Starting Afresh
Housing Associations, Stock Transfer and Regeneration

Adrian Norridge Research Bursary 2012
Declan Redmond and Rory Hearne
June 2013
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The Authors

Dr. Declan Redmond is a lecturer in housing and urban planning at the School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy, University College Dublin. He has published extensively on social housing policy, regeneration, community sustainability and planning and politics. He co-edited, with Dr. Michelle Norris, the standard text on housing policy in Ireland.

Dr. Rory Hearne completed his PhD in the Department of Geography in Trinity College, Dublin, in 2009 and is currently the regeneration co-ordinator in Dolphin House, a social housing flats complex in inner Dublin. He has recently published a book on Public Private Partnerships in Ireland (Manchester University Press, 2011). He has also undertaken research into human rights approaches, community development, advocacy and politics and he contributes to lectures in the Department of Geography, NUIM.

The views in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Clúid Housing Association.
Acknowledgements

This report is a product of the Adrian Norridge Housing Research Bursary 2012. The bursary was founded in 2011 and was set up to support applied research on social housing issues for the benefit of the social housing sector. This is the second report funded by the bursary.

We interviewed a wide range of people during our research for this report and we would like to thank them all for their co-operation and openness. For the case study research we interviewed tenants, home owners, Clúid officers, local authority officials, community representatives, local councillors and Gardaí. We also interviewed some central government officials and other stakeholders with regard to the future of housing associations and regeneration policy.

We would also like to thank the steering group for their help during the research and for their comments on the drafts of the report. The steering group comprised Simon Brooke and Fiona Cormican of Clúid and Dr. Mary Murphy of NUI Maynooth.
Regeneration involves the physical refurbishment or rebuilding of dwellings and – just as importantly – the renewal of communities through tackling social exclusion.
This research is the second project funded by the Adrian Norridge Housing Research Bursary, which was established in honour of the founder of Clúid Housing Association. As well as founding Clúid, Adrian was an energetic and inspirational board member for 16 years until his retirement in 2010.

The bursary, which is awarded annually, supports applied research on housing issues that will be of relevance to the social housing sector in Ireland. The first year’s research project, *Financing the Irish social housing sector: lessons from England and Canada*, was launched in April 2012 and is available at www.cluid.ie.

Clúid Housing Association is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that develops and provides high quality, affordable housing for people who cannot afford to buy their own home or pay for private rented housing. Clúid was established in 1994 and currently owns 3,700 houses and apartments across the country, and in addition manages another 1,300 properties that are owned by others such as local authorities or developers.

The creation of the bursary underscores Clúid’s commitment to contribute to the development of housing policy in Ireland that will ensure that everyone has access to good quality affordable housing.

Regeneration has been a key feature of Irish housing policy since the late 1990s, as a response to growing problems of substandard housing, anti-social behaviour and crime, social exclusion and poverty. Regeneration which addresses all of these issues can enable neighbourhoods to rebuild and renew, and assist communities to start afresh.

In the current environment local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to fund major renewal projects and some are experiencing difficulties with effective management of problem estates. Housing associations, which have a track record in effective housing and estate management, and are able to access private loan finance, have been identified as key players in future regeneration in Ireland. Clúid Housing Association has been the pioneer in this area, having completed four significant regeneration projects around the country, each of which involved a transfer of housing stock from a local authority to Clúid.

This report marks a major addition to the literature on regeneration in Ireland through detailed examination of two case studies of Clúid regeneration projects and a comprehensive assessment of the challenges of physical refurbishment and social regeneration. In addition, the report contributes to the debate on the role housing associations should play in future regeneration.

I would like to particularly thank the two authors, Dr Declan Redmond and Dr Rory Hearne who brought their very wide-ranging skills and experience to this research project and approached it with great enthusiasm. In addition I would like to acknowledge the commitment of my fellow members of the Adrian Norridge Housing Research Bursary committee: Dr Mary Murphy from NUI Maynooth, and Fiona Cormican, Regeneration Project Manager at Clúid.

**Simon Brooke**
Head of Policy
Chair: Adrian Norridge Housing Research Bursary
Executive Summary

Background

Since the late 1990s regeneration has become a key policy response to social housing and poverty in areas of urban disadvantage in Ireland. The regeneration project in Ballymun is well known. But the failure of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, combined with significant funding reductions, has meant that the Government is looking at new ways to continue regeneration. Policy has, to date, placed too much emphasis on regeneration through displacement and property development approaches, rather than community sustainability and participation. In this context, housing associations are being identified as key players in government policy. For housing associations in Ireland, this represents a relatively new area, with many significant challenges. This report explores the opportunities and challenges that face housing associations engaging in regeneration in Ireland. It addresses issues such as: identifying the key components in successful regeneration; the challenges in stock transfer; community engagement; social issues such as unemployment and complex family needs and the debate about what role should housing associations play in sustaining estates and communities post-regeneration.

Social housing regeneration is a complex process that has been proven to work and is clearly needed for disadvantaged areas in Ireland. There are tens of thousands of people living in disadvantaged areas affected by sub-standard housing, anti-social behaviour and crime, social exclusion and poverty. In spite of these issues, these low income and working class populations value their neighbours and communities. They do, however, urgently need regeneration to address the issues of housing and social exclusion and sustain their communities. An affordable, good-quality home is crucial to a person’s well-being and social participation (European Commission, 2013).

Regeneration is an important policy tool to address the current crisis of unemployment, poverty and deprivation, which is disproportionately affecting these disadvantaged areas, as evidenced by the higher than average unemployment rates and lower education attainment levels. Regeneration can provide a pathway for social inclusion for the most marginalised people in Irish society, through the participation and the empowerment of these communities to engage - in partnership, with the state, community and voluntary organisations and housing associations - to find solutions to the complex challenges they face. More generally, investment in regeneration can contribute to addressing the current economic and social crisis by addressing housing needs, reducing inequality, fulfilling the state’s human rights obligations to its most vulnerable citizens and providing an economic stimulus through local employment, training, construction etc.

While the transfer of local authority housing stock to housing associations is common in Britain, it has happened to a minimal degree in Ireland. Clúid Housing Association has been the pioneer in this regard, having completed four stock transfers and subsequent regenerations around the country. Although the association developed its own guide to stock transfer, it is, nonetheless, timely to independently evaluate this policy, particularly with the possibility of further such transfers for Clúid and other associations. It is important, therefore, that central government develop a detailed policy on regeneration, including stock transfer, in order to enable regeneration programmes in our cities and towns.

The context for stock transfers in regeneration, to date, in Ireland has been the decline of some local authorities’ housing estates, which often suffer multiple problems. These can range from sub-standard housing and environment, to complex problems of community safety, anti-social behaviour and intense social disadvantage. In the context of a substantial reduction in government regeneration funding, local authorities are finding it difficult to fund major renewal and they are also finding it problematic to manage estates effectively. Housing associations have been able, in some cases, to access the necessary capital funds to regenerate estates and have a track record in effective and efficient housing and estate management. Current national policy and local authority practice is encouraging housing associations to undertake regeneration through more stock transfers, using mixed funding from the Housing Finance Agency and central government.

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1 Housing associations, (also called Approved Housing Bodies or Voluntary Housing Bodies) are independent not-for-profit bodies that develop and manage social housing.
Research Aims and Methods

Given this context, this study has the following aims:

a) To evaluate the stock transfer and regeneration of two case study estates

b) To ascertain the degree to which housing associations should become involved in community development and social regeneration, in addition to the physical and environmental regeneration of estates

c) To make recommendations, based on the results of the research, for future stock transfers and regeneration.

The research sought to evaluate the stock transfer and regeneration, with regard to the following four broad issues:

a) The process of stock transfer from the local authority to the housing association

b) The consultation process between tenants and the housing association on the design and regeneration of the estate

c) Immediate regeneration outcomes

d) Sustaining the estate and the community, particularly focusing on the post-regeneration period.

The primary research method employed was a series of in-depth, qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders on two case study estates, along with some supplementary interviews with key national stakeholders, regarding future policy on stock transfer and regeneration. In the case study areas, interviews were held with tenants, owner occupiers, Clúid housing officials, local authority officials, local community representatives and Gardaí. In total, 43 interviews were held across the two case study areas and a further six interviews were held with national stakeholders.

Key Results

Successes and Key Achievements

- The complete turnaround of both estates which had suffered from multiple physical, environmental and social problems
- The development of a sustainable community
- Re-development of the estate, with high quality housing and environmental works
- Clúid’s engagement with a vulnerable, disadvantaged community in the regeneration process
- Effective management and steering of a complex regeneration process
- Radical reduction in anti-social behaviour and an associated improvement in the quality of life
- The successful draw-down of funding by Clúid, thus ensuring completion of the project
- Effective estate management by Clúid.

Difficulties in Regeneration

- Uncertainty over funding commitments from central government can put regeneration at risk and alienate local communities.
- The length of time required by the process meant that, in one case, residents were stressed and frustrated. This led to a decline in trust in Clúid.
- Potential legal anomalies with regard to tenant transfers
- Delays and changes in funding, from central government, meant altering some commitments previously given to residents.
- Disagreements with homeowners over valuation of homes. The lack of a set price meant flexibility to ensure progress, but also meant more negotiations and, possibly higher prices being paid for properties.
- Staff turnover, leading to disputes over what had been agreed previously with residents and – in some cases - a lack of supporting documentation on agreements
- Difficulties for Clúid staff in managing the process
Issues over tenant purchase option being available throughout the process

Inconsistent involvement of other state and public agencies in the process.

Sustainability Challenges and Risks

- Difficulty in assessing the outcome so close to completion. A longer time frame is required to analyse effectiveness.
- Lack of structured co-operation between statutory services, community and voluntary services and Clúid
- Inadequate community support/community development
- Estate management – keeping a presence on the estate
- Anti-social behaviour – ensuring sensitive tenant allocation, effective interventions and prevention
- Reduced funding for community and voluntary services, such as community development and reduced resources for state services make it more difficult to address key issues in social regeneration.

Key Recommendations

Here we present a summary of our key recommendations which are divided into:

- Government Regeneration Policy and Housing Associations
- Regeneration Policy and Practice
- Housing Associations and Regeneration.

They are discussed in more detail in the section on conclusions and recommendations.

Government Regeneration Policy and Housing Associations

- Irish Government housing policy should continue to assign housing associations a greater role in the delivery of the regeneration of areas of urban disadvantage.
- If housing associations are going to be successful in increasing their involvement in regeneration they require support from Government in the following areas:
  - A detailed policy on regeneration, including stock transfer
  - Increased state funding
  - State support to enable borrowing from the Housing Finance Agency and private funders. The Housing Finance Agency should explore funding from the European Investment Bank.
  - Department of Environment, Community and Local Government funding must be clear from the outset for projects.
- Expecting housing associations, through stock transfer, to take responsibility to solve the problems of sub-standard housing, estate management and social deprivation would be wrong on many levels. Local authorities, therefore, should be funded sufficiently from central government to continue to play an active and, in many cases, lead role in delivering regeneration.
- Housing associations should remain non-commercial bodies and their housing should be maintained as social housing to the maximum extent possible.
- A regulatory system for the governance of the sector is critical and should be implemented as soon as possible.
- Regeneration policy and practice should be measured and monitored to assess its effectiveness.
Regeneration Policy and Practice

- Regeneration should continue to be used as a key national and local level policy tool to address the current crisis of unemployment, poverty, inequality and deprivation that is disproportionately affecting these disadvantaged areas.

- Further reductions in spending on community and voluntary and key state services present great risks. Clear funding commitments to social regeneration are required.

- Funding for social regeneration should be sought also from the European Social Fund 2014-2020 Social Investment Package (SIP).

- Regeneration should be viewed as an important mechanism that can contribute to addressing the current economic and social crisis, by providing an economic stimulus.

- The Government should implement the UN recommendations to adopt a legislative framework for a National Public Housing Estates Regeneration Programme to ensure international human rights standards and community participation.

- Increased effort should be put into developing innovative responses to social issues.

- The social capital of disadvantaged communities must be given a greater priority and value.

Housing Associations and Regeneration

- It is critical that housing associations adequately resource regeneration projects. It is essential that associations ensure that project management structures and teams are in place who will work from the start to the finish of the project.

- In the regeneration process, it is important that a lead agency drives the process.

- Housing associations have expertise in housing provision, housing and estate management and it is not appropriate that community development becomes a core part of their function or mandate.

- As it is critical to sustain estates and communities, it is imperative that structures are put in place to manage estates, once they have been regenerated. Housing associations will have a significant, but not central, role in this.

- There is a need for a clear democratic process for tenants in stock transfer.

- Resources are required for community development and the provision of independent support, advice and capacity building for residents.

- Regeneration should also deliver social and community infrastructure.

- Priority should be given to addressing anti-social behaviour and effective estate management, pre- and post-regeneration. Sustainable allocation policies are essential.

- Social and economic regeneration initiatives, with a strong preventative and education and employment focus, are required.

- The full cost of regeneration, in terms of engagement and social regeneration, should be built into budgets from the start.

- Housing associations should ensure they are open to advocacy and accountability from local politicians, local groups and community law centres.
Successful regeneration involves a partnership between the community, the local authority and housing associations.
1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Since the foundation of the state, local authorities have been the main providers of social housing in Ireland and, though subject to criticism, they have made an enormously positive contribution to improving the housing conditions of the population (Fahey, 1999). However, over the past thirty years the local authority sector has become increasingly residualised. The right to buy policy has led to over two thirds of the local authority stock being sold to tenants, with the best or most popular estates moving from being social rented to owner occupied (Norris and Redmond, 2005; Redmond and Norris, 2007). The remaining housing stock has been in less desirable estates and has often been of an inferior or sub-standard quality. The local authority sector, accounting for about seven per cent of the nation’s housing, is, thus, a minority tenure which more and more accommodates a population which is heavily welfare-dependent.

In addition, local authorities have had to operate a rental system which has, to a great extent, militated against a professional management of their housing stock. The income-related rents scheme, known as the differential rents scheme, ensures that rents are affordable for all tenants. However, it does not generate sufficient income for local authorities to manage and maintain their stock in an efficient and effective manner. Leaving aside these broadly structural factors, however, there is evidence that local authorities have had, at best, weak housing and estate management policies and practice. At worst, they have neglected estates and allowed them to deteriorate physically and socially, to the point where they are in need of urgent attention (Redmond, 2001; Norris and O’Connell, 2002, 2010).

In combination, these factors have meant that many local authority estates or neighbourhoods have seen serious physical, environmental, social and economic decline. The need for some form of refurbishment or regeneration has been obvious on many estates and a number of policies have been pursued. Since 1986, for example, local authorities have been able to seek central government funding for refurbishment of their housing stock through a scheme known as the Remedial Works Scheme (Norris, 2001). From the early 1990s, government policy has encouraged a diversification of social housing providers through the encouragement and financing of housing associations who have, to a limited extent, become involved in regeneration. Major public funding of regeneration has been seen in the redevelopment of Ballymun for example, while there were attempts to regenerate estates in the Dublin City Council area via Public Private Partnership (PPP) mechanisms (Hearne, 2009, 2011).

However, with the collapse of the property market and the attendant economic crisis, capital funding for local authorities and housing associations has been drastically reduced and there is limited funding for regeneration programmes. Furthermore, the increased emphasis on social regeneration responses, through the more recent regeneration projects, is endangered by funding reductions. Government policy on social housing has turned to providing current funding for leasing social housing from private providers and also encouraging housing associations to become more involved in seeking private finance. The need for regeneration of social housing is clear, though not quantified in any systematic manner. Thus, it is appropriate to review stock transfer, to date, through an evaluation of recent transfers. It is also appropriate to consider how such transfers might be funded into the future.

1.2 Research Aims

While stock transfer of local authority housing to housing associations has been common in the UK for the past twenty years, it has been rare in Ireland. Indeed, Clúid Housing Association has been at the forefront of stock transfer in Ireland. It has been the pioneer of stock transfer and has, to date, been involved in four stock transfers. In Dublin, the flats of St Joseph’s Mansion were transferred to Clúid and the complex was refurbished to a high standard. In Sligo, part of the Cranmore estate was transferred to Clúid and a regeneration programme was completed. In Longford, Lanna AoiBHím and Annally Gardens were regenerated in the early 2000s. More recently, St. Patrick’s Estate in Ballina and St. Michael’s Road in Longford were transferred to Clúid and both of these estates have been regenerated. Given the absence of any formal government policy on stock transfer, Clúid has, based on experience to date, published its own guide to stock transfer and regeneration (Clúid Housing Association, 2009).
The general context for such transfers is:

- The often severe physical, environmental and social problems in these estates
- The lack of funding for local authorities to undertake major refurbishment or regeneration
- The availability of funding for housing associations to undertake refurbishment or regeneration
- The view that housing associations will regenerate the estates to a high standard and that, as importantly, they will manage the estates efficiently and effectively.

