



A CASE STUDY OF AN ESTATE IN MAHON

Co. Cork Ireland



Paddy Gray, Erick Guerra, John Driscoll, Ursula McNulty, Peter Shanks
International Centre for Local and Regional Development
and University of Ulster



The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Management of the Housing Agency. This document is not intended to be a legal interpretation of any existing legislation or to be a legal instruction in relation to procedure.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Foreword

We are pleased to present this report, one of three that the Housing Agency has agreed to publish as part of research carried out by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD).

This individual publication is part of a research project conducted in six areas in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The six locations are distinct because they look at unique stages of development to create sustainable communities not only in existing estates, but also in newly built areas. In Northern Ireland, the research team investigated the progress being made in Springfarm, Antrim, Carran Crescent, Enniskillen and Irish Street/Gobnascale Interface in Derry/Londonderry. In the republic, the focus was on Cranmore, Sligo, Mahon, Cork and Adamstown, Dublin.

All six studies will be available soon as part of a larger publication. They will also be available on the ICRLD website.

Abstract

This case study on Mahon Estate is part of a larger study undertaken by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) that investigates initiatives and policies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to improve and build subsidized housing in mixed communities through the lens of six case studies – Springfarm, the Irish Street and Gobnascale interface and Carran Crescent in Northern Ireland and Cranmore, Mahon and Adamstown in the Republic of Ireland.

Together, the six cases provide a cross section of the challenges and opportunities faced by communities, councils, and central government agencies working to promote or provide mixed housing. Each case highlights the strategies that have helped address these challenges and opportunities to create and maintain housing that is safe, prosperous and open to all. A synthesis report that summarizes the six cases is also available.

Introduction

Over the last 40 years, Ireland, north and south, has experienced dynamic changes in demographics, settlement patterns, the economy, migration, socioeconomic conditions and political attitudes. Major shifts have also occurred in how both sides of the border finance, construct, deliver and manage subsidized housing. There was a focus on providing large numbers of units quickly and inexpensively on large social housing estates, often in remote locations without appropriate services, shops or infrastructure. Increasingly, many of these estates came to be seen as areas of housing of last resort, where poor households, unable to make the transition to home ownership, became concentrated. Some estates gained reputations as hotbeds of violent crime, drugs, antisocial behaviour and, in the north, sectarian paramilitary activities and ethnic intolerance.

Just as in much of Europe and North America, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have developed new policies to counteract some of the perceived failures of earlier housing policies by improving conditions in existing housing estates and providing new mechanisms for delivering subsidized housing that does not concentrate housing of last resort in remote locations. In particular, both governments, while continuing to promote home ownership, have emphasised the need to create mixed, integrated and balanced communities that can accommodate and nurture people and households from different backgrounds, ethnicities and income groups. In Northern Ireland, the legacy of the Troubles and ongoing sectarian mistrust add an additional layer to an already complex process of promoting and supporting mixed communities. The rapid increase in migration, particularly from Eastern Europe, added a new dimension to integrated housing in both jurisdictions.

Methodology

The particular history of an area and even the resolute and voluntary efforts of individual community members have profound impacts on housing estates and government programmes. Given the nuanced, context-specific factors that contribute to the success of policies and programs to promote balanced communities, this study presents its findings as a series of case studies. Each case is unique, but also provides a wealth of information on how government bodies and other key stakeholders can play a role in the creation or continued success of balanced, sustainable communities and key factors that contribute to this success.

In preparing the cases, our research team was supported and informed by the guidance of a panel of experts from both sides of the border. The team conducted interviews, held conference calls and set up focus group meetings with key stakeholders and community members at each site and in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Multiple site visits and meetings with local officials and policy makers complimented these interviews. Draft versions of the cases were distributed for comments to community representatives, government officials, estate managers, private developers and academics. The research team drew materials from a comprehensive literature review and analyzed statistics from agencies throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Study Sites

The six case study areas vary tremendously in terms of location, scale, design and history. Three are located in Northern Ireland – Springfarm outside of Antrim, the Irish Street and Gobnascale Interface area in Derry/Londonderry and Carran Crescent in Enniskillen – and three are located in the Republic of Ireland – Cranmore in Sligo, Mahon outside of Cork and Adamstown on the outskirts of Dublin. Four of them, Springfarm, Irish Street/Gobnascale, Cranmore and Mahon were primarily developed as social housing estates in the 1970s or earlier; while Carran Crescent, a 20 unit ‘Shared Future’ pilot project, and Adamstown, a 10,000 unit private development that is under construction with a 15% social rental and affordable home sales component, are 21st century new build projects.