Given this context, this study has the following aims:

- To evaluate the stock transfer and regeneration of two case study estates
- To ascertain the degree to which housing associations should become involved in community development and social regeneration, in addition to the physical and environmental regeneration of estates
- To make recommendations for future stock transfers and regeneration, based on the results of the research.

1.3 Research Design and Methods

Research Methods

Given that this is the first study of regeneration by housing associations, involving stock transfer in Ireland, the research, necessarily, sought to gain an overview of the process and outcomes and did not seek to focus on one aspect of the process in detail. So, for example, this is not a forensic financial cost-benefit analysis of stock transfer and regeneration. Rather, the analysis sought to evaluate the stock transfer and regeneration with regard to the following four broad issues:

- The process of stock transfer from the local authority to the housing association
- The process of regeneration - from pre-planning, to consultation between tenants and the housing association on the design and regeneration of the estate, through to estate management
- The outcomes of the regeneration projects, in terms of the delivery of physical and social regeneration
- The post-regeneration period, particularly focusing on how best to sustain the estate and the community.

In order to undertake this evaluation the following methods were used:

- A focused literature review on regeneration and stock transfer in Britain, where such transfers have been in operation since 1988, as well as a succinct review of literature on the benefits of regeneration
- A focused literature review on regeneration of social housing in Ireland
- The undertaking of primary research in two case study areas where Clúid have completed stock transfer and regeneration. In consultation with the steering committee, St. Patrick’s Estate in Ballina and St. Michael’s Road in Longford were chosen.
- Background information on each estate, including the project briefs for regeneration, provided by Clúid
- The primary method used was the qualitative interview with a range of stakeholders as listed below:

Table 1 Stakeholder Categories

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<th>Stakeholders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elected Councillors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clúid officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardaí</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local authority officials</td>
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</table>
A series of direct face-to-face interviews were undertaken in each estate between January and March 2013 with the stakeholders listed above. The Table below shows the number of interviews conducted on each estate. A total of 43 interviews were held.

Table 2 Case Study Interviews Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of stakeholder</th>
<th>Ballina</th>
<th>Longford</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clúid Officials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Representatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupiers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardaí</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Elected Councillors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

In addition to the case study interviews, we held interviews with three officials from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, one from Dublin City Council, one from the Housing Finance Agency and one with a regeneration worker in Dublin. The purpose of these additional interviews was to gain a broader insight into the issues which arose in the case study estates and to discuss potential future trends in the housing association sector. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, where possible. Otherwise, detailed notes were taken and were written up after the interview.

The report is structured as follows:

Section 1 introduces the report.

Section 2 presents the findings of the literature reviews on stock transfer in Britain and on social housing regeneration in Ireland.

Section 3 reports on the findings of the case studies, while Section 4 concludes the report by making a series of recommendations.

The need for regeneration of social housing is clear, though not quantified in any systematic manner. Thus, it is appropriate to review stock transfer, to date, through an evaluation of recent transfers. It is also appropriate to consider how such transfers might be funded into the future.
Regeneration projects must not only deliver on new or improved housing, but also provide community facilities and social infrastructure such as community centres, parks, playgrounds, youth areas, youth cafes etc.
2. Housing Associations, Stock Transfer and Regeneration

2.1 Introduction

In Ireland, Clúid has been the pioneer in housing stock transfers and, to date, has taken ownership of four estates from different local authorities. It is interesting to note, however, that while these transfers are clearly innovative, there is no formal policy framework or guidance from either central or local government regarding such transfers. Indeed, the absence of a clear policy directive continues to hamper progress in stock transfer. In that context, this section of the report focuses on three issues.

Firstly, it summarises some of the evidence which assesses both the economic and social value of regeneration.

Secondly, it provides a review of the evidence regarding stock transfer in Britain, as this is the most comparable policy and there is now over twenty years’ experience of transfers in Britain.

Thirdly, it examines some of the key regeneration policies in Ireland over the past twenty to thirty years. The purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of regeneration, but to highlight the key messages and learning that have emerged from a series of regeneration policies and initiatives. The report summarises some of the key elements of Clúid’s stock transfer guide, which informs our evaluation of the case studies.

2.2 The Value and Benefits of Regeneration

Thus, valuing existing communities and seeking to improve quality of life are core motivations and rationales for regeneration. Improvements in housing quality, the environment and public realm, as well as the reduction of anti-social behaviour, are central objectives of regeneration programmes.

Area-Based Initiatives and the Benefits of Regeneration

There is a vast literature on what can be termed Area-Based Initiatives – that is policies which seek to turn around disadvantaged urban areas. It is not the intention here to review this literature in a comprehensive manner, but rather to take a number of illustrative studies which point to common approaches and solutions.

Perhaps the most intensively examined initiative in recent years was the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme in England, which operated between 1998 and 2008. This was the flagship neighbourhood renewal programme of the New Labour Government where thirty nine disadvantaged areas were selected with the aim of reducing the gaps between these poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. This programme has been subject to one of the most extensive and exhaustive evaluations of any area-based initiative and there are over 60 detailed reports evaluating different aspects of the programme (See the following website for all the reports: http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/). When the programme was launched the central government budget was £1.7 billion and the aim was to achieve three ‘place-related’ and three ‘people-related’ outcomes. The former related to crime, community and housing and the latter to health, education and worklessness.

The NDC was underpinned by the following principles:

- A ten-year strategic approach to neighbourhood transformation
- Dedicated neighbourhood agencies
- A partnership approach
- Learning and innovation.
With regard to outcomes, based on a detailed measurement of indicators, it is reported that the 39 areas saw an improvement in 32 of 36 core indicators relating to crime, education, health, joblessness, community and housing. Residents were, at the end of the programme, more satisfied with the areas they lived in. The general lessons of this initiative related to taking a long term approach and not seeking quick fixes; taking a holistic approach to regeneration and not just focusing on housing and the environment; ensuring the engagement of residents throughout the process; developing effective partnership mechanisms and, finally, seeking to mainstream these approaches into policy.

Another major review of regeneration policy by Tunstall and Coulter (2006), which tracked 20 unpopular social housing estates in England over a 25-year period, also reaches broadly similar conclusions. Some of the key factors which explain improvements on the estates relate to improved and sustained housing management, modernisation of housing and increased resident involvement in estate management.

These broad lessons are also what emerge from a brief examination of regeneration in other EU countries. For example, Droste et al (2008) examine social housing regeneration in France, the Netherlands and Germany and come to similar conclusions. They say that, despite differences, the three countries attempted to ‘combine physical economic and social strategies’ (Droste at al, 173). Wassenberg (2011) undertook a longitudinal study of the regeneration of the Bijlmermeer estate (13,000 dwellings) outside Amsterdam.

This high-rise estate was built between 1968 and 1975, but the area declined quite rapidly. Wassenberg reports an evolution of regeneration policy which initially focused on demolition and rebuilding, to a more sophisticated policy which emphasised improving services, amenities and infrastructure - in effect, an integrated approach to regeneration.

While the evaluation of the NDC programme emphasised the socio-economic benefits, the evaluation also undertook a more standard benefit cost analysis. From a financial viewpoint, the evaluation estimated that, in addition to the £1.71 billion of direct government money invested an additional £8.68 billion of ‘monetised net additional outcomes’ were achieved, leading to a leading to a benefit to cost ratio of 5.08 (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010a).

Other recent work by the UK government has sought to put an economic value on different aspects of regeneration - something which is not attempted very often. Using a variety of economic and valuation techniques, they conclude that ‘the overall benefit cost ratio associated with regeneration expenditure is estimated to be 2.3’ (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010c, 113).

Table 3 gives a more detailed breakdown of benefit cost ratios for different aspects of regeneration, all of which are positive. While this is a very complex issue, it is noteworthy that investment in regeneration is measured in a positive manner.

### Table 3 Benefit Cost Ratios of Regeneration Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Valuation Basis</th>
<th>Central Valuation</th>
<th>Cautious Valuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New build housing</td>
<td>Consumption (property betterment) and production benefits</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Improvement</td>
<td>Consumption benefits - property betterment and social benefits</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition, demolition and new build</td>
<td>Consumption benefits - property betterment and social benefits</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities: Volunteering</td>
<td>Shadow price of volunteer inputs - minimum wage</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities: Investing in community organisations</td>
<td>Shadow price of social enterprise ‘GVA’</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental: Open space</td>
<td>Consumption benefits - willingness to pay</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental: Public realm</td>
<td>Consumption benefits - willingness to pay</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood renewal</td>
<td>Consumption benefits - value transfer from</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Communities and Local Government (2010c, 113)
Preventative Social Policy and Sustaining Communities

Estates and neighbourhoods deteriorate in part because of a lack of preventative policies. This suggests strongly that, in order to sustain estates and communities, preventative policies and practices are pursued in the long term. In particular, as suggested by Tunstall and Coulter (2006), sustained housing and estate management is required. More specifically, there is increasing evidence that social regeneration plans form part of the toolkit of regeneration programmes (Ballymun Regeneration Ltd, 2012). Such social policy evidence is increasingly pertinent to regeneration.

The recommendations and analysis on preventative investment in Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC) are particularly important. Preventative investment returns have been captured through various studies. In the US High Scope Programme Perry showed a 16:1 rate of return, while in Chicago evaluations found an 11.1 rate of return. In Ireland the Geary Institute found a 7:1 rate of return (Start Strong, 2012). Apart from very welcome child outcomes which feed into higher human productivity, there are also more short term growth stimulus returns from such social investment. Research in Cornell University showed significant stimulus multipliers associated with investment in ECEC, with a growth multiplier of 2 and employment multiplier of 1.5 and that the higher the quality of childcare, the higher the multipliers. Finally, making the link across child investment and homelessness we find using Irish data that investment in ECEC at €2,850 per annum has the potential to reduce risk of adult imprisonment. This is highly correlated with low education outcomes and costs €70,803 per annum per prisoner.

There is also evidence which shows that preventative approaches have been found to be the most effective interventions for individuals and communities and that they provide long-term value-for-money. For example, there is a clear link between ensuring successful regeneration and preventing homelessness. Providing social regeneration aspects can support social housing tenants (where those who have been homeless tend to be located) to avoid becoming homeless. A good example is to employ, on a permanent basis, skilled social caretakers with pedagogical, health or craftsman qualifications. Targeted, integrated policies that mitigate the overall impact of homelessness are good examples of investments with high rates of return. Providing permanent housing and support measures for the homeless and preventing the circumstances which might lead to homelessness has long-term social and economic benefits, including lower public expenditure on shelters and crisis support services, healthcare, increased employment, higher tax revenues and lower judicial system costs. It also contributes to a better social cohesion (European Commission, 2013).

A Dutch study has calculated that for every €1 spent on preventing homelessness, about € 2.20 in costs are saved elsewhere (European Commission, 2013). This study identified areas where savings are most likely to occur, in emergency healthcare, semi-clinical care, psychiatric services, prisons, police interventions, tribunal procedures, drug ambulances, temporary housing provision and nursing homes.

Recent studies have confirmed the cost-effectiveness of preventing eviction. Calculations made for Scotland in 2010 showed that whilst providing temporary accommodation and re-housing costs about £ 5,300 per household per year, successful mediation between the landlord and household to avoid eviction amounted to hardly £600.79. An Austrian survey showed that the prevention of evicting one person cost altogether some € 370 in 2007. For reintegration, Austrian municipalities had to spend € 460 a month per person for a period of more than 12 months, on average. Housing homeless people in crisis accommodation like hostels is usually much more expensive than helping tenants to stay in their homes. Evidence shows that a considerable number of evictions can be prevented. In the Netherlands in 2006, evictions from social housing were reduced to 70 % of the 2005 level (European Commission, 2013).

Timely contact with tenants when they are starting to encounter problems is crucial to successfully preventing evictions. In Sweden, all housing companies must send a written notice to the local social welfare committee as soon as the first rent payment problems arise, long before the formal termination of the lease, giving enough time to find a solution. Outreach services are warned ex officio about planned evictions, for example, in Amsterdam, where landlords have to report 2-month arrears to service providers, and in Vienna, where courts automatically alert the Secure Tenancy Centre (FAWOS) to any eviction procedure. Identifying tenants in difficulty often poses a challenge but persistent follow-up action will pay off. In Austria for instance, counselling centres send consecutive letters to tenants in trouble and also offer them a follow-up home visit. This practice has improved the contact rate with clients to an 80 % outreach instead of the earlier 30 %. Early access to integrated, low-intensity support, including personalised counselling and guidance and mediation between tenants and landlords, financial institutions and authorities are the cheapest ways to reduce evictions. In Austria, social workers provide comprehensive counselling services for tenants to advise them on how they can access the benefits they are entitled to and how they can best manage their debts and pay their rent on time.
2.3 Regeneration, Stock Transfer and the UK Experience

The transfer of local authority housing stock to registered social landlords, or housing associations, has been ongoing in Britain since about 1988. Legislation to allow stock transfer was passed in 1985 and, according to Pawson et al (2009), in what is a major review of stock transfer, over 1.3 million dwellings had been transferred to housing associations between 1988 and 2008. In the first decade, from 1988 until 1997, the transfers were primarily from non-urban local authorities. However, between 1998 and 2008 the transfers have mainly been from urban authorities and were aimed at ‘addressing seriously dilapidated housing, stemming neighbourhood decline and, sometimes, remedying a legacy of humdrum housing management’ (Pawson et al, 1). Transfers of local authority housing in Britain must be put to a ballot of the tenants and, while legally it is not necessary to obtain a majority, in practice transfers occur only where a majority has been obtained. Housing associations seeking to have local authority dwellings transferred typically set out a series of what are termed ‘transfer promises’. Most commonly, the following transfer promises are made:

Investing in Housing Improvement and Modernisation

The primary role of stock transfers in the UK has been to access capital investment to repair and modernise existing housing stock. Typical transfer promises in this regard will give detailed promises on how housing is going to be upgraded. One example cited by Pawson et al (2009) shows a housing association specifying that all houses be fitted with PVC double glazed windows; energy efficient central heating; modern kitchens and bathrooms; re-wiring (3,800 homes); security works and environmental improvements. All of this was to be achieved in a seven-year period.

Rent Levels

A major concern for tenants considering transferring to a housing association is the level of rent and the potential for rent increases. Consequently, it is common for promises to be made regarding rent and transfer associations specifying that rents will increase in line with consumer inflation plus 1 to 1.5%.

Improved Housing Management Services

All transfer associations made commitments to improved housing management and service standards. Most commonly, they specified improvements in repair and maintenance services and in anti-social behaviour policy. For example, in a number of cases, there were pledges for dedicated anti-social behaviour units.

Enhanced Tenant and Resident Involvement

One of the criticisms of many council housing departments in the UK related to their being over-centralised, with minimal tenant involvement. In seeking to transfer council housing to transfer associations, which are typically local and community based, pledges are made with regard to increased tenant involvement. More specifically, it is usual to promise that tenants would be appointed to management boards; that tenant associations would be funded and that customer feedback would be sought regularly.

New Housing Development and/or Area Regeneration

Promises relating to regeneration, understood as encompassing demolition, as well as community regeneration, were less common among the cases reviewed by Pawson. In large part, this was because housing improvement and modernisation is a separate pledge.

Stock transfer in Britain is driven, in large part, by the potential of accessing capital investment which is not available to local authorities and of achieving Decent Home Standards which are technical minimum standards for social housing laid down by central government. In that regard, the reality has been that when tenants come to vote on stock transfer the choice is a ‘loaded’ one, in that if tenants decide to remain with the local authority there is often no guarantee of any funding for stock improvement or regeneration. To some extent, this is similar to the case in Ireland where tenants may be left with a choice where there is a reasonable likelihood of a housing association receiving funding, whereas the local authority may have little or no chance of funding.

The review by Pawson et al (2009) states that, in many cases, housing associations have improved dwelling standards to a higher level than those officially set, thus over-achieving relative to the original transfer promise. With regard to regeneration and associated community development, this has tended to feature as a low priority in the list of transfer promises. Nonetheless, the decade up to 2008 saw increased attention by transfer housing associations to regeneration, often involving demolition of sub-standard housing and the development of new housing and associated environmental improvements. Pawson et al (2009) state that, while many transfer associations may not have started off with any promises of regeneration, often the reality, on the ground, has led them to demolish and rebuild and to become involved in various forms of community regeneration. They assert that ‘it has often been only a short time after commencing renovation programmes that many landlords have shifted their attention to considerations of long term sustainability’
and that this has ‘triggered a realisation that investing in social and economic renewal of formerly deprived communities is likely to be an essential act of self-interest for the landlord itself’ (Pawson et al, 112).

The largest and most controversial stock transfer occurred in Glasgow in 2003. In what was the largest stock transfer in Europe, approximately 80,000 dwellings were transferred by Glasgow City Council to a new entity called Glasgow Housing Association (Kearns and Lawson, 2008). This transfer was unique in four respects.

Firstly, it dwarfed the size of typical transfers which were usually of the order of 5,000-10,000 units. Secondly, it involved very large amounts of money - a housing debt of £900 million and a potential investment of £4 billion private and public investment over 30 years. Thirdly, the transfer in Glasgow was to be a two-stage process. Stage one involved the transfer of the 80,000 dwellings to the Glasgow Housing Association - a single entity. The second stage involved the transfer of dwellings to local housing organisations, who had a community basis or even community ownership. Fourthly, the process was deeply political. Because council housing was seen as part of the culture of Glasgow, there was significant opposition to the transfer from elected councillors and some tenants.

The research, to date, shows that the process of second stage transfer, that is, to local community organisations has been fraught with difficulties (Kearns and Lawson, 2008; Lawson and Kearns, 2010; McKee, 2009). The argument has been that the scale of the transfer led to an underestimation of the difficulties and complexities of transferring the stock on to local community housing organisations and that the number of second stage transfers has been disappointing. Another criticism is that significant power has remained with Glasgow Housing Association, thus centralising, rather than decentralising the housing system. However, Pawson et al (2009) review the Glasgow case and argue that much of the criticism of the Glasgow Housing Association has been misplaced and that it has been successful in delivering a complex investment programme of housing improvement and modernisation.

Despite the mainly positive conclusions of the Pawson study, it is also the case that there has been some significant criticism of the housing transfer policy (Card and Mudd, 2006; McCormack, 2009; Smyth, 2012). At a general level, critics have argued that stock transfer represents a form of privatisation and an attack on council housing, motivated in part by political ideology. In Britain, it is perhaps easier to make this case, particularly as housing associations are heavily funded by private finance and the political system is more polarised between right and left than in Ireland. Housing associations, it is argued, charge higher rents and service charges, are less open to tenant involvement and are increasingly governed by an elite who are more at home with private sector governance and finance than with the culture of council housing. Housing associations, by necessity, have had to become more commercially oriented.

Another related strand of criticism has been that stock transfers are linked to gentrification processes. Watt (2009) in a study of stock transfer in London argues that such transfers represent a form of state-led gentrification.

### 2.4 Social Housing Regeneration in Ireland

#### Trends in Social Housing, Policy and Regeneration

While large sections of the social housing sector had experienced few problems, the Remedial Works Scheme was introduced by Government in 1985 to fund local authorities to refurbish units in estates that had gone into decline. Over 12,000 units were refurbished by 1995, but the scheme failed to have a significant effect on the most disadvantaged estates as it did not address social issues such as unemployment, poverty and the drugs epidemic (Fahey, 1999).

These issues and problems were compounded by inadequate maintenance, allocation policies, overcrowding and ineffective responses to serious anti-social behaviour by local authorities. There was an understandable deterioration of the relationship between tenant and landlord. Various aspects of social (dis)order - the degree to which estates or parts of estates were disrupted by noisy or unruly neighbours, vandalism, joy-riding, harassment, drug dealing, petty criminality, and so on – were the core factors that defined the quality of community and neighbourhood life for residents (Fahey, 1999).

Despite the period of economic growth from 1997 onwards, these areas continued to experience deprivation and social exclusion. They were characterised by high levels of dependency on social welfare, lone parent poverty, high rates of early school leaving and very low rates of participation at third-level (Fahey et al, 2011; Hearne, 2011). It was identified that these localities were disproportionately likely to experience a multiplicity of these problems and experience them simultaneously (National Economic and Social Council, 2004). Despite this, however, tenants and residents within these areas expressed a strong commitment to and identity with
the local community, emphasising the importance of family and neighbourhood connections (Bissett, 2008; Hearne, 2011).

In the 1990s, local authorities, along with communities campaigning for improvements, developed plans for the demolition and rebuilding of the most acutely disadvantaged social housing estates as part of large-scale ‘regeneration’ plans. The regeneration Master Plans aimed to transform the areas through urban redesign, increased density, tenure diversity of new social and private housing, and commercial development, following urban renewal and spatial planning policies, which emphasised entrepreneurial, property market-led, approaches (Drudy and Punch, 2005). Social exclusion and poverty were to be addressed through attracting higher income owner occupiers into these areas to create a ‘social mix’ in order to diminish concentrations of ‘mono-tenure’ areas of social and low-income housing (Department of the Environment, 2005). It is noteworthy that the benefits of social engineering of mixed tenure has been contested - particularly the extent to which the norms, values and behaviour within a community can be altered by changing its social mix (Allen et al, 2005; Berube, 2005; Minton, 2005; Kearns and Mason, 2007). Nonetheless, there is a significant amount of evidence that, in other ways, mixed tenure communities provide benefits over mono-tenure communities (Tunstall and Lupton, 2010).

In 1997 Ireland’s first, and largest regeneration scheme was developed in Ballymun, an area with high levels of deprivation and social exclusion in Dublin City’s northern suburbs. The regeneration Master Plan included the demolition of 2,800 high rise social housing units and the construction of a mix of social and private new housing units, parks, roads and community facilities, as well as various social and economic interventions. It was to be funded by direct state investment and the use of tax reliefs to attract private investment.

However, in 2001, national urban regeneration policy encouraged the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) as the principal mechanism to deliver regeneration. It applied a speculative property development approach, leveraging rising land values to facilitate deals with private developers (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001). The PPPs involved redeveloping these estates as mixed tenure areas, with land being transferred to a private developer who would build owner-occupier housing and commercial/retail units on site. In return, the local authority would receive new social housing and community facilities on site (Redmond and Russell, 2008; Russell and Redmond, 2009; Hearne, 2011).

In this period, regeneration became an important policy tool to address urban disadvantage, poverty and spatial inequalities. A National Regeneration Programme was developed to include projects, ranging from large-scale urban regeneration projects such Ballymun and Limerick City, to smaller estate-wide regeneration projects in parts of Dublin City and regional towns including Sligo, Dundalk and Tralee (Fahey et al, 2011). The Programme included an increased emphasis on the social and economic aspects of regeneration, underpinned by an analysis that, “the problems afflicting parts of Dublin and Limerick cities and other large urban centres have been significantly driven by a too narrow conception of housing support in the past”. This holistic programme of physical, social and economic regeneration would address the various causes of spatial deprivation in the country’s most disadvantaged estates "to build sustainable communities, through a combination of social, educational and economic initiatives and also by rejuvenating the built environment” (Department of the Environment, 2011, 3).

This reflected the international literature and policy experience which highlighted that social problems had remained relatively unchanged after regeneration projects were completed. Therefore, there was a requirement to promote social regeneration or social inclusion measures as a vital component through which the multiple aspects of deprivation could be tackled in a holistic and sustainable way (Page, 2006). Addressing the social determinants of health (such as the impact of housing and the environment on mental health; community cohesion and consequent participation in employment and education, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and lower income families) was emphasised. This approach is also supported by the WHO assertion that the social cohesion of the community and the sense of trust and collective worth depends on the quality of the neighbourhood and urban design (Ormandy, 2009). Sustainable regeneration of communities, therefore, involves the creation of high quality housing, effective public services (particularly addressing education, health, family support, employment opportunities, poverty and low incomes), safety and security. These various aspects must, therefore, be treated as integral, of equal value, and interdependent, in order to ensure that adequate living standards are provided to citizens (UK Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010c).

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government’s 2005 Housing Policy Framework: Building Sustainable Communities showed that almost €1 billion had been spent on regeneration and remedial works for local authority housing estates since 1997. It outlined the intention to roll out a programme of regeneration for all run-down estates, nationwide and a prioritisation
of maintenance and management of social housing estates. It stated that “it is not acceptable that the social housing domain should be compared unfavourably with private housing development...the Government will ensure that new housing is designed and planned on quality principles, includes an appropriate housing mix and provides necessary social infrastructure” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005, p4). Guidelines for regeneration of social housing estates were also developed (Norris and Treadwell Shine, 2006).

In 2007, two new special purpose Government Agencies were established in legislation to drive the regeneration of disadvantaged areas in Limerick City (one Northside and one Southside (Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2007). The Master plan included planned investment of €3 billion from combined public and private sources to build and replace 7,240 homes, including a mix of 2,450 local authority houses and 4,790 private dwellings. By early 2008, Dublin City Council was planning the regeneration of at least twelve large, disadvantaged local authority estates in the inner city, involving over 2,000 dwellings of its stock of 11,000 inner city flats, through the PPP mechanism.

These PPP projects were viewed as ‘flagships’ and ‘catalysts’ for regeneration across Ireland (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a, 2007b). Regeneration areas were also supported by state funded, area-based social inclusion programmes, implemented through national anti-poverty policies and schemes, including the community development programme, community drugs and youth services, Family Resource Centres, after school clubs, and youth services (Fahey et al, 2011). At an implementation level, the most advanced regeneration project is Ballymun, while other smaller projects such as Fatima have also been developed. We will now discuss the outcomes from these.

Analysis of Irish Regeneration Project Outcomes

The case studies of Ballymun and Fatima in Dublin demonstrate the potential of regeneration to radically transform areas of urban disadvantage, and while the projects require sustainability strategies post-regeneration, they have significantly addressed inequalities of housing and social disadvantage, and therefore, can be considered to be examples of good practice regeneration.

Ballymun

The only comprehensive audit of regeneration in Ireland was undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General (2007) into Ballymun. The findings highlight that the successful regeneration of disadvantaged areas requires substantial state investment over a long time period. The project started in 1997 and was estimated to be completed by 2006 at a cost of €442 million. It is now expected to be completed in 2014 - eight years later than planned and the estimated state investment will be €942 million. Nonetheless, regeneration has radically transformed Ballymun. Most of the tower blocks have been demolished and over 1,600 new social housing units, a small amount of voluntary housing units (105) and 1,200 private and affordable units were built. In addition, a range of new infrastructure was provided, including a Garda station, new roads, parks, neighbourhood centres and state of the art community facilities. Private investors built the private apartments, new hotels and commercial and retail units.

Most notably, the regeneration incorporated a significant, innovative and landmark social regeneration plan (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2012). This was underpinned by the logic that only social regeneration could ensure sustainable regeneration and, thus, ensure the significant public and private investment was protected and used effectively. Social regeneration in Ballymun is “about improving community safety, health, education, recreation, arts and cultural services; providing access to community services, and continuing the development of a strong community sector. It includes skills training, access to qualifications and community learning and empowerment”.

Particular success was achieved through partnerships and interagency networks between various state agencies and bodies, community and voluntary organisations and local residents. For example, an independent evaluation of the Ballymun School Attendance Community Action Initiative shows that in two short years Ballymun almost halved the gap in whole school attendance between Ballymun and the national average (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2012).

Also the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme implemented by Young Ballymun, in partnership with parents and children - jointly resourced by the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department for Children and Youth Affairs - has supported this and improved learning and well-being outcomes for children, young people and their families. It involves a sequence of evidence-based, integrated services from pregnancy and birth through adolescence to adulthood. Key to the success of the strategy has been its multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-community design and delivery, as well as its emphasis on evidence, training and capacity
building. Ensuring that all children, young people and their families are actively supported to reach their full learning and well-being potential is fundamental to social regeneration and to making a contribution to tackling area-based child poverty. Community safety also emerged as the primary social priority (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2012).

However, criticisms of the Ballymun regeneration process were highlighted in a report commissioned by Ballymun Area Partnership in 2006 into residents’ views of participation (Ballymun Partnership, 2006). It raised questions about the quality and effectiveness of community engagement in Ballymun. An overwhelming majority (82%) of Ballymun residents surveyed did not feel they had a voice when it came to matters concerning the Ballymun area and a similar figure (80.5%) said they did not receive enough information. Furthermore, the results from the 2011 Census reveal the failure to address historically high unemployment levels in parts of Ballymun, as they recorded some of the highest unemployment rates in the country, with unemployment in Ballymun Ward B at an extremely high level of 44 per cent.

Fatima Mansions

The Fatima Mansions PPP project in Dublin’s inner city commenced in 2004 and, by 2009, had delivered the demolition of the estate of 280 social housing units and the construction of 150 Public Housing Units for existing tenants, 70 affordable dwellings, 394 private residential apartments, a community neighbourhood centre, a leisure centre, a crèche, an outdoor all-weather pitch, and retail and community enterprise units. It also included a social regeneration plan, for which €6.5m was provided for community development, leadership and capacity building; family support; education support; training; community health; youth issues; arts and culture; employment; a social enterprise plan; and estate management (Hearne, 2011).

The most important aspect to the success of Fatima was its timing, as the project was close to completion when the property crash occurred. Other significant contributions to its success included: the strong action, vision and participation by tenants, supported by the local community and voluntary projects; the social regeneration plan and associated employment opportunities; the availability of a super affordable tenant purchase scheme, which ensured resident leaders stayed in the new community; support given to a number of particularly disadvantaged families; the reduction in the social housing community making it more manageable; the eviction of a small number of extremely disadvantaged and highly disruptive residents; and the design integration between social and private units (Fatima Groups United, 2004, 2006; Hearne 2011; Fahey et al, 2011).

The eviction of disruptive tenants from disadvantaged neighbourhoods under re-generation schemes is quite a common theme in areas that are being regenerated (Fahey et al, 2011).

There have also been challenges here, and in Ballymun in achieving the social mix as private investors bought many of the private units and then rented them out in the private rented market which tends to be a transient, and in some cases, lower income population. There is a high vacancy rate of newly constructed retail units built as part of the economic enterprise development strategies within the regeneration projects. The economic sustainability of aspects of the social enterprise plans are also in doubt, given their dependence on rental revenue, which has proven difficult to achieve in the economic crisis. Notably, the post regeneration sustainability is most at risk from anti-social behaviour, intimidation, and illegal drug related issues that have persisted in these areas, despite the regeneration.

Property Crash and Austerity

The property crash revealed the extent of over reliance of the regeneration projects on private sector funding and a booming housing market. As property prices plunged, the private residential and commercial aspects were no longer deemed economically viable by private finance and all of the PPP projects collapsed, except for Fatima which was mostly completed at the time of the crash. In Limerick, for example, to date, there have been very few new houses constructed, as the emphasis has been on demolition and the relocation of residents. The Limerick Regeneration Agency was closed in April 2012 and its functions brought in under the Limerick local authority. The former head of the Limerick Regeneration Agency stated that after five years of this regeneration some families are worse off (Irish Times, 2012).

The recession has impacted on Ballymun and Fatima in terms of the high vacancy rates of enterprise units. In Ballymun, central sites, owned by private developers, remain derelict, with little prospect of development in the short-to medium term. The state investment aspects of regeneration were radically reduced from 2008 onwards by the imposition of a series of austerity budgets (see Table 4).
Table 4 Government Investment in National Regeneration Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total (£ million)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>97,250</td>
<td>116,795</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin city flat complexes</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork city</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tralee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dáil Statements, various Ministers for the Environment, 2008-2012

As a result, the regeneration Master Plans for the areas in the National Regeneration Programme have been reduced, redeveloped and rescaled and are now predominantly based on Exchequer funding, with the voluntary housing sector being included as a new partner in delivering the programme, and as a mechanism to access additional, private finance. Up to this point, the involvement of housing associations in regeneration projects has been very limited. Examples include the involvement of Sonas, Hail, Sophia and Clúid in Ballymun.

Clúid developed a new sheltered housing complex of 41 housing units, landscaped gardens, an office, a laundry, a resource room and communal facilities for the elderly in Ballymun. Clúid’s first involvement in regeneration in Ireland involved the stock transfer and refurbishment of 138 dwellings from Dublin City Council in the St. Joseph’s Mansions estate in Dublin 1.

The physical redevelopment set out to rectify the high degree of building dereliction, the ineffective use of the site, the quality and size of units, as well as the failure of open deck access and design elements that propagated anti-social behaviour. Construction finished in August 2002 and delivered 105 apartments, with a mix of 48 general needs apartments and 57 sheltered housing units, and a semi-private communal courtyard, with play facilities for children and amenity areas.

Clúid was also involved in the regeneration in Cranmore Estate in Sligo. Respond! Housing Association undertook a regeneration project of the Glen flats in Cork City in partnership with Cork City Council in 2006. It delivered a new 5-storey development, including 51 homes and a day centre for older persons.