The commonality is that they all involve a partnership of residents, public officials and private entities working to provide mixed, integrated housing or services that are available for a diversity of residents. Both governments see mixed communities as an integral part of a strategy to ensure economic and social progress and stability in the 21st century as well as a policy objective in its own right.

Table 1: The Six Study Sites

Site	Units	Population	Opening	City	County/DC
Springfarm Estate	460 (originally 516)	ca. 1,200	1978	Springfarm	Antrim, NI
Irish Street and Gobnascale*	ca. 1,700	ca. 4,300	1949-52; 1968-71	Derry / Londonderry, NI	Derry/ Londonderry, NI
Cranmore Estate	499	ca. 1,500	1974	Sligo	Sligo, RoI
Mahon	4,100 (700 social)	12,000	1970s	Mahon	Cork, RoI
Carran Crescent	20	ca. 60	2006	Enniskillen	Fermanagh, NI
Adamstown	1,019 out of 10,150	ca. 3,000	2006	Adamstown	Dublin, RoI

Source: 2001 Census from Clondermot 1 and Victoria Super Output Areas and Hollymount 2 Output Area 95MM180004

These case studies document good practices and will help others learn from the challenges and opportunities encountered in the planning process. Together the cases demonstrate:

- the importance of community empowerment and leadership;
- the successful creation and management of dynamic partnerships between residents, community groups, the voluntary sector, housing providers and local authorities, public safety and social services among others;
- the adoption of central government policy initiatives that generate local opportunities and have physical implications for the larger neighbourhood context;
- and the ability to achieve results on the ground.

Support

This series of individual case studies and the synthesis report are part of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development's ongoing initiative to support collaborative approaches to cross-community and cross-border development through jointed-up analysis and research. Funding from the Irish Government, through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) supported this research as part of the core research programme, which brings together a multi-disciplinary team from five academic and research organisations on the island of Ireland and the United States.

Acknowledgements

The ICLRD would like to convey our sincerest thanks to the numerous interviewees in each of the case study areas who were consulted during the course of the study; their views and opinions contributed significantly to this work.

The research team conducted the following interviews at Mahon Estate in Cork: Director of Housing at Cork City Council, Cork City Council, housing and elected officials, O'Callaghan Properties, Cork RAPID, Barnardos, An Garda Siochana, community representatives, residents, public representatives, and a DOEHLG Focus Group.

We would like to express our gratitude to the stakeholders and local officials for their support, input and guidance during the interview and data collection process.

The research team further takes this opportunity to thank the ICLRD partners for their support during this study and our sister organisation, the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) for their assistance in the mapping housing development in each of the case study areas

Research Team

Professor Paddy Gray, University of Ulster

Mr. Erick Guerra, Institute for International Urban Development

Mr. John Driscoll, International Centre for Local and Regional Development

Dr. Michaela Keenan, University of Ulster

Ms. Ursula Mc Anulty, University of Ulster

Mr. Peter Shanks, University of Ulster

Maps by Justin Gleeson and Peter Foley, All Island Research Observatory (www.airo.ie) at The National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, NUI Maynooth.

About the Authors

Paddy Gray is Professor of Housing at the University of Ulster. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and is currently national President of the CIH for UK.

Erick Guerra is a Research Associate at the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning at the University of California Berkeley.

John Driscoll is the Director of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development and Vice President of the Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge Massachusetts.

Ursula Mc Anulty is a Lecturer in Housing at the University of Ulster. She is a member of the Housing Studies Association Committee.

Peter Shanks is a Lecturer in Housing at the University of Ulster. He is a Corporate Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)

Contents

MAHON	2
BACKGROUND	2
Mahon Shopping Centre Development	5
Traveller Community	6
Mahon Community Development Project	9
RAPID	9
Local Plans	10
Public Safety	10
Traveller Accommodation Programme	11
SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES	11
REFERENCES	13

Mahon

Mahon Estate, built quickly in the 1970s on the poorly connected periphery of Cork City with few social services or amenities, was typical of the estates of that era. Peripheral land was cheap, construction was non-contentious and the demand for social housing was great. As a result, already disadvantaged households were concentrated, isolated, and excluded from opportunities in the city. However, over time, with the increase in car ownership and urbanization of the population, Ireland's cities have grown and suburbanised, bringing infrastructure and economic opportunities to many peripheral estates.

Following the development of a large shopping centre in 1999, new industrial office buildings and private homes, Mahon, with 4,100 units that house a population of 12,000, has become a vibrant, diverse and integral part of the city. Investment in transportation, public safety, social amenities, education, training, community services and open space has contributed to Mahon's regeneration. City officials, developers and community members worked together to ensure that many of the new construction and retail jobs went to existing residents, further enabling them to benefit from improvements to the area. New training programmes, community outreach and improved child care facilities also helped residents take advantage of the new developments.

The history of Mahon serves as a reminder of the hazards of creating isolated social housing estates. As Tom O'Driscoll of Cork City Council stated, 'For communities to achieve social, environmental and economic sustainability, it is imperative that community facilities and the necessary supporting infrastructure are put in place from the outset; not almost 20 years later as has been the case in this particular community'. At present, Mahon can demonstrate the positive effects that private investment supported by public services and infrastructure can have on a disadvantaged community if appropriate steps are taken to allow previously disadvantaged residents to benefit from improved opportunities.

Background

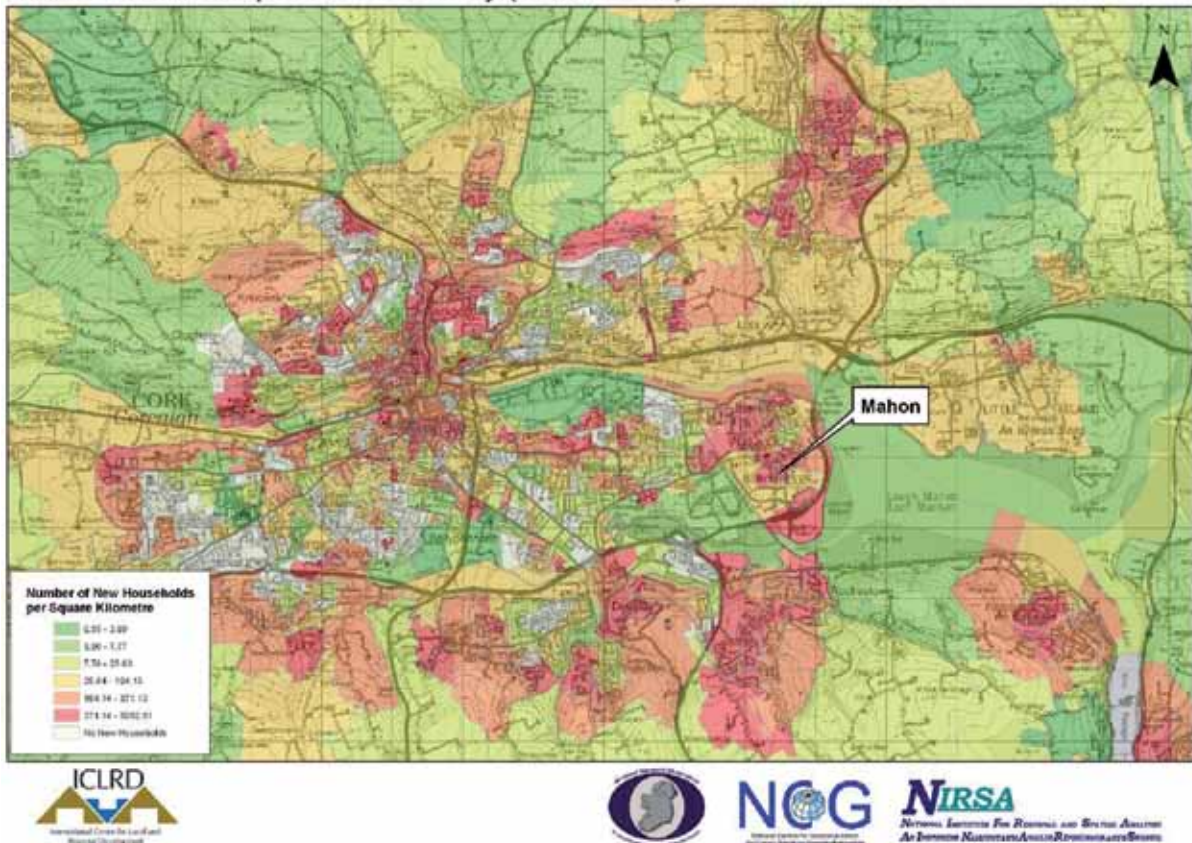
Mahon, which is located to the southeast of Cork City and consists mainly of local authority dwellings, was built in the mid 1970s. Residents of the estate were traditionally low-income families, many of whom relied on state subsidy in order to make ends meet. Exacerbating the social polarisation of the Mahon estate, the community as a whole faced spatial and social exclusion as a result of poor transport links and low employment prospects. One local councillor described it as, 'one big sprawl built on marshland... Although the housing built by the council was nice, in practice it was a disaster.'