The retrenchment in government spending has also affected these regeneration areas significantly, by the reduction in funding for voluntary community organisations - in particular community development projects, youth services, partnership companies, and community drugs projects. These were more severe than the reductions in overall government spending. From 2008 to 2012, government spending on current services fell by 2.82%. Table 5 outlines the much greater reductions in government funding for the voluntary and community sector, in the same period, particularly the community development programme and voluntary social housing. Employment in the sector may be down to 36,638 by the end of 2015.

Table 5 Government Funding Reductions for Voluntary and Community Sector 2008-2012

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General government spending</td>
<td>-2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services</td>
<td>-4.5% to -29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary social housing (capital assistance scheme)</td>
<td>-54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National supports</td>
<td>-48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community Development Programme</td>
<td>-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiatives against drugs</td>
<td>-29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support projects</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormant accounts</td>
<td>-87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Harvey, 2013
In response to funding reductions, voluntary and community organisations have sharply reduced their spending, their last options being the dismissal of staff and the closure of services. It is estimated that by the end of 2013, the voluntary and community sector will have contracted by 35% on its 2008 level, leading to a loss of 11,150 jobs in the sector (Harvey, 2012). In 2010, funding was withdrawn for regeneration development workers in Dublin. The community employment scheme was also significantly altered, as its training budget was reduced and the length of time for participants was reduced. The abolition of additional payments for those with disabilities and lone parents severely impacted on the vital role that this scheme plays in the social regeneration of these areas. The previously accepted role of community development as central in the promotion of social inclusion, capacity building and empowerment of these marginalised communities has been undermined and its capacity drastically reduced (Community Worker’s Co-op, 2012).

These reductions in spending have been compounded by the reduction in resources and the employment embargo for key, area-based, social public services, such as the Gardaí, local authority estate managers and local health services - also by the closure of state agencies, valued by and important for the functioning of an effective voluntary and community sector. The Comprehensive Review of Expenditure holds out the prospect of further contraction in education, community employment, housing, mental health, disability and especially services for the protection and welfare of children (Harvey, 2012).

The regeneration communities, which have high concentrations of ‘at risk of poverty’, groups, such as lone parents, people who are unemployed, or people with low skills and education levels are, thus, being negatively impacted from multiple directions by austerity.

Census 2011 results, outlined in Table 6, demonstrate the unemployment crisis that is affecting these disadvantaged areas. CSO statistics also show that 50% of lone parent households delayed or missed paying a bill over the past two years. The Survey on Income and Living Conditions in Ireland shows that, in the 12 months from 2010 to 2011, the percentage of those ‘at risk of poverty’ increased from 14.7% to 16%. In 2011, almost one quarter (24.5%) of the population experienced two or more types of enforced deprivation. This compares with 22.6% in 2010 and 11.8% in 2007. Ireland’s ‘consistent poverty’ rate has soared over the past three years with the ‘consistent poverty’ rate for children rising from 8.8% in 2010 to 9.3% in 2011. 250,000 children are ‘at risk of poverty’. The crisis is also increasing the risk of homelessness (European Commission, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Division</th>
<th>Unemployment rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John’s A, Limerick City</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford No. 1 Urban, Co. Longford</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larchville, Waterford City</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun B, Dublin City</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knocknaheeny, Cork City</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallaght-Killinarden, South Dublin</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athy West Urban, Co. Kildare</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennis No. 2 Urban, Co Clare</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clondalkin-Rowlagh, South Dublin</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullingar North Urban, Co. Westmeath</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick-on-Suir Urban, South Tipperary</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tralee Urban, Co. Kerry</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Statistics Office, Census 2011

Lessons from Regeneration

Participation

The successful regeneration projects (notably Fatima and Ballymun) have given high priority to resident participation. There has also been a strong commitment to this at government policy level, reflected in the statement of the former Minister for Social Protection, Eamon O’Cuiv TD (June 2010):

The regeneration of long-established communities requires sensitive management, and, for long-term success, a consensus approach to the development of proposals is important. In this regard, the City Council, in addition to addressing ongoing management and maintenance issues, is working with residents to develop regeneration solutions that are acceptable to the community and that can be implemented.

In theory, the participation of local residents ensures the projects are determined by the needs of the local community. This approach will gain their support and will, therefore, achieve the ultimate goal of all stakeholders - the delivery of successful regeneration within the shortest possible timeframe. The experience of exclusion and disempowerment by many communities has led them to adopt a
position of extreme cynicism and caution toward state institutions, particularly given the delays and collapse of regeneration projects, despite the communities’ best efforts. Their inclusion at the highest level provides some guarantees to address this. Residents are the ones with the real-life experience and authentic expertise on what works and what does not in managing and designing estates. Therefore, their voice should be listened to very carefully, and continuously, through the process. Ensuring residents’ voices are heard is, however, not an easy task.

Expecting such residents to be able to engage as an equal partner, simply by inviting them to be present at a meeting where decisions are being made has been found to be a naïve, ineffective and unfair approach. The key to achieving equal and adequate participation, therefore, is for residents and their representatives to receive on-going support, training and education from independent expertise. They require this, in particular, to develop their own positions and views on such key aspects as physical and social master planning and regeneration. These include aspects such as: what is good physical design for these estates, in terms of height, density, mixing or clustering of public units, open spaces and the number of public and private units; defining what community facilities are required; and what is the level of social need on the estate (Hearne, 2011).

Where it is successful, participation is supported by considerable resources in order to address the inequalities that exist between the local community and other stakeholders. Most residents do not have the professional training, technical expertise and language in relation to the complex issues associated with regeneration such as planning, architecture, design, social analysis and knowledge of state and private organisational structures. They are also dealing with issues of poor literacy, lack of self-esteem and many other disadvantages (Bissett, 2008; Dillon, 2004; Drudy and Punch, 2005; Participation and Practice of Rights, 2009; Taylor, 2011).

Estate-based community workers, who interact on a daily basis with residents; supporting them to participate in regeneration processes; addressing the day-to-day estate, family and anti-social issues, while also engaging residents in processes of personal development, education and capacity building have been particularly effective in this regard. Hiring local residents to train up in these roles and act as champions of the regeneration project has been found to be very successful. The local, estate-based regeneration board structures and consultation processes, including independent chairs and equality of representation between community and statutory groups (equal numbers) has also been effective - as seen in the regeneration of Fatima Mansions (Redmond and Hearne, 2011).

The Importance of Social Inclusion Measures and Social Regeneration

A key lesson from the regeneration projects researched is the requirement for a social sustainability plan that has an adequate budget and is given the same priority as the physical plan. Ideally, the social aspects should be developed in parallel to the physical designs and the plan should have a community and economic sustainability strategy that puts jobs, social enterprise and community empowerment at its core (Fahey et al, 2011). A challenge for everyone, however, is as noted by the Ballymun Regeneration (2012):

“Measuring the success of neighbourhood renewal and regeneration initiatives is challenging. The essential elements that make regeneration and renewal effective are qualitative – pertaining to complex dynamic social systems unique to neighbourhoods, and demanding active community engagement in the process - whether at the level of individuals, groups or networks. While physical construction and demolition is relatively easy to track, agreeing key indicators and targets for social regeneration is more difficult” (Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. 2012, 63).

Social inclusion measures that have been implemented as part of social regeneration initiatives include:

- Improved estate management and policing
- Community development and engagement
- Targeted local employment projects and local employment clauses within contracts and tenders, to ensure that a certain proportion of employment within the construction or consultation is sourced from the local community
- Community enterprise; skills training; literacy schemes and prevention and early intervention strategies for vulnerable children and families. This includes pre-school, after-school, school support, community and youth work projects
- Targeted family support and social amenities.

(Drudy & Punch, 2005; Fatima Groups United, 2006; Hearne, 2011).
Indeed, progress in the provision of intensive, high-quality support services for acutely disadvantaged households is one of the most positive developments of the past decade in services for disadvantaged areas. The need for these services arises particularly in the fields of health, education and criminal justice. The role played by the acutely disadvantaged in the dynamics of neighbourhood decline in poor areas provides an important justification for giving them a high priority in service provision, in addition to the justification that arises from the extreme distress that they themselves suffer from. Social programmes, supported by regeneration should be geared towards filling gaps in existing services and developing partnerships, rather than duplicating existing initiatives (Barnardos, 2011; Fahey et al, 2011).

The June 2011 Housing Policy Statement reaffirmed this through its commitment to addressing, in a holistic manner, the various causes of spatial deprivation: “The problems afflicting parts of Dublin and Limerick cities and other large urban centres have been significantly driven by a too narrow conception of housing support in the past. Housing supports should be better aligned with broader supports for the physical, social and economic renewal and rebirth of these areas” (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011, 3).

In March 2012, the Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Jan O’Sullivan TD, reiterated that the current approach is that regeneration should deliver “more than just an improvement in the housing standards of an area, by taking a broader approach to addressing the socio-economic and infrastructural deficits that contribute to the social exclusion of the community.” However, there remains a difficulty in engaging state agencies other than local authorities and the Gardaí who are responsible for various aspects of social regeneration - notably the Health Services Executive, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Regeneration Delays can Destabilise and Destroy Communities

The complete destruction of communities can occur, due to prolonged delays in regeneration and an over-emphasis on demolition and the relocation of tenants. Several estates that commenced regeneration have been subsequently either completely emptied or left with significant vacancy rates, due to the process of de-tenanting in preparation for demolition. The destabilisation, decay and destruction of existing communities are a significant and irreplaceable loss to the individuals and communities and to the social, historical and cultural fabric of our towns and cities. It is also a violation of the human rights of these communities. Once de-tenanting commences on an estate, management and maintenance tended to be reduced, and this, combined with high vacancy rates, has resulted in estates becoming more difficult to live on leading to a ‘downward spiral’ effect where the remaining tenants become disillusioned and want to leave. The process has resulted in the removal and dispersal of existing working-class communities, thus irreversibly dismantling the original social structures.

The resident who remain are left waiting in poor conditions are, generally, those suffering the most intense social and economic inequalities, such as high levels of vulnerability, poverty and disadvantage (the elderly, lone parents, single men). Thus, the cycle of decline and decay intensifies further (Bissett, 2008; Dillon, 2004; Hearne, 2011; Tenants First, 2009).

The pressure communities are under is revealed by the case of Dolphin House, where residents turned, in desperation, to the Irish state’s commitments to international human rights covenants, to try get action on the sub-standard conditions of their housing units and progress on regeneration (Redmond and Hearne, 2011). The conditions were found to have significantly deleterious impacts on tenants’ health. The Irish Human Rights Commission condemned the sub-standard living conditions as deplorable and asserted that these conditions clearly contravened the rights of residents under the United Nations Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, to which Ireland is a signatory (Irish Times, 2010). Furthermore, in a legal case taken by a Dolphin Tenant in relation to sewage overflows Circuit Court President, Mr Justice Matthew Deery, stated that:

“The evidence leads me inevitably to conclude that his apartment at Dolphin House was unfit for human habitation and in breach of the council’s contractual duty of care under the Housing Act” (Irish Times, 2011).

The more successful regeneration projects have supported the intrinsic value of the existing, mainly poor, communities staying ‘in situ’ to become sustainable. Of particular importance has been the delivery of high-quality and effective estate management, both pre- and post- regeneration. Efficient and effective responses from local authorities, the Gardaí and the community to problems on the estate, as they arise, (such as serious anti-social behaviour of gangs; intimidation and drug-dealing; issues of allocations; and operating from the principles of community development; providing family support services and continuing to work with the residents to try to improve living conditions) have also been found
to be critical. This, therefore, highlights the necessity and responsibility on local authorities to ensure that the regeneration process sustains the existing communities and conditions do not deteriorate.

**Insufficient Co-ordination, Institutional Capacity and Certainty**

Greater levels of inter-agency planning, co-ordination and delivery are required to address the complex needs of regeneration areas. There is insufficient inter-agency co-ordination and implementation of practice within projects and at city, regional, and national level across the regeneration projects and between local authorities, government departments, and other stakeholders. While there are area-based, holistic regeneration Master Plans, there are insufficient targets and schedules; benchmarks and monitoring; clear, dedicated funding; timetables for implementation, and sufficient mechanisms for community participation.

The capacity of existing local authorities to develop, drive and maintain momentum of regeneration has been criticised as being weak and ineffective (Fitzgerald, 2012). The practice of regeneration is too often determined locally, on the basis of the particular perspectives of the relevant local authority officials and the determination and organisation of local community and resident organisations to articulate and assert their vision. Regeneration interventions are too often ad hoc and piecemeal, without a strategic approach to their role. There is a greater requirement of integration and cooperation between regeneration and statutory and community social inclusion programmes. Regeneration projects must also be subject to greater certainty, in the context of costs and timeframes as, up to this point, the risk analysis by the Department of the Environment has been weak and should have been built into the process from the outset (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2007).

**Rights-based Approaches to Regeneration**

Increasingly, regeneration is being benchmarked by human right-based approaches that assess whether regeneration is meeting the state’s obligations under international human rights instruments (Hearne, 2013; Participation and Practice of Rights, 2009). The relevant rights in regeneration include: addressing the right to adequate standards of living, housing, health, education, social protection and participation; and effective remedies for violations and non-discrimination. In the Irish context, these are covered under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 25 states:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.²

Also relevant here is the Council of Europe Revised European Social Charter (RESC). Article 30 states:

> With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the Parties undertake:

  a. to take measures within the framework of an overall and co-ordinated approach to promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, to, in particular, employment, housing, training, education, culture and social and medical assistance;

  b. to review these measures with a view to their adaptation if necessary.³

This means that, for the situation to be compatible with the treaty, a States Party must:

  a. Adopt the necessary legal, financial and operational means of ensuring steady progress towards achieving the goals laid down by the Charter;

  b. Maintain meaningful statistics on needs, resources and results;

  c. Undertake regular reviews of the impact of the strategies adopted;

  d. Establish a timetable and not defer indefinitely the deadline for achieving the objectives of each stage;

  e. Pay close attention to the impact of the policies adopted on each of the categories of persons concerned, particularly the most vulnerable.⁴

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⁴ Complaint No. 39/2006, paras 55-56.
Housing associations are charitable, not-for-profit, bodies, with a social mission to provide housing for families on low incomes, older people, people with disabilities and homeless households. Their properties are not sold on the private market. Their role in social housing in Ireland has grown significantly in recent decades from 15 per cent of social housing in 1997 to 18.6 per cent (25,442 dwellings) by 2006. In excess of €2 billion has been invested by the State in the sector since the 1980s and they now manage over 27,000 social housing units (Irish Council for Social Housing, 2012). The Government's Housing Policy Statement, published in June 2011, proposed a radical change in their role in the provision and funding for social housing stating that: “approved housing bodies will be at the heart of the Government’s vision for housing provision.” This is due to constrained funding levels available for local authority construction programmes and government confidence in the capacity of the housing association sector. It encourages the use of loan finance (from both commercial lending institutions and the Housing Finance Agency) to reduce reliance on capital funding from the Exchequer, to further promote the evolution of mixed tenure communities through the provision of housing for market sale and rent, as well as social renting and to offer a new path to ownership via sales to tenants under incremental purchase arrangements.

Housing associations have been funded under Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1992, which enables housing authorities to provide assistance to approved housing bodies in respect of the provision of housing, through two capital funding schemes, the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS). Under CAS funding of up to 100% of the approved cost is available for the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of persons with specific categories of housing need, including older people, people with an intellectual, physical or mental health disability, the homeless, returning emigrants and victims of domestic violence. The Department provides the funding and the relevant local authority administers the project. The CLSS was discontinued in 2010.

The overall level of CAS funding has declined substantially in recent years by 68% from €156 million in 2008 to €50m in 2012. The Government is focused on finding other funding mechanisms that will provide additional sources of capital funding and will grow the supply of new social housing. Such mechanisms will include options to purchase, build to lease, and the sourcing of loan finance by approved housing bodies for construction and acquisition.

For example, the Capital Advance Leasing Facility provides an up-front, equity stake of up to 30% of the property value to approved voluntary housing bodies, who raise private finance to acquire or build new social housing units, using leasing payments to repay loans, in respect of their equity share. The Department also wants to explore how best to use the equity accrued in housing association housing stock to leverage additional new supply. The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009 introduced a new approach to the sale of social housing whereby social housing tenants, including tenants of housing associations, could acquire new local authority houses and existing apartments under the Incremental Purchase Scheme (IPS). There is no provision at present for the purchase of individual houses by tenants of housing associations, but it is likely that central government policy wishes to give housing associations tenants’ equal rights to local authority tenants (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012).

Tenancies in the voluntary housing sector will be brought under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board when The Residential Tenancies (Amendment Bill is passed into law later this year. This will allow housing associations and their tenants access to the dispute resolution services, such as mediation and adjudication, currently available to private sector tenants.

The move from capital funded programmes of construction and acquisition by housing associations to a more revenue funded regime presents challenges for them. The Department is developing an enabling, regulatory framework for the sector that will provide support and assurance, both to the sector itself and to its external partners, as it takes on the expanded role envisaged for it in the policy statement. This will underline its status as a viable and attractive investment opportunity for financial institutions. The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), the national representative body for the housing association sector, explains that, against the backdrop of diminishing capital funding, non-profit housing associations have been proactive by pioneering innovative funding models and working to attract private finance.
However, the body highlights that “the level of expectation on the sector is significant in many areas, given the drastic cuts in capital funding and the rapidly changing model for financing social housing in Ireland”. Housing associations are key investors in local communities and what they contribute is much more than simply bricks and mortar. The ancillary services such as community development, training, care and support services are all vital to the continued development of sustainable communities. Therefore, the ICSH (2012) is asking the Government to: “Allow capital funding allocated to local authorities for regeneration and stock transfer to be used by housing associations as part of a mixed funding model to stretch capital investment through the injection of private loan finance”.
The value of family support, neighbourhood networks, community engagement and local leadership are critical to the survival and development of disadvantaged communities and should be sustained, not displaced.
3. Case Studies of Stock Transfer and Housing Association Regeneration

3.1 Introduction

Two estates were chosen for evaluation, in consultation with the steering committee. This section of the report describes the results of that evaluation. Before examining the case studies, we summarise the Clúid guide on stock transfer, as it allows a comparison with the actual regeneration process in the case study estates. The first is St. Patrick’s Estate in Ballina, Co. Mayo. The second is St. Michael’s Road in Longford town. St. Patrick’s estate was a typical local authority scheme of mainly two storey, detached dwellings, whereas St. Michael’s consisted of single story cottage dwellings, approximately one hundred years old. Both these schemes were funded through the Capital Loans and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).

3.2 Clúid Housing Association Guidance on Stock Transfer and Regeneration

As there is a complete absence of policy or protocol on stock transfer from either central or local government, Clúid developed its own guide on stock transfer and regeneration in 2009. The guide outlines three strategic options for regeneration. The option chosen will depend on the size of the estate and the degree and depth of physical, social and economic problems, as well as the resources that can be devoted to the project.

Option 1: The Bricks and Mortar Approach

This involves the refurbishment of existing dwellings to a modern standard and may involve some demolition. It would also involve a ‘sustainable long-term housing management strategy for the estate’, particularly bearing in mind that there may be legacy issues, such as non-payment of rent, illegal dumping, anti-social behaviour and uncontrolled animals. This option would, at a minimum, involve the association’s housing management team, the project management team, the local authorities and the residents.

Option 2: The Inclusion of Community Facilities as Part of the Redevelopment

This would incorporate Option 1, as well as the development of community facilities. It would ‘go beyond the production of a building and seek to engage the wider community in the development of a range of services’. It would involve the employment of a community liaison officer.

Option 3: Total Physical and Social Regeneration of the Area

This option would involve detailed analysis of the nature of the estate’s problems, the development of a master plan, the setting up of a regeneration forum and a multi-agency approach to regeneration from the start of the process.
When it comes to the stock transfer process, the guide recommends the following (Table 7):

**Table 7 Clúid Guidance on the Stock Transfer Process**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initial discussions with the local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Internal assessment by the housing association (Risk analysis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | Consultation on the option of stock transfer  
   i. Door-to-door survey of residents (introduces residents to the association and to what the issues are on the estate)  
   ii. Open door/public meetings  
   iii. Residents’ charter  
   iv. On-going visit by the association  
   v. Consultation with the wider community  
   vi. Transparency and clarity in community consultation (for example, don’t promise what cannot be delivered)  
   vii. Ballot (depending on circumstances). |
| 4 | Transfer order from local authority to the association |
| 5 | Transfer agreement |
| 6 | Policy regarding privately owned units on the estate |
| 7 | Following transfer to the association:  
   i. Provide more information on the association  
   ii. Pre-tenancy courses  
   iii. Tackle estate issues quickly (for example, illegal dumping)  
   iv. Demonstrate high quality service to tenants. |
| 8 | New tenancy agreements |

With regard to the design and construction of the new estate, the guide is clear that the input of residents is crucial in order to understand the current problems on the estate, as well as to suggest ways in which the estate can be re-designed. Clúid has made clear both in the guide and in their project briefs (see box below), their commitment to an open, transparent and consultative process of regeneration.

Clúid believes that in order for any regeneration project to succeed in the long term it has been proven not only desirable but necessary to involve the people who will be living in the scheme. If a stock transfer/ regeneration project is to be a success in terms of a regeneration of the social fabric of the community as well as the physical, it is imperative that the residents buy into the regeneration process. In order to encourage this buy in, it is important to involve as many of the residents as possible in the process from the beginning. It is even more important to involve the residents in the decision making, in as far as is practical, and to be very clear from the outset as to what level of involvement they can have in the decision making and who else has decision making powers and the extent of these powers. It is equally important to encourage the long term involvement of the residents in the management of the estate and to promote active community involvement to improve the stability of the community.

(Clúid Housing Association, Project Brief, St. Michael’s Road).

While this commitment is critically important and welcome to prospective tenants, there are a number of issues or concerns that may arise for tenants thinking of transferring to housing associations, including:

- Tenant purchase
- Successor or inherited tenancies
- Rent levels and service charges
- Ability to transfer from a housing association back to a local authority.

None of these issues are insurmountable but they do set a context in which local authority tenants might view the prospect of transferring. Against that, however, we must set the poor quality of life that exists in some local authority estates in the context of the potential of regeneration and a transformed quality of life if a housing association takes over.
3.3 Case Study 1: St. Patrick’s Estate, Ballina

Overview of Regeneration Programme in St. Patrick’s

St. Patrick’s estate is part of a larger local authority estate in Ballina. Nevertheless, it has had a distinct identity, with a small number of inter-related families dominating the estate in terms of population. The estate originally consisted of 47 social rents dwellings. When the estate was transferred 20 of these units were vacant (Table 8). In addition, 24 tenants had bought their properties from the local authority, under the tenant purchase scheme. Over the course of the regeneration process there were a number of configurations but, in the final stage, 54 new social rented units were completed and 24 dwellings were refurbished. This was inclusive of privately owned units.

Table 8 Regeneration Before and After: St. Patrick’s Estate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-regeneration estate</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Final completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 social housing units (27 tenanted, 20 vacant)</td>
<td>53 new social housing units</td>
<td>54 units were newly built (50 were social, 23 allocated to existing tenants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 social refurbished units</td>
<td>10 social refurbished units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 privately owned</td>
<td>11 privately owned houses housing refurbished owner occupied</td>
<td>19 private units (2 private refurbished, 4 new build private, 13 private 50/50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community room (4 units)</td>
<td>Community centre</td>
<td>On hold. Vacant site at front not effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design out areas for anti-social behaviour –alleys etc. Eliminate back alleys.</td>
<td>Alley ways designed out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play space &amp; safe communal spaces</td>
<td>Play space and well landscaped and designed communal spaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the most significant elements of the regeneration in St. Patrick’s was the long time scale (Table 9). Initial discussions between the local authority and Clúid Housing started in 2002 but the estate was not completed and occupied in 2012. This is explained by a combination of extended consultation and a long process of obtaining funding approval and planning permission.

Table 9 Regeneration Timeline – St. Patrick’s Estate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial discussions with local authority and Clúid</td>
<td>2000-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of stock to Clúid</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and consultation period</td>
<td>2002-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning permission granted</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding granted</td>
<td>January 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction started</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project completed and occupied</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>€13.18 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix 1 for detailed timeline.

Estate Decline and Clúid Transfer

The original St Patrick’s estate was developed by Ballina Urban District Council in the 1970s and comprised of 75 houses and a community centre located in 4 units. By the late 1990s, the estate was suffering from serious social and physical decline. The houses were cold – they were prefab type buildings, with poor heating systems. Windows weren’t closing. There was a low level of maintenance, with dumping in the back alley, problems with rats and derelict houses that the council had left boarded up for years - even decades. Due to the sub-standard condition of these homes and the reputation of the estate, it was difficult to re-let unoccupied houses and, thus, the estate was unsustainable.

There had been a substantial investment in the late 1980s refurbishing the units which improved the structural fabric but did not address the social issues. It degenerated again and the local authority reported that the estate was taking up “a huge proportion” of its maintenance budget. It was the most difficult local authority estate in Ballina. A small number of very large families occupied the majority of the estate. This situation created a strong community but sometimes meant others were intimidated from seeking housing there. Serious anti-social behaviour and violence resulted in frequent injury and damage to the properties. The local authority had effectively failed as a landlord of the estate, as one local councillor explained, “there was insufficient management which created a lot of anti-social behaviour such as the lighting of fires in vacant houses”.

By the late 1990s, the local authority had “reached the end of the road with it (the estate)”, had “no funding”, having failed in proposals to the Department of the Environment, and thus explored the new concept of engaging a voluntary housing association. Discussion and negotiations between Clúid and the local authority in relation to a possible transfer of the estate started in 2000.

Design and Consultation Phase

Discussion and agreement with residents took place prior to transfer through a private ballot. Mayo County Council and Ballina Town Council then made the decision to transfer the stock in the estate to Clúid in 2005 and to support their application to the Department of the Environment for funding to refurbish the estate under the voluntary housing capital grants scheme. In 2006, ownership of the scheme was transferred to Clúid.

The transfer was supported by the elected councillors as Clúid were viewed as “professional people...who had proven capabilities in Sligo and the Ard na Rí estate in Ballina”. The local authority was also enthusiastic, as they believed Clúid would be better able to deal with social issues such as anti-social behaviour, as it was known locally Clúid had evicted someone on a nearby estate. In the period after the transfer, Clúid worked on cleaning up the estate, bricked-up the derelict houses, secured alleyways and implemented a programme of repairs for tenanted dwellings. Table 10 shows the investment in initial regeneration. The clearance of illegal dumping in back alleys was a crucial step by Clúid in demonstrating that they could deliver improvements on the estate. A part-time caretaker was employed to carry-out ongoing maintenance work.

Table 10 Initial Regeneration Costs - St. Patrick’s Estate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Category</th>
<th>Cost €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial enabling, boarding and estate tidying</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decanting, moving and temporary relocating costs</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tender advert/site investigations/surveys</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>143,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clúid Housing Association

There was a lengthy design and consultative process undertaken by Clúid, which commenced soon after the transfer process and continued on up to planning stage and examined a variety of regeneration options. The residents were actively involved in the re-design process, to encourage their ownership and development of solutions to the problems. In addition to public meetings and open days there were one-to-one visits with every resident on the estate, letters informing them of progress at all stages and regular newsletters. Space for growing families, security from anti-social behaviour, supervised play areas, and energy costs were all issues raised by residents in consultation workshops. The biggest challenge at these early stages was getting the existing residents to believe that Clúid would undertake and complete the regeneration. When Clúid took over the estate, the general feeling from the residents was one of despair and doubt that their circumstances would ever improve. The Parkside Community Development Project (CDP) worked in the Summer of 2006 with Ballina Arts Centre, to involve children in the painting of murals on the many blocked-up houses and was tasked with undertaking discussions with residents and other groups on a proposed community facility to generate and encourage community participation in the management and sustainability of the estate.

The Residents Association was very proactive and instrumental in leading a media campaign to draw attention to the need for funding for the regeneration. As the years dragged on, in 2007, residents publicly expressed frustration with the delays and the difficult conditions:

“There is a great community here still. But something needs to be done immediately. We are fed-up waiting for Clúid...We really are Ballina’s forgotten estate. I think it’s only since the new road was built up to the crèche that the rest of [the people of] Ballina are beginning to remember we are here. We’re like a second World War estate”. (Mayo News, Forgotten People, 7th August, 2007).

In 2008, Clúid presented to the then Housing Minister, Batt O’Keeffe regeneration plans for €12 million funding for the estate, that had been agreed with the residents and supported by Mayo County Council. The plans involved the demolition, refurbishment and new build construction of 79 units, including 68 new social housing units (53 newly built, 15 refurbished), and 11 privately owned houses. These included a mix of 2-bed bungalows for the elderly, homes for single parents, properties for those with families but also for those young couples hoping to start new families here in future. This diversity of community was to be reflected throughout the entire estate. It involved considerable re-design of the original estate, such as creating a main spine entrance road and a large area of public open space, including a children’s play area, to provide a central community focus. The plans also included a community facility. The aim of the re-design was to design out areas such as alley ways that supported...
anti-social behaviour; improve the standards of the properties in terms of space and energy usage; and create a new estate that would encourage new people to take up tenancies on the estate and, so, improve the social mix and sustainability of the estate.

In January, 2009 the Minister for Housing announced the allocation of funding of €12.9m for the refurbishment/regeneration programme, to be carried out by Clúid, under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme for voluntary housing bodies. At the announcement the Minister stated:

“This community is hurting...This community needs a lifeline and it needs it now. We need to look beyond a bricks and mortar solution if we are to successfully regenerate this community. We need all the agencies and the local community working together to tackle disadvantage and address pressing need in the area of education and training, employment and social services generally...a collaborative approach to the management of the estate and to focus the efforts of all stakeholders in the future of the estate is necessary”.

To this end, a regeneration forum comprising of Ballina Town Council, Clúid Housing association, the HSE, local Gardaí and the Residents Association representatives was set up to meet monthly to discuss the ongoing sustainability of the estate. By 2009, the estate had 24 privately owned houses, 27 tenanted units, 4 leased units for community development purposes and 20 vacant units. The council facilitated the relocation of some tenants prior to regeneration to newly built council houses elsewhere in the town.

The length of time of the tender/planning process created further frustration, disbelief and negativity among residents. Through 2009, the Residents Association representatives campaigned for the work to commence as soon as possible and expressed fears that the grant was going to be withdrawn due to the economic climate and on-going cutbacks within the Programme for Government. Trust building between the residents and Clúid, which had been worked at so hard and which is so essential to ensuring a stable and sustainable estate, was being eroded. It was a very stressful time for everyone.

For the residents, it was a hugely stressful and emotionally charged time. Having been abandoned for decades they were terrified that it would not actually happen, and that they would be abandoned again. They had little trust that their needs would be met and, so, they pressured Clúid housing officers to try to increase their chances of getting what they needed. The Clúid housing officers explained that they were subject to intimidation and even bullying at times while they worked to try and ensure the resident's needs were met. There were issues in relation to the mandate of the Residents Association and Clúid organised training for them in 2009 and supported them to hold an election in 2010.

The time taken by the process was complicated by the changes necessitated through the design, planning and tender stages. For example, in 2008, Clúid sought the transfer of land at the back of the estate to facilitate better design of the regeneration. This required changes to the plans. The government contract and procurement process also changed midway through. The tender process started in May 2008. Clúid sought tender approval from the Department of the Environment in early 2009 but it wasn’t granted until December 2009, due to an appeal by an unsuccessful contractor. The length of time it took to get approval at various stages from the Department of Environment was highlighted as a significant contribution to delays.

Furthermore, the Department only gave final approval for the specific allocation of funding after the design and tender process. Even after the tender price is agreed they don’t always approve the full amount and lengthy negotiations can ensue.

From Clúid’s perspective, it is a ridiculous system and one which puts the housing association at risk from the disgruntled contractor who, at this point, has put huge resources into tendering for the work. It also meant that if the funding was reduced on what was previously indicated, earlier promises and commitments to residents couldn’t be kept, resulting in further frustration and erosion of trust. It would appear to be more appropriate for the housing body to be made aware by the Department of the funding available at earlier phases, such as at the design phase. This is particularly important when you are working with a living community and trying to maintain their trust.

**Phasing of Regeneration**

Because there were residents living on the estate throughout the construction phase, it was necessary to phase the construction over five phases. Phase One involved new build and the majority of residents were decanted into Phase One when it was completed in October 2011. A pre-tenancy course was held, which facilitated the residents and housing management team to get to know each other before the handovers and to help to nurture community spirit. Clúid wanted to build the maximum number of new houses possible in the first phase, so that it would avoid the necessity of temporary relocations. Thirty five tenants were required to be moved and, so, by delivering 22 new units, they could address the needs of most people – but there were issues around who would be included.
Home Owners and the Regeneration Process

Home owners presented a challenge, as some of them were less favourable towards the regeneration than the tenants. They were very proud of their homes and had put a lot of investment, work and time into improving them. Some houses needed to be purchased and demolished, as part of the redevelopment and, so, those owners were offered compensation. In addition, a 50/50 scheme was offered to the owners of homes not required for the re-design of estate. They only had to come up with 50% of the cost of improving the exterior of their properties. In addition, the local authority offered loans to homeowners to meet their element of the cost of the upgrade.