The construction of local authority units began in the mid 1970s and continued over the next 30 years. Even though a design team worked for approximately 10 years to develop the urban plan, infrastructure and public realm facets of Mahon, the project encountered unforeseen problems. The local authority provided high-quality housing, but 'the community lacked the social infrastructure it needed to be sustainable', according to Ted Keating of Cork City Council. Finbar Murphy, Chairman of Mahon Community Centre, commented that numerous social issues arose as a result of the lack of social infrastructure and the community's isolation. He stated that 'Mahon in the 1990s was an awful experience, a place full of burnt-out cars, and an area where unemployment stood at 31%'. The lack of public transport further reinforced the sense of isolation and deterred families from

choosing the estate as a residence. Up until 1999 the only non-housing land use in the immediate vicinity were two pubs. The private sector was virtually absent in Mahon and homebuyers were unwilling to consider the area. Brian Bermingham, Lord Mayor of Cork from 2008-2009, has also noted the difficulty of attracting the private sector and the need for community facilities and amenities to support the considerable amount of housing.

Like most Irish cities, however, Cork has experienced significant population and employment growth in its suburbs and hinterland over the last decade and a half. As the city expanded and suburbanised, what was once a peripheral isolated housing estate, became an integrated and well-connected part of the city. The land around the Mahon estate became valuable and sought after by residential and other developers. The map below, using the Pointer Dataset, shows the significant growth of residential units in Cork between 2000 and 2008, as well as the city's overall suburban growth patterns.

Residential Development in Cork City (2000 - 2008)



At the time of the 2006 census, Mahon had a population of around 12,000 people. Approximately 700 households resided in local authority units, while 3,300 lived in private accommodations, including those in a halting site provided for members of the Travelling community. Ninety-four percent of the population lived in houses or bungalows, with the remainder living in flats, caravans or unspecified accommodations. Unemployment figures for the area dropped to 8.9%, a far cry from the previous 31% in 1998 when, according to one local community worker, 'most of those who worked were in part-time jobs. Indeed if you heard a car in the area, everyone ran to the window to see who was working!'. Private house sales have increased with new development and investment in Mahon. Jacobs Island, Mariners Hall and Eden, all of which are new private developments, have been constructed in tandem with retail and shopping centres.

With the establishment of the Mahon Technology Park, many new businesses have been attracted to the area and residents are receiving training to take advantage of the employment opportunities. The development of the Jack Lynch Tunnel, opened in 1999 by the Mayor, Joe Flynn, and the recently upgraded bus service have also contributed to Mahon's economic performance and stronger integration with the rest of Cork.

Mariners Hall Private Housing Development, Mahon



Source: ICLRD, 2008

Growing Industrial and Office Space, Mahon



Source: ICLRD, 2008

Mahon Shopping Centre Development

Mahon Shopping Centre Development



Source: ICLRD, 2008

The development of a major shopping centre in 1999 acted as an important catalyst for investment, transforming the area's economy. Cork City Council put about 1,000 acres in Mahon up for bid and sold it to O'Callaghan Properties, which developed the Mahon Point shopping centre, a large retail park, mall and cinema. O'Callaghan Properties' bid of IR£400,000 was the second highest of 28 bids, including some from Great Britain and other parts of Europe. O'Callaghan was awarded the project based on local experience and

the company's commitment to improving conditions for existing residents. According to Owen O'Callaghan, Chief Executive of O'Callaghan Properties, his company turned to a German bank for financing, since no Irish bank would sponsor the project. After securing the site, he set about procuring anchor tenants to invest in the area and negotiated with C&A retailers, Marks and Spencer, Debenhams and Eason.

O'Callaghan Properties agreed to provide construction and retail training at a centre for local residents and migrant workers to help them take advantage of the new employment opportunities generated by the centre.

At the outset, it was difficult to get many local residents involved in the training program. According to Ted Keating of Cork City Council, 'people thought they would never be considered for jobs because of the area they lived in... coming from Mahon barred them from getting a job... this was the mentality... they were living in a little cocoon and it was hard to get them out of this'. Local priests were asked to announce the training and job opportunities at mass but, given the fall-off in church attendance, this strategy failed to reach the younger working age groups. Owen O'Callaghan noted that he had learned through a similar project that it is more effective if they team-up with community leaders and work through their community centres to distribute the information as well. In Mahon, he helped to complete the construction of a community centre as part of the Mahon community outreach efforts. He also stressed the importance of engaging FÁS, the Irish National Training and Employment Authority to establish the training programme.

Job training was considered a key component of Cork City Council's policy of generating employment for the residents of Mahon. Therefore, every household in Mahon received an application form for training and priority hiring for construction and retail jobs. To overcome residents' hesitancy to apply for jobs, the developers also hired a respected local resident to go to households within the community and explain the jobs and the training opportunities, as well as answering questions and alleviating concerns.



Source: ICLRD, 2008

At first, some residents sought construction jobs directly on the site but found that they lacked the appropriate skills to compete with the skilled labour. Owen O'Callaghan recognized that this was demoralising for those who sought work and counterproductive to what they were trying to do for the area's residents.

A construction training centre was established at the Mahon Community Centre. An instructor provided six weeks of training for entry-level construction workers for 18 residents

enabling these residents to work on the construction site, where they acquired additional experience and skills. The training was so successful that contractors began to seek employees directly out of the programme.

Retail training was also provided for 604 residents from Mahon who were subsequently employed in the Mahon Point retail park and shopping complex. One local representative commented, 'Prior to knocking on doors, one in every five households owned a car and it was a banger... now this has changed to five cars for every two households'.

Evelyn McGrath from Barnardos, Ireland's leading children's charity that works with approximately 20 disadvantaged families in Mahon, commented that, 'Roughly 60% of jobs from Mahon Point go to people in Mahon. There is an agreement to allow development with the local community which has helped to change the area. Unemployment and financial management courses were run to get people back into work, for example, in the building and administrative sectors. A lot of the indigenous population did get employed and benefited greatly from the training initiatives'.

Traveller Community

The development of Mahon Point required the relocation of an existing Traveller caravan site, for which Cork City Council subsequently allocated a plot of land, eight houses in Meelagh View and another four in Meelagh Estate. The development comprises a mixture of halting bays, houses, and a community centre. The families receive on-going support from the Council, and a full-time social worker, if required.

Councillor Terry Shannon reported that the Travellers believe themselves to be natives of Mahon, as they were there before its development and Mahon's economic boom. According to Brian Cullen, Traveller Resource Worker, 'many Travellers suffered from depression because they felt they were coerced into settled accommodation. They felt the offer of settled accommodation was a take-it or leave-it proposition'.

There were disagreements, moreover, between the Travellers and the Council regarding the design of the new housing. Another concern was the relocation of Travellers' horses, which were accommodated offsite by O'Callaghan Properties until they were sold. At the new site, however, facilities are now available for horses.