Some owner occupiers disputed the amount they were being offered to buy their unit as being too little, relative to the value of the property. One home owner stated they were offered €50,000 for their unit by Clúid, while the value at the time was closer to €150,000. Others were promised work to their houses in return for becoming tenants of Clúid. However, some problems arose, as a change in Clúid housing officers meant there wasn’t a record of agreements made with residents. The new Clúid officer wasn’t sure what promises had been made and this led to disputes. Promises that couldn’t be delivered upon were made by one Clúid development officer, in order to minimise the constant pressure the officer was under from the residents. But, ultimately Clúid did not honour any such promises. The high level of staff turnover, prior to 2009 was the cause of a lot of difficulties and misunderstandings. Clúid had three regional directors, several development managers and officers and several housing officers in the project and the only constant was the consultant architect between 2000 and 2009.

A local councillor reported that some home owners came forward looking for advice on the financial implications of their options. The home owners “were sitting on the fence because they were big financial decisions to make. I don’t think tenants got the best advice. There were short term deals offered. Clúid needed the houses for the design. They should have offered financial and legal advice to tenants/residents. A lot of clients would have been vulnerable. It might not have worked out well. For example, vulnerable people who got the right to buy, bought their house, but then they were stuck in a house that they had no money or capability to improve or make agreements with Clúid.” He noted, that in this case such problems didn’t materialise because, “Clúid did very well to work it out and avoid a potentially negative situation.”

The existence of owner occupiers also required a complex negotiation around planning permission. In some cases, boundaries had to be drawn in the planning permissions around the houses of people who didn’t want to be included in the regeneration. A further complication to this situation was the extension of the availability of the tenant purchase option after transfer had taken place. This was insisted upon by elected representatives who wanted to give people the opportunity to buy their home. As a result, a small number of tenants bought their house just before the regeneration was about to start and were able to use their houses as huge leverage, since they were in a location that was essential for the construction phase. Clúid thus required additional funding to buy back these units. This necessitated consent from the Department, which delayed things further. The Department disputed the prices being paid and argued that it was questionable in terms of value for money.

The decanting phase also met the challenge of a tenant who refused to move. Clúid had to threaten him, in the end, with eviction and served him with a notice to quit. The tenant disputed that he had signed over to Clúid. There was no written evidence of the signing of a new tenancy agreement and this created the risk of such a dispute. Some residents (homeowners and tenants) achieved better agreements than others on the estate because they had engaged with the process from the start, or because they lived in a strategic position on the site, which gave them a greater bargaining position. Given the small size of the estate and the close connections of families, it was inevitable that the different deals would be public knowledge and this led to upset and discontent and residents refusing to transfer or sell until they were treated comparably to others.

Some residents then accused Clúid of ‘excluding’ them from the regeneration project. Clúid counters this by explaining that they had a housing officer on site each week for residents to speak to and the project manager met with Residents Association members on a regular basis, as well as at monthly regeneration forum meetings. The housing manager and regional director had also attended meetings with residents, when requested to do so. Clearly, not all residents’ expectations were met to the same extent and this is possibly why some residents expressed a sense of exclusion.

Clúid was trying to find an extremely difficult balance between ensuring equality of treatment of residents, while also ensuring that the momentum of the project, at this crucial stage, was maintained. Clúid had little choice. If tenants or homeowners legally challenged them, or challenged the planning process, it could have held up the regeneration indefinitely and would have cost significantly more than the cost of fulfilling the needs of the residents, as they presented. Also convincing existing homeowners to remain living on the estate helped to maintain the social mix - an important aim of regeneration projects.
Construction

The tender process was completed in December 2009, when J.J Rhattigan was appointed as contractor. Construction began in January 2010. The contractor was praised from all sides. Phase One involved the construction of 23 units which were handed over in October 2011. Phases 2 and 3 were delivered in June and July of 2012 and the remaining houses in Phase 3 and Phase 4 were handed over, as they became available, with the last units handed over in December 2012. Table 11 outlines the content of the phases.

The final regeneration comprised of 79 units of housing, incorporating a mix of two and three bed bungalows and two, three, four and five-bed two storey houses. Fifty four units were newly built, 50 of which were social units and 4 private units. Twenty units were refurbished, 10 of which were social units and the remainder privately owned. Thirteen of these owners availed of the 50/50 package of external works. In total, 60 units were made available for social housing and 23 of these units were allocated to tenants living on the estate at the time of the regeneration. Nineteen units remain in private ownership on the estate. The last three houses in the St. Patrick’s Estate Regeneration Project were handed over to tenants on the 22nd of February 2012.

Table 11  Housing Content of Phases Delivered in St. Patrick’s Regeneration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
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<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Phase 4</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Immediate Regeneration Outcomes

A resident’s representative said the regeneration would benefit not just the estate itself, but the town overall:
A stakeholder stated controversially that “It would have been cheaper to demolish the estate but you would have had to move the community and would have dispersed the community…But I felt that the estate should have been demolished. It would have been cheaper to buy 30 houses for the remaining residents – someone would accuse me of being a terrorist breaking up the community – we could have two football pitches and a community building and wouldn’t have the concern for the future.”

Comments on success of the regeneration included:

“It was a great idea – fair play to Clúid – for doing the refurb of the houses its fabulous (Youth & community development organisations).

The landscape and quality of finish is great (Youth & community development group).

DCELG: In terms of the high quality of the design, the build - the scale of the works – giving a house for a house to private owners and replacement for social housing. It was of its time – it would be the ideal. You couldn’t replicate it. Everything is what you think social housing should be. Clúid designed it to a very high spec. It set a very high standard.

Once St. Pats was built they wanted to come back. Once upon a time no one wanted to get into St. Pats. Now everyone wants to get in.”

“Clúid as a voluntary body are doing a good job managing the estate. There are no headlines in the paper. All that is gone … There hasn’t been any conflict or any move from the residents to set up an overseeing housing authority with us. We haven’t been asked to. There is also no significant turnover of tenancies.”

Local authority official

Post Regeneration Phase: Challenges and Potential

Community centre

The original plans included the development of a new community centre and funding and a site for it appears to be available. The need for it is clear, based on the large number of families with young children on the estate, and the extent of the elderly and lone parent population. There had been a community centre on the estate before which was used for after-school activities and festivals. Stakeholders, including Clúid officials and the local authority, are supportive of the need for a community centre, which would act as a “base for state agencies such as the Gardaí to build a relationship with the community, by sitting in for an hour and listening to residents’ issues” (local authority official).

It would be a physical space to bring together the various agencies that had committed to the regeneration forum. It could offer, given the absence of a community centre in the wider Parkside area, an opportunity for cross-community activities with other estates and mixing of various groups within the community - a place for residents to have meetings etc. There are complex reasons as to why the community centre has not been developed. In particular, it has been affected by the closure, in 2010, of the Parkside CDP, a key potential driver of the project. The local authority points to the “lack of tangible community support prepared to work on a management committee to run the centre”. Clúid highlights that it does not have the staff to run the centre and wouldn’t have sufficient usage of the building, so it felt it would only be feasible if residents and different community and youth organisations took on the responsibility of management.

Another rationale was offered by the community and voluntary groups who stated that none of the state agencies – the local authority; Gardaí, health board etc. were prepared to be the anchor tenant necessary to facilitate the centre’s sustainability. A number of attempts were made to get groups, state agencies and residents together to explore the development and management of the centre but these were abandoned. It was highlighted also that local residents were reluctant to facilitate the wider community to be involved (although this is disputed by the residents). There was also criticism of how that process was developed, with no forum being set up in the community to develop it. Instead, it was done through a public meeting where volunteers were randomly selected, rather than through elections. These randomly selected volunteers then didn’t maintain their involvement afterwards. The failure to develop the community centre reflects the wider difficulties that became apparent in the regeneration in relation to community engagement, development, sustainability and social regeneration.

Residents’ engagement, community development and community sustainability

A clear gap exists in St. Patricks in a number of areas that can be classified as social regeneration or community development. There are serious social issues in the estate and wider community, typical of such marginalised communities - low-self confidence and self-esteem, poverty, low education participation, criminal anti-social behaviour, vulnerability and isolation, high rates of unemployment and long term unemployment.

The Minister correctly highlighted, at the announcement of the regeneration project, what was required to address these issues: “We need all the agencies and the local community working together to tackle disadvantage and address pressing need in the area of education and training, employment and social services generally”. 
However, there hasn’t been a detailed social analysis of the social issues, such as identifying the needs of the vulnerable and isolated residents in this disadvantaged area and co-ordinating interventions from state services. There is an absence of structured co-operation between the state, local residents and community and voluntary services. There is also little evidence of community development support being available for the residents to continue to organise themselves and advocate around their issues; to develop their capacity; to organise community events that bring the community together and increase community spirit and reduce potential tensions; to develop an awareness of emerging tensions and issues and to be in a position to mediate solutions before they escalate, particularly for young people; to engage with surrounding estates, and to provide pathways for those in social need to connect to state services such as health, family support, welfare support, schools etc. It is reported there is poor communication between people from St. Patricks and surrounding estates. It would be expected that such a group as the regeneration forum would be responsible for trying to address some of these issues. However, the forum did not develop such capacity and followed a similar trajectory to the community centre.

The forum was set up in February 2010, as part of the conditions of the loan approval from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The local authority was responsible for setting up, organising and chairing the monthly steering group meetings, which were to include representatives from Mayo and Ballina Councils, Clúid, the residents association, Parkside CDP, the Gardaí, the HSE, the contractor and an employer’s representative. However, it did not function effectively. Clúid offered to take responsibility for it, but were firmly told by the local authority that it was their responsibility.

This reveals a serious risk to the potential sustainability, long term viability and success of the estate in the post-regeneration phase. There is a demonstrable and accepted need for the on-the-ground community development and coordination that can bring various groups together and get over stumbling blocks to ensure opportunities such as the development of the community centre are not lost and that social need is met.

Other worrying issues that have been raised include the relative representativeness of the residents association and the need for community work to be undertaken with all tenants - both those in the residents association and those who are not, in order to ensure everyone’s needs are being met. Despite the general decrease in anti-social behaviour it has not completely disappeared.

Clúid states that they are not currently in a position to fill this gap. “We are not a community development organisation. The forum should be strong enough to carry on but participation in it from other agencies has been very weak. Clúid is willing to be a member and bring housing expertise/estate management but not to organise the forum. It’s not our role to tell community development organisations how to do their jobs. The housing officer doesn’t have the time or resources to do community development”.

So, while it was clear that Clúid had responsibility for managing the regeneration project it was, in reality just the physical aspects. Generally, the agency leading the regeneration project is expected to lead all aspects, or at least facilitate the addressing of the social issues. It highlights the requirement for a sharing of responsibility among all state agencies in such regeneration, particularly as government policy states that it is not just about housing. A contributory factor could be the scale of the project. The Department saw it as refurbishment and, therefore, did not provide additional social regeneration funding, while other agencies do not have the resources to dedicate staff at this small scale.

This presents serious challenges to the concept of urban regeneration and raises the issue of whether refurbishment is a sufficient response. The case of St. Patrick’s Estate also highlights the impact of cuts to the community development programme, and the failure of estate agencies to engage in regeneration. While these areas are not currently Clúid’s responsibility, they do present serious threats to effective estate management.

**Estate management and anti-social behaviour**

It was highlighted that maintaining an active on-site estate presence by Clúid is essential to ensuring successful estate management, so that repairs and issues of anti-social behaviour can be responded to rapidly. Tenants reported that there was a good response to repairs but the on-site presence appeared to be decreasing. An elected councillor raised the issue that the nature of the relationship between tenants and councillors had changed, because of the transfer to Clúid. In a local authority, a councillor could easily raise issues directly with the relevant housing officer. Now, however, they have to make contact with Clúid officers, which they are finding more difficult. They do not have similar direct access, given that Clúid employees are not as accountable to councillors as local authority employees.

The fragility of an estate like this was highlighted as it would only take one person or family to cause disruption. As a housing officer explained:

“If you are not keeping control or managing (the estate) it will become a mess. From the bins and stuff building up in the garden – if there are any issues – you need to go back every week. In a lot of communities if you don’t know the key personnel...”
to talk to it’s a waste of time – if you are not talking to the right people – it won’t be able to work – especially where it is a no go area. If you are not pulling everyone in together it just won’t work – you need the on-the-ground presence to be able to do this.”

A councillor concurred:

“it could go downhill quickly. A lot comes down to Clúid’s commitment to the estate – their presence – there was supposed to be a full time caretaker – now it seems less. More resources should be given to caretaking to keep up the appearance of the estate. Once the appearance of the estate declines then the rest of the estate will deteriorate.”

Clúid clarified that, in relation to the councillor’s comments on the caretaker, the residents recently rejected the offer of a caretaker on the estate, as it would entail a management charge and the service charge for a caretaker is something that all councillors had been aware of since the original stock transfer. This raises the important issue of who will cover the cost of providing essential estate management into the future on the estate.

A key success within the regeneration has been the dramatic improvement in the level of serious anti-social behaviour (ASB). A number of reasons were provided as an explanation for this:

- Firstly, Clúid’s intensive direct intervention on ASB from the principle of prevention and belief that most people’s ASB can be modified if challenged. If there is a complaint of ASB they investigate it by interviewing the tenant, getting a report from the Gardaí, giving a warning, following up that warning, and taking it to eviction, if necessary. Carrying out an eviction is expensive and the last resort but “carrying out an eviction has a ripple effect for your reputation of being strict”.

- It was also addressed prior to the regeneration by the relocation of tenants who had been engaged in serious ASB. These tenants relocated, as the local authority required rent arrears to be addressed before tenants could move into the new regeneration. Some of these tenants, involved in more serious ASB such as illegal drug dealing, also relocated, in order to avoid the greater level of surveillance expected from Clúid. A local authority official explains:

“I don’t think Clúid had to do social engineering to get tenants out. If we were the landlord still, a lot of the same people would have been glad to come back to the regeneration – but some troublesome tenants were not interested in being Clúid tenants and didn’t come back. The local authority is seen as a softer touch. There is also political influence with a local authority, where the tenants will go to a local councillor and plead their case. I have no doubt that some of the troublesome tenants are aware that Clúid are strict and will undertake eviction quicker than the local authority and won’t tolerate their behaviour”.

The local authority representative further explained:

“They (Housing Association) are not the housing authority of last resort but we are. It is very difficult for us to put someone out on the street – You go into court and the judge knows that if he puts on the road someone in local authority housing they have nowhere else to go. But if he puts someone from Clúid on the road they can come to us”.

There remains a danger that a small number of families could destabilise the estate again. The importance of addressing ASB through effective allocations, making use of local knowledge, was highlighted to avoid certain families taking over and disrupting the social balance within the estate. Again, community development workers could play an important role in preventative action in this regard. While currently the perception is that “Clúid is stricter about everything… it is a reputation that requires work and effectiveness, in practice, to be maintained. A counter view can develop easily enough. That is a danger that Clúid faces (Community and voluntary group).”

An indication of the challenges facing the estate are apparent from the on-going involvement of a small number of residents of St. Patricks in serious ASB (ref. Mayo News, 4th December 2012…Ballina man cleared of drug charge because of faulty search warrant & Teen jumped on victim like a trampoline, 18 October 2011). Clúid highlights that:

“The support of all stakeholders is vital to succeeding in building a sustainable community. Clúid must be supported to tackle anti-social behaviour and to manage the estate. Clúid will maintain the estate to a high standard and will endeavour to ensure that all of our tenants adhere to their tenancy agreement. Intensive management of the estate and a policy of tackling issues before they become problems is the strategy that Clúid have been operating on St. Pat’s estate and will continue to do so. The biggest challenge Clúid faces in this regard is where people are enabled by other agencies or persons to continue to cause nuisance or problems to other residents and Clúid does not get the necessary support from elected representatives and state organisations to enforce our tenancy agreements. At present, Clúid is being supported very successfully by all stakeholders and if this support continues to be forthcoming then we will be able to ensure the successful management of the estate.”
St Patrick’s Estate prior to Regeneration

St. Patrick’s Estate after Regeneration
3.4 Case Study 2: St. Michael’s Road, Longford

Overview of the Regeneration

St. Michael’s Road is the third and final part of a regeneration project undertaken in the area by Clúid. Lean Aoibhinn and Annally Gardens were completed in 2003 and St. Michael’s Road was completed in mid-2012. Table 12 shows the estate pre and post regeneration. At the time of transfer the estates contained 58 dwellings, all of which were approximately 120 years old. The average property size was 40 square metres. The final completed project consisted of 37 new and refurbished dwellings, as well as 12 owner occupied dwellings which were externally refurbished. The total cost of the project was €6.05 million. St. Michael’s represented a smaller scale and less complex regeneration than St. Patrick’s.