A community centre, provided by the City Council and opened by the President of Ireland three years ago, was not used as intended and has since been boarded up on the outside. According to a local Traveller resource worker, 'Travellers will not take responsibility for running community centre activities; they feel that it would be unrepresentative given family structures and that individual families would look after their own. The centre is constantly vandalised as a result.'

A number of Travellers are gradually integrating into the larger community through sports (principally boxing), education and other activities. According to a local activist, 100 Travellers are attending nearby St. John's College, and others are attending school in the local area. Nevertheless, some enmity continues to exist within and between the different Mahon communities. Some residents dislike living in close proximity with Traveller families and many Travellers prefer not to settle in 'fixed housing'. One woman from Mahon expressed apprehension at Travellers moving into the abutting properties. There was also friction between St. Michael's GAA club house and the residents of the Travellers' group housing scheme. The issue concerned the use of vacant land next to the club house as a dumping ground by the Travellers and burning copper wire on the pitch. Cultivating mutual acceptance of different cultures and lifestyles is a long-term project that will need careful promotion over time. The onus of addressing these issues rests primarily with the City Council, which has to provide additional Traveller accommodation in accordance with a 2009 housing programme.

Traveller horse grazing at Mahon Estate



Source: ICLRD, 2008

Initiatives Promoting Sustainable Communities

Much-needed social infrastructure and social networks were severely lacking for many years in Mahon following its construction. Childcare facilities were inadequate, there was no community centre and there were almost no usable structured open spaces. In fact, many open spaces were developed to help discourage the antisocial behaviour, which was common in the open areas. Mahon now has a thriving community centre that supports residents and is a source of local pride. Social networks have improved immensely with the support of government funding for Mahon's Community Development Project, RAPID, a Traveller Accommodation Programme and several other initiatives. Members of the local council and local agencies, such as the Health Board and Garda Siochana, also participate in ongoing programmes and support services in the area. A community centre, funded by Cork City Council, has become a focus for community activities and networks. It provides a Tai Kwon Do martial arts club, a drop-in café, a youth group, a book exchange and a community development training agency.

Overall, social infrastructure and social networks have improved immensely with the help of government funding for Mahon's Community Development Project, the RAPID initiative, a Traveller Accommodation Programme, and several other initiatives. Members of the local council and local agencies such as the Health Board and Garda Siochana also actively participate in ongoing programmes and support services in the area.

Mahon Community Centre



Source: ICLRD, 2008

Mahon Community Development Project

The Mahon Community Development Project was established in 1992, with a remit to provide support and development opportunities to local groups and individuals in the Mahon area. The project's resource centre enables community activists and stakeholders to convene and discuss a wide range of issues affecting the community, from road safety to waste disposal problems. The project's voluntary committee has met for the past 15 years and has two core staff members, a child care centre, computer training facilities, a meeting room and resource centre.

'The project is committed to a positive programme of action to promote equal opportunities (job applicants or affiliated members) and eliminate any discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, family status, race or ethnic origin, Travellers, religion.'

(MCDP, Equality statement)

Several programmes have been initiated to promote resident employment such as child care and information technology courses. Local volunteers have created and maintained networks in the area, such as the Mahon Childcare Network, Mahon Education Network, Mahon After School Network and the Mahon Youth Network. Due to Mahon's large youth population, the project has a strong emphasis on child and youth services. Youth workers run education programmes such as school completion programmes, a youth crime prevention project and a youth drugs programme. Drugs issues are quite prevalent in parts of the Mahon area, according to Viv Sadd from the Mahon Community Development Project, but the situation is improving.

The project has also supported Travellers groups since 1992, promoted people with disabilities, and combated racism with youth workshops. The Mahon Equality Group, established in 2003 under the project, develops trust and fosters understanding between individuals with different social and cultural backgrounds, thus developing and progressively building up social capital among residents of the estate and Mahon.

Rapid

Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) is an initiative designed to improve the quality of life and mitigate the deprivation of residents living in disadvantaged communities by providing essential community services. The programme targets significant state resources in the physical, social and community infrastructure of disadvantaged areas, thus strengthening and empowering local communities. RAPID engages community members to define local needs, develop local solutions and coordinate services to take advantage of existing resources. A RAPID co-ordinator develops plans with input from the local community and various agencies, thus ensuring a coordinated delivery of services and investment.