Table 12 Regeneration Before and After: St. Michael’s Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-regeneration estate</th>
<th>Final completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 dwellings</td>
<td>37 new and refurbished dwellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dwellings were approx. 120 years old</td>
<td>Of which 17 new (social) 18 refurbished (social) 12 private (external refurbishment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- small 2 bedroom, averaging 40m squared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the long period of regeneration experienced in St. Patrick’s estate, the re-developed St. Michael’s was shorter and more condensed, in part because Clúid had already completed two adjoining estates and were, therefore, known to the local residents and the local authority. However, it was also due to learning experiences in St. Patrick’s (See Table 13). Initial discussions between the local authority and Clúid began in 2006 and the stock was formally transferred in 2007. There followed over two years of consultation between Clúid and the residents regarding the design of the estate. Thereafter, funding was granted in the Autumn of 2010 and the project was completed and occupied by the Autumn of 2012.

Table 13 Regeneration Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Discussions between local authority and Clúid</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of stock to Clúid</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and consultation period</td>
<td>2008-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Permission granted</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding granted</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction started</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project completed and occupied</td>
<td>Autumn 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Project Cost | €6.05 million |

Estate Decline and Stock Transfer

It is clear from the project briefing documents and from the interviews with all stakeholders that St. Michael’s Road suffered from multiple problems, including:

- A wide variety of anti-social behaviour, including intimidation
- Poor estate management by the local authority
- A previous failed intervention. A regeneration project by the local authority in the 1980s/1990s was unsuccessful.
- Poor housing conditions
- Vacant housing
- Dumping
- Littering
- A very poor reputation, in spite of its historic centrality to the town.

One of the critical junctures in regeneration is when the housing association formally takes control of the estate. This is a delicate time, when tenant expectations are raised, because of the prospect of regeneration and because there is a new landlord. It is important, therefore, that the association immediately demonstrates that it is serious regarding quality services and estate management.
In that regard, Table 14 shows the amount of up-front spending by Clúid on St. Michaels’ Road, once the transfer had been completed. From a tenant viewpoint, clearance of any rubbish from illegal dumping, for example, sets a good precedent for how the association will manage by providing early evidence of good estate management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Category</th>
<th>Cost €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial enabling, boarding and estate tidying</td>
<td>45,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decanting, moving and temporary relocating costs</td>
<td>19,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tender advert/site investigations/ surveys</td>
<td>48,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113,437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clúid Housing Association

However, if a tenant transferred and moved to a new property and signed a tenancy agreement they did not have the right to buy.

The interviews with tenants showed that, in overall terms, they were satisfied with the consultation regarding transfer. However, one tenant is disputing that they were transferred to Clúid and is claiming to still be a local authority tenant, which raises some issues. While the majority of tenants agreed to the transfer, and the councillors voted to transfer the stock, if a tenant refuses to sign a new tenancy agreement with the housing association, what is the legal position? The tenants under discussion pay their rent to Clúid and according to Clúid’s legal department this makes them a de-facto Clúid tenant.

This raises the issue of whether all tenants are compelled to sign a new tenancy agreement or whether they can refuse to sign. Is there a situation where the property has been transferred to the housing association but the tenant, by refusing to sign a new tenancy agreement, claims they are still a local authority tenant? This is a potential anomaly, arising most likely, from a lack of clear legal and policy guidance and might become more problematic with larger scale transfers. If a tenant refuses to sign a Clúid tenancy agreement what is their legal status? It was also stated by tenants that they were supportive of the transfer, in part, because the rent to be charged by Clúid was similar to that of the local authority.
a) Consultation period on regeneration and construction phase

The consistent message from all stakeholders, including residents, was that the consultation by Clúid, with regard to re-designing the estate, was good and professionally organised. A regeneration forum was created, which consisted of tenants, owner occupiers, Clúid officials, the project architects, local Gardaí and local community representatives. This forum worked well, usually meeting on a monthly basis. There was special praise for the project manager from many stakeholders. Some of the comments referred to:

- ‘Good communication by Clúid’
- ‘Plenty of meetings were held with good notice to all concerned’.
- ‘Good one-to-one meetings with tenants and owner occupiers’
- ‘Clúid went the extra yard’
- ‘Consultation was excellent’
- ‘A quality listening approach and they took the hard questions and faced the fears’.

However, while the consultation process went well, there were some issues regarding the regeneration process. Some stakeholders raised the issue of a lack of independent expertise for tenants on design/regeneration issues, as distinct from the advice of Clúid and their architects. While this is not always necessary, it is well to remember that the issues of design, architecture, construction and planning are a domain which local residents, as non-experts, might find difficult. It is often considered best practice that some independent expertise is provided to tenants. There was some evidence from tenants that they were reluctant to question the project architects, given their lack of expertise.

Building a relationship of trust and respect between residents and the housing association is critical for the success of redevelopment, whether that be at the start when a transfer is originally mooted, or during the design and construction phase. However, given the complexity of construction, changes in design may be required or reductions in funding may require design alterations. This can give rise to some tensions and, in St. Michael’s, there were reports of some cost cutbacks during the regeneration that led to some scaling back of planned improvements.

As we have seen in St. Patrick’s, one of the most complex and controversial issues often relates to how owner occupies are dealt with. Housing associations are faced with a situation where an estate is pepper-potted with privately owned houses and, when undertaking large scale redevelopment or refurbishment, it would be illogical not to seek to refurbish these dwellings from a design perspective and from a community perspective. Consequently, owner occupiers are offered 50 per cent of the costs of external refurbishment. In strict terms, this is clearly a state subsidy to an owner occupier.

However, often such owner occupiers still see themselves as in some way linked with or associated with the local authority and they can resent what they perceived as unequal treatment. There was some element of this feeling in St. Michael’s. More commonly, however, even with 50 per cent contribution to external refurbishment costs, many cannot afford the improvement works.

In theory, it is good practice to maintain the same housing association personnel during the course of the regeneration, though this is not always possible. In the case of St. Michael’s, local authorities and some residents highlighted the change of housing officer, which resulted in some problems of communication. It must be pointed out, however, that the project manager for Clúid did not change.

Immediate Regeneration Outcomes

The overwhelming view among all the stakeholders, including tenants and owner occupiers, is that the regeneration has been a major success, in particular because St. Michael’s had been a very problematic estate. The quality of the physical regeneration has been very high, with respect to the new and refurbished dwellings, as well as the environment. There has been a huge improvement in visual and landscaping impact. The level of achievement must be recognised as genuinely significant, as often estates such as St. Michael’s are seen as being irredeemable.

Apart from the physical improvements, the other most significant improvement has been the major reduction in anti-social behaviour. It was suggested that the relocation of a small number of families - who had been involved, for a long time, in anti-social behaviour, during the regeneration process - has had the biggest impact on reducing anti-social behaviour. According to one stakeholder, it was about ‘weeding out some tenants, as their accommodation had got so bad they were rehoused elsewhere by the council’.
In a related manner, it is interesting to note that Clúid has a reputation as being a strict landlord, at least when compared to the local authority. Many stakeholders referred to Clúid operating a ‘three strikes and you are out’ policy in relation to anti-social behaviour.

As a consequence of the hugely improved environment and the reduction in problematic behaviour, there is now good demand for St. Michael’s Road. The regeneration created a ‘buzz and excitement’, with a councillor reporting that people came to him looking to transfer on to the road after regeneration was complete. The view that prevailed among residents was that it was now a ‘generally quiet and good neighbourhood’.

Tenants report high levels of satisfaction with their housing and the general environment - a response which is helped by what are seen as an efficient and effective maintenance and repairs service by Clúid. The employment of a caretaker/maintenance person is seen as particularly helpful, as small repairs can be dealt with efficiently. Indeed, one councillor reported that it “could be a model of how local authority should manage housing”.

Some aspects of the regeneration process proved impossible to solve. For example, a local property owner owns a derelict building connected to the community centre. This gives the road an unfinished look and takes from the positive visual impact. In cases where private houses were left vacant and did not take up the offer of 50 per cent funding for external refurbishment, photomontages of windows have been put up over the vacant properties.

The Post-regeneration Period

Challenges post-regeneration

While the view that the redevelopment has been a success is widespread, there are concerns among stakeholders regarding sustaining the estate and the community. One of the most interesting responses was that many of the official stakeholders (local authority, community development, Gardaí etc.) were critical of Clúid for what they perceived as a lack of communication from Clúid after the regeneration was complete. This perception reveals that other stakeholders see Clúid as being the lead agency in, not only housing and estate management, but also community development. It is, perhaps, the case that relationships and networks, developed in the regeneration forum, have been let slip once the development was complete. This, of course, begs the question of defining roles with respect to estate management and community/social development.

Another casualty of the post regeneration period has been the collapse of the residents association. Some of the residents expressed exasperation and cynicism about the possibility of getting it up and going again because ‘no one is interested’. While the local Community Development Project has set up a ‘training for transformation’ group with residents – to provide leadership - no one was clear about this and it hadn’t seemed to have met for a while. Recently, however Clúid has allocated the Community Development Group premises Lean Aoibhinn as a meeting place for the community. Clúid officials reported that they would hope to be more involved in helping residents’ capacity development, but find it very difficult to get the time to do this.

With regard to community development, there seems to be some division between the community development groups (Harmony House and the local CDP) regarding the use of Harmony House, specifically, as well as a more general division as to who should lead community development efforts. Harmony House was designed with community groups in mind, but is used mainly by the crèche and has recently began a meals service for the elderly. Tenants without children stated that there was a lack of activities in the community centre for them and for older people, as the community centre is focused on parents and children.

Dampness and condensation issues

When conducting interviews with residents, one of the issues which arose was that of dampness and/or condensation in refurbished dwellings. Residents complained of dampness and/or condensation in ten of the units. However, in interviews with Clúid officials, it was explained that there is an issue with regard to some of the older properties, where there is a cold spot between new build elements and old and that this is not a problem of defective construction. According to Clúid, 85 per cent of the issue is with how tenants are using the accommodation.

In response, Clúid have engaged in a protracted education process with residents around the issue of mould; discussing the issue in the pre-tenancy course; speaking to all individuals concerned and providing information repeatedly. According to Clúid the issue is related to fuel poverty, which results in the residents in the houses affected not turning on the heat, because they can’t afford it or have other priorities for their income.
Socio-economic issues
As with St. Patrick’s there are a host of social issues, such as special education needs, mental health issues, alcoholism, poverty, inability to live independently (for example, untidiness and dirty house). This leads to questions as to who is responsible for delivering related services or, more pertinently, what is Clúid’s role in this area.

With regard to community development, or social services, for example, there seems to be a reliance on the nuns living in the house on St. Michaels Road to link vulnerable residents to other services. They appeared to be offering a sort of drop in centre. It is interesting to note that interviews with local authority officials showed that they are seeking clarity from Clúid about who deals with the social issues in relation to Clúid tenants. However, it must be stressed that Clúid is not a social services organisation and that their housing managers do liaise with various social services.

One of the interesting issues which arose in the St. Michaels Road area relates to ethnic minorities. Some stakeholders referred to potential longer term issues of integration because of the very high ethnic minority population (over 40%) who live in Leann Aoibhinn. Stakeholders recalled only rare occasions of what could be called ‘racial incidents’. The general view was that tensions were absent or minimal, although one local authority representative did suggest that, as these estates mature and children reach their teenage years, there might be potential for more tensions to develop.

In economic terms fuel poverty is a clear issue. Interviews with tenants revealed that there are major issues, mainly financial, with regard to heating houses. Some tenants have expressed a preference for solid fuel and open fires and back boilers, rather than gas or storage heaters. However, it is important to say that this issue is, to a great extent, outside of Clúid’s remit, as they have no power over energy prices. Instead, Clúid tried to address fuel poverty on both estates by providing a high level of insulation and alternative heat sources such as solar panels, stoves and gas. This was to ensure there was a minimisation in the cost of energy and to give tenants choice. Reflecting the economic climate, there is also evidence that increasing rent arrears are a serious issue. According to Clúid housing officers, 65 of the 115 tenant households in St. Michaels, Leann Aoibhinn and Annaly Gardens are in arrears. In Ballina there is a similar picture, with 33 out of 60 households in arrears. Apart from the economic climate and financial hardship, a Clúid housing officer reported that they did not have enough time to dedicate to dealing with rent arrears.
St. Michael's Estate prior to Regeneration

St. Michael’s Estate after Regeneration
Increased effort should be put into developing innovative responses to social issues by, for example, supporting co-operatives, community ownership and community benefit clauses around employment and education.
4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Summary Conclusions

The analysis and research on regeneration in Ireland and internationally, combined with the detailed research into the case studies of regeneration, undertaken by Clúid, highlights that recent Irish Government housing policy is correct to assign housing associations a greater role in the delivery of the regeneration of areas of urban disadvantage. Housing associations offer a number of potential benefits that can complement local authorities in regeneration projects including:

1. They bring considerable housing management and estate management expertise which is essential at the pre-planning, construction and post-regeneration stages.

2. Housing associations’ main purpose is the delivery and management of social housing and, therefore, they can focus on the task of regeneration, unlike local authorities who have many competing responsibilities.

3. Housing associations have the potential to access private finance which can be used to enable exchequer regeneration budgets go much further. Loans undertaken by housing associations are not considered as part of Gross Government Borrowing. This, in theory, allows increased investment in regeneration projects. In the future, it may be possible, according to some of our interviewees, that the Housing Finance Agency could access funding for this from the European Investment Bank which is currently looking for potential social infrastructure projects in which to invest.

4. Housing associations value and understand marginalised communities and prioritise their inclusion, self-ownership and sustainability. In some cases, they support community development. This can reverse the damaging unequal power relations and poor relationships which have developed between tenants and local authority landlords.

5. Housing associations provide a focus on housing for the most vulnerable – homeless people, elderly people and people with disabilities.

6. Housing associations understand and value the importance of social housing. In general, housing associations do not sell their stock. However, Clúid is in the process of developing a tenant purchase policy that would not lead to a loss of social housing. While these benefits do exist within the housing association sector, the evidence highlights a varying capacity to deliver regeneration amongst different housing associations.

4.2 Considerations for Policy and Practice

The research undertaken for this report has generated a number of issues which are important to the housing association sector, more generally. Below we discuss some of these issues, bearing in mind that they are for consideration and not firm recommendations.

Housing Associations, Regeneration and Resources

If housing associations are intending to engage in regeneration projects over the next decade, they need to put adequate resources in place in terms of staff experience; extra staff resources for community development and resident engagement; and extra resources for housing management. Assuming development staff and housing management staff can facilitate regeneration, as part of their overall work plan, is not realistic. By their very nature, these projects can take up to 60% more staff time to manage than other social housing delivery projects. Regeneration is far more complex and time consuming than new build and carries far more risk. Failure to adequately resource regeneration will increase the chances of failure. As many communities have already been failed by the state, not to resource regeneration properly is a false economy.

Social Regeneration and Community Development: The Role of Housing Associations

The question of whether housing associations should directly undertake community development and lead on social regeneration initiatives was a key question for this research. Our findings would suggest emphatically that housing associations should focus on their strengths - namely housing provision, housing management and estate management. An excessive concentration on these
issues could jeopardise the sustainability and success of regeneration projects. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed. It is, in our view, more appropriate for communities to be supported by local, independent community and voluntary organisations along with relevant statutory agencies. However, the research suggests that it is essential to secure the long-term sustainability of estates and communities and that housing associations do have a role here, but not a lead role.

An alternative view is that housing associations should be given the capacity and funding to lead the setting up of local social regeneration forums, which would bring together all the relevant stakeholders and support and co-ordinate the development of a social regeneration plan and implementation of initiatives.

Housing associations could play a facilitative, network building and co-ordinating role, by undertaking a needs analysis; developing a social plan; identifying services gaps and then supporting local statutory and community and voluntary services to meet these gaps. Housing associations could be given a social mandate and the lead in the development of innovative responses to social issues in these areas, for example, by supporting co-operatives, community ownership, community benefit clauses around employment and education etc. However, such a role would have major resource and organisational implications for housing associations.

Valuing the social capital of disadvantaged communities

The Government’s national regeneration programme has insufficient funding and has been uneven with regard to implementation and practice. The evidence points to an undervaluing by current regeneration policy and practice in Ireland of the intrinsic beneficial aspects of these communities. These include: their own forms of social capital (Hourigan, 2011); their family support and neighbourhood networks; commitment to community engagement; local leadership, their community and neighbours, and the importance of the local neighbourhood connections and relations to the individual residents, at a personal level, supporting them to cope with isolation and poverty and the importance of this framework of connections to the sustainability of the wider community (Bissett, 2008; Hearne, 2011). It is important to recognise the value in existing communities.

Community concerns about stock transfer to housing associations

Some communities are concerned that housing associations will charge higher rents, exclude residents groups, dislocate existing community services and organisations, be unaccountable to complaints and be a form of privatising social housing. Housing associations and government have a job to allay these fears and demonstrate in practice their support of residents’ empowerment and organisation. It is also important for the state and private sector to note that there is an openness, enthusiasm and energy on the part of local communities to undertake regeneration and find innovative models of delivery. This would provide much-needed employment in these areas, a general economic stimulus, and significant improvements to the local estates. However, where the majority of residents do not wish to transfer to a housing association their decision should be respected and they should have the option of regeneration, through the local authority mechanism.

In relation to the issue of redress and accountability, housing associations should ensure they are open to advocacy from local politicians, local groups and community law centres. However, such advocacy must have limits. For example, it is clearly inappropriate for local councillors to seek to exert undue pressure in the allocations process. This will enable trust building with residents on their estates and it also provides a mechanism whereby problems that might not be raised through existing channels are identified for the housing association to rectify.

When the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2013 becomes law, housing associations will come under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board. This will provide tenants with another channel for redress. In relation to privatisation, which is the sale or transfer of control of public assets to private for-profit companies, housing associations are non-commercial bodies and their housing is maintained in the social housing sector, in contrast to general local authority stock. So, in some ways it is more supportive of the social housing sector. It should be noted that in stock transfer the public land is being transferred over to the ownership of the housing associations. It is vital that safeguards are put in place to ensure that this land is principally used for social housing. It is also important that housing associations’ non-commercial nature is maintained. Otherwise the danger is that it will indeed become a form of privatisation with the potential negative impacts of other privatisations of social services such as rising rents, reduced service etc.

Fulfilling human rights through regeneration

The most disadvantaged communities in social housing estates in Ireland have been suffering for decades. Their rights are being violated. While the economic reality has to be taken into account, there is still a requirement and responsibility on the part of the Irish State and Government to meet its human rights obligations. These difficulties should not be used as an excuse to disregard human rights obligations or prioritise other issues over the realisation of human rights. As detailed by the UN
Special Expert on the Question of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, Magdelena Sepulveda (2011, 1), following her recent visit to Ireland:

“Human rights must be particularly protected in times of economic uncertainty. When designing and implementing policy measures aimed at recovery, the authorities must assess their impact on the most vulnerable groups; consider their appropriateness; and examine alternatives aimed at protecting such groups as a matter of priority.”

The UN expert recommended in her statement on Ireland: “The State should consider adopting a legislative framework for a National Public Housing Estates Regeneration Programme to ensure that international human rights standards and community participation are ensured in all regeneration projects in the country.”

Ireland’s social and economic policy in a time of austerity: the opportunities of regeneration

Ireland, historically has a corporate, charity-based, neoliberal, market model of the welfare state, with poorly developed systems of social protection that is centrally managed, and has not promoted or address concepts of solidarity, rights, equality and citizenship (Healy, Reynolds & Collins, 2011). Thus, this already weak social infrastructure is being undermined disproportionally by government reductions in spending at a time when the need is substantially increasing. The failure to adequately invest in services infrastructure in education, health and family support or to adequately redistribute wealth through an equitable system of child income support has pushed more children into poverty as the weaknesses of the system have been exacerbated by the recession (Barnardos, 2011).

At this time of austerity, unemployment crisis and rising deprivation and inequality, a focus on the regeneration of these disadvantaged communities can make these communities sustainable - somewhere the people from these communities and surrounding areas want to keep living. It can also address the inequalities and human rights of their disadvantaged populations. Housing construction, planning, architectural design, estate management, community development, and preventative social services are all labour intensive and have the opportunity to create long term employment for these local communities and wider society (Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2009). Ongoing development of social housing not only provides homes for those most in need, but also provides a multiplier effect which boosts the economy, provides jobs and creates sustainable communities (ICSH, 2012).

Ireland needs such social infrastructure projects to meet our goals of an Ireland of equals and to provide much needed employment and economic stimulus. Along with the invaluable social gains achieved from investing in regeneration there is a considerable potential return on public investment as part of Irish economic development strategy. One component of social regeneration – early childhood care and education – has been proven in the US to provide a return of more than $8 for every $1 invested (Grunewald and Rolnick, 2003). Similar returns can be extrapolated to investment in other aspects of regeneration such as education and training, employment initiatives, preventative family support etc. (European Commission, 2013). Dealing with the outcomes of these problems will cost the state and society much more in the short, medium and long term in health, constant maintenance of dilapidated housing, in spending on social issues such as drug-related problems, school drop-out etc., rather than if it provided the investment now. This could also provide an alternative source of income away from the drug trade and, thus, could encourage local youth away from drug dealing and associated criminal activities.

Regeneration offers the potential to offer solutions to homelessness through the prevention of evictions, tenancy support and its integrated approach to service support in providing housing and supports to the homeless. The European Commission continues to address homelessness, through its general social inclusion framework. There is potential for the Irish state and voluntary housing bodies to address social regeneration by drawing down European Structural Funds and Investment Fund funding from the European Social Fund 2014-2020 Social Investment Package (SIP) measures, which was adopted by the European Commission on 20th February 2013. These are used to invest in a wide spectrum of social fields such as: employment, human capital, social services, social inclusion, childcare, health, housing and education infrastructure, as well as food and material deprivation. These are set up to enable Member States make use of EU financial instruments to boost the delivery on the SIP priorities and social targets of Europe 2020.

The European Commission (2013) has highlighted the necessity to elaborate new innovative approaches for bottom up participation and to address the particular challenge of including people experiencing poverty in new public spheres. Public participation and deliberation are necessary ingredients to overcome challenges of political legitimacy and to deliver a politics that is capable of addressing crisis and supporting an alternative sustainable European economic governance strategy. Participation in regeneration can provide an avenue to ensure this.
Housing associations and private finance for regeneration

The Housing Policy Statement 2011 (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011) announced a number of major changes in Irish housing policy. Included in these is the introduction of loan finance for housing associations. This replaces the previous funding scheme for general needs housing, the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS), which was discontinued in 2010. This was in effect a 100% grant for the purchase or building of housing by housing associations. The new funding system has significant benefits for government because private loan finance is not treated as government expenditure and so, in turn, is not contributing to the national debt.

The new funding system comprises the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and a loan from the Housing Finance Agency (which offers loans on competitive terms) or a commercial lender. CALF is a facility that comprises a loan of up to 30% of the capital cost that is made available by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) to assist housing associations to access a loan for the remainder of the cost. The CALF loan accrues interest at 2% per annum and is not repayable until the period of the second loan has expired. So, in effect, CALF enables the HFA or commercial loan to be provided at a reasonable loan-to-value ratio.

Thus it can be seen that a relatively small amount of capital funding from government (CALF) can leverage a much larger amount through the use of loan finance. The ICSH estimates that for every €1 of state capital expended, a further amount of between €3 and €5 can be leveraged through this mechanism. Of course the housing association has to make repayments on the loan. These repayments are met through a combination of rents from tenants, and a revenue payment from government called an availability payment.

This shift, in which capital funding is replaced by revenue funding, mirrors changes that have been made in several other European countries over a number of years. The main difference is that in Ireland this fundamental transformation of the funding system has taken place almost overnight. This has left little time for the various stakeholders to make the necessary changes to facilitate the new arrangements. This new funding mechanism will be the source of funding for the refurbishment of dwellings as part of a regeneration programme. However, as stated above, regeneration involves other costs which may include: demolition; the provision of infrastructure works such as new access roads; as well as the cost of ensuring that tenants have access to the expertise they require and appropriate training.

These costs cannot be met from loan finance because the housing association would have no means of making repayments on the loan. The most appropriate source of funding for these works would be the Estate Regeneration – Social Housing Improvements Fund. Housing associations are not explicitly excluded from receiving funding from this source, and such funds could make the difference between a regeneration project being financially viable or not feasible.

With housing associations in Ireland being encouraged by central government to seek private finance for development and regeneration, the sector is entering a period where commercial risks will become more important in their operations. This evolving situation offers both opportunities and risks. The potential to access new finance, from a combination of the Housing Finance Agency, central government and private finance could open innovative possibilities for associations to become more central to regeneration projects. As well as the challenges of securing private finance for refurbishment, funding also needs to be secured for other aspects of regeneration such as demolition, infrastructure improvements and support for tenants. However, this move to a greater use of private finance is, in effect, uncharted waters with attendant risks and it behoves associations to pursue this path, while bearing in mind their core social mandate.

4.3 Recommendations

Government Regeneration Policy and Housing Associations

1. Irish Government housing policy should continue to assign housing associations a greater role in the delivery of the regeneration of areas of urban disadvantage.

2. If housing associations are going to be successful in increasing their involvement in regeneration they require support from Government in the following areas:
   - A detailed policy on stock transfer and regeneration so as to give more certainty and clarity to housing associations who wish to become involved in regeneration.
   - Increased state funding to deliver regeneration within the necessary timeframes
   - Housing associations require state support to enable borrowing from the Housing Finance Agency, private funders and the state itself.
The Housing Finance Agency should explore all avenues to provide funding for this from the European Investment Bank which is currently looking for potential social infrastructure projects to invest in. Housing associations require support to improve their capacity and expertise to utilise these new sources of capital.

- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government funding systems must be structured so that there is clarity and certainty that regeneration projects will be funded to allow planning and community buy-in.

3. Expecting housing associations, through stock transfer, to take responsibility to solve the problems of sub-standard housing, estate management and social deprivation would be wrong on many levels. The need for holistic regeneration that exists is way beyond the capacity, and likely capacity over the medium term, of housing associations on their own. Local authorities, therefore, should be funded sufficiently from central government to play an active and, in many cases, lead role in delivering regeneration if we are to avoid the crisis in these areas persisting for decades.

4. Housing associations should remain non-commercial bodies and their housing should be maintained as social housing to the maximum extent possible. Many problems of local authority estates are due to the sale and privatisation of social housing stock. Commercial pressures could also lead to rising costs for tenants. We must avoid repeating mistakes of the past.

5. Given the decline of 100% capital funding models, it is important to assess the capacity of the housing association sector to avail and use Housing Finance Agency and private funding and to improve the expertise of associations to utilise these new sources of capital.

6. The proposal to regulate the housing association sector is an important one to support their capacity and ensure accountability and is a matter of priority, especially given the new funding mechanisms. The voluntary regulation code for housing associations that is expected to be launched in the near future will play an important role in building confidence in the housing association sector and ensuring accountability.

Regeneration Policy and Practice

1. Regeneration should continue to be used as a key national and local level policy tool to address the current crisis of unemployment, poverty, inequality and deprivation that is disproportionally affecting these disadvantaged areas. Regeneration can provide a pathway for social inclusion for the most marginalised people in Irish society through the participation and empowerment of these communities to engage, in partnership, with the state to find solutions to the complex challenges they face.

2. Clear funding commitments to social regeneration are required for community engagement, development and social regeneration. Also inter-agency co-ordination is essential. Commitment and involvement is required from key state departments and agencies responsible for housing, health inequalities, mental health and disabilities, anti-poverty, children, employment, education and community safety. Reductions in funding for community and voluntary organisations and state services present a grave risk to the potential for successful social regeneration. These areas should be ring fenced and their funding protected.

3. Funding for social regeneration should be sought also from the European Social Fund 2014-2020 Social Investment Package (SIP) as regeneration offers the potential to offer solutions to homelessness through the prevention of evictions, tenancy support and its integrated approach to service support in providing housing and supports to the homeless.

4. Regeneration should be viewed as an important mechanism that can contribute to addressing the current economic and social crisis by providing an economic stimulus through local employment, training, construction etc. Ongoing development of social housing not only provides homes for those most in need, but also provides a multiplier effect which boosts the economy, provides jobs and creates sustainable communities.

5. The Irish state should fulfil its obligations that it has signed up to in international human rights treaties. The government should implement the UN recommendations to adopt a legislative framework for a National Public Housing Estates Regeneration Programme, to ensure that international human rights standards and community participation are ensured in all regeneration projects in the country.
6. Increased effort should be put into developing innovative responses to social issues in these areas, for example, by supporting co-operatives, community ownership and community benefit clauses around employment and education.

7. The social capital of disadvantaged communities must be given a greater priority and value. Their family support and neighbourhood networks, commitment to community engagement, and local leadership should be sustained not displaced.

The Housing Association Sector and Regeneration

The experience of regeneration outlined in this report demonstrates that achieving the successful regeneration of areas of social housing disadvantage is a very complex process. Ensuring the regeneration process runs smoothly and efficiently requires serious and sustained effort in developing and maintaining relationships and open communication among local residents and community groups, the local authority, the housing association and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and other relevant stakeholders. It requires, therefore, a number of overlapping and interlinked aspects that must be given equal importance. We recommend:

1. In the regeneration process it is important that a lead agency drives the process to ensure Master Plans are completed, funding is achieved and regeneration is commenced and completed within the shortest possible timeframe. Housing associations could lead this process in more areas than is currently the situation.

2. Housing associations should ensure that there is a clear democratic process for tenants in stock transfer. Where tenants do not wish to transfer this decision should be respected and regeneration should proceed through the local authority mechanism.

3. Given the sheer complexity of regeneration it is necessarily resource intensive. It is therefore critical that housing associations adequately resource regeneration projects. It is essential that associations ensure that project management structures and teams are in place, who will work from the start to the finish of the project. This means, in our view, that associations need to form dedicated regeneration teams who have expertise in resident engagement, design, construction, housing and estate management. Inadequate resourcing of this aspect of regeneration carries a high risk of failure.

4. Community development and provision of independent support, advice and capacity building for residents. Residents will tend to engage better and with more confidence in the process when they get access to these even though it might seem such advice might delay the process.

5. Regeneration projects must not only deliver on new or improved housing but also deliver community facilities, social infrastructure such as community centres, parks, playgrounds, youth areas, youth cafes etc.

6. Focused planning and service delivery in partnership with local residents, statutory agencies and community and voluntary sector organisations

7. Nonetheless, as it is critical to sustain estates and communities, it is imperative that structures are put in place to manage estates once they have been regenerated. Housing associations will have a significant but not central role in this.

8. Effective estate management pre- and post-regeneration, with a priority given to addressing anti-social behaviour and sustainable allocation policies. The issue of poor estate management by local authorities was a major factor in the requirement and demands from the communities for regeneration. Future regeneration projects need a budget for sustaining the buildings and communities post-regeneration, or else they will require further regeneration in the future.

9. Social and economic regeneration initiatives with a strong preventative and education and employment focus

10. Ensuring that the full cost of regeneration, in terms of engagement and social regeneration is built into the costings from the start

11. Ensuring that residents have sufficient independent expertise and support

12. Ensuring written records are made and kept when making agreements with tenants

13. Ensuring relationships and networking with local statutory and community and voluntary organisations is given central priority

14. In relation to the issue of redress and accountability, housing associations should ensure they are open to advocacy from local politicians, local groups and community law centres.
Clear funding commitments should be made towards community engagement and development in the process of social regeneration. A strong preventative, education and employment focus is essential.
Appendix 1: Detailed Timeline for St. Patrick’s Estate

Scoping & negotiation between local authority and housing association re transfer.

2000
Local authority approaches Clúid.
Negotiations between Clúid & Ballina Town Council re stock transfer.

2002
Conditions survey by Clúid of estate finds sub-standard conditions.

2004
Private ballot held with tenants who agree to transfer to Clúid.

Tenant & local authority transfer consultation.

2005
Decision to transfer.
Clúid appoints part time caretaker, clean up estate, do repairs.
Consultation with community on designs.

2006
Formal transfer takes place.

2007
“There is a great community here still. But something needs to be done immediately. We are fed-up waiting for Clúid”.
On-going consultation with community.
Planning.

2008
Presentation of plans to Minister.
Clúid to seek to transfer land at back of estate.
Tender process starts in May.

Tender development.
Tender process.
Application for DOE approval & funding.

Transfer Consultation and pre planning design.
Tender process.
DOE Funding approval.
Contractor appointment.
Support of residents’ capacity.

Minister announces €12.9 million for project.
Clúid seeks tender approval from DOE.
20 units vacant.
Setting up of Regeneration Forum.
Training for residents association.
Appeal by unsuccessful contractor.

Residents express fear of funding cut as they don’t see progress.
Tender approval from DOE.
Appointment of contractor.

Construction.
Decanting.
Moving.

Construction commences.
Pre-tenancy course with residents.
Formal elections for residents association held.

Phase 1 - 23 units complete.
Decanting – resident pressure/discontent.

Phase 2 & 3.

Final construction and hand over.
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Starting Afresh
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