In Mahon, the RAPID programme, 'Stepping Stones Towards Fairness', has secured funding for a community centre, bus improvements, worker training, sports fields, a park and playground, a family resource centre, a child care centre and infill housing. Monthly meetings are held to drive the programme forward and address specific problems. Implementation teams, which address specific community issues, draw membership from the community, Cork City Council, the health service, the local Gardai, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and the Drugs Task Force.

Local Plans

The Council developed the Mahon Landscape Master Plan (1998) to provide sports facilities, neighbourhood parks, open spaces in residential areas and tree planting. The plan promoted improved landscaping, public realm and public walkways. They improved the area for residents and non-residents alike and contributed to an increased interest in the area by the private housing sector. The most recent green space, Loughmahon Amenity Park, opened in 2006. The City Council has worked closely with GAA clubs to provide playing pitches and sports facilities, and the development of playing facilities which are now substantially complete.

The Cork City Development Plan of January 2004 promoted suburban areas of the city for population and job growth. The plan used land zonings to indicate the Council's priority development areas, such as the Southeast, where Mahon is located. The Council wanted to integrate new industrial development with the surrounding residential areas in order to make the region more attractive to existing and potential residents. The policy included developing a transport infrastructure to include a 'green route' where park-and-ride facilities would be available. The Mahon Point Shopping Centre, Mahon Retail Park, IDA Industrial Estate, Mahon Industrial Estate, National Software Campus and the Central Statistics Office are all located in the Southeast plan area. The development of a strategic road network and improved transport links encouraged public and private investment, benefiting the local population with improved services, connectivity and job opportunities.

Public Safety

All 700 council tenancies are managed by area-based officers, who, working in conjunction with Gardai, community groups and other agencies, have been instrumental in dealing with day-to-day issues. Areas which historically attracted high levels of anti-social behaviour have been addressed using a variety of different approaches. For example, housing units have been constructed in open spaces that were once prime locations for youths to engage in anti-social activities, causing a disturbance to the neighbourhood. Through active participation and local management, communities and local agencies are able to respond to problems quickly and efficiently. Accountability at a local level has played a key role, not only in addressing particular issues but also in harnessing considerable support from the wider community.

The Gardai now patrol the area on bicycles and have become involved in local community issues. For example, Gardai meet with the community on a local basis, and produce progress reports on policy and procedural outcomes. These meetings are attended by various public service organisations on a regular basis. The Parks and Houses departments within Cork City Council hold open forums four times a year, giving the local community a platform to engage in meaningful debate about community issues. At the outset, there were four pages worth of issues. The list has now been reduced to only half a page of ongoing issues remaining to be addressed. Area-based housing management and policing have clearly played an important role in this positive achievement.

Traveller Accommodation Programme

Cork City Council developed the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005-2008) to integrate Travellers into the community through support for Traveller organizations, skill-building and increased economic participation, the promotion of equality, and a strategy for reconciliation and conflict resolution with the community at large. Cork City Council has strived to integrate the Travelling community economically and socially into the wider community, working with statutory and voluntary agencies to improve employment and educational opportunities. A Traveller Housing Welfare Officer helps provide Travellers with the opportunity to participate in community decision making.

Successes And Challenges

As Cork has expanded and suburbanised, Mahon has become a thriving economic centre, a desirable residential location and a self-sustaining community with jobs, social services and recreation and leisure opportunities. A combined approach of ensuring jobs and training for locals while also providing new social services and facilities has ensured that Mahon's boom has benefited its original residents. According to Evelyn McGrath (Barnardos Centre, Mahon), 'The estate is thriving and has matured, no longer being a disadvantaged area'. It appears that Mahon has embraced its social mix and the development of commerce and infrastructure has meant that the economy of the estate is no longer reliant on government 'hand-outs'. A local councillor commented, 'People came to the Mahon area from other parts of the city and it took years for them to integrate and gel. Now they are getting on much better and the area is like a phoenix rising out of the ashes. What is happening in Mahon is now being rolled out all over the city.'

With these improvements, new issues have emerged, such as increased traffic congestion and challenges with the community's housing allocation process. There is a long waiting list for council housing: residents currently wait 7-10 years in the most desirable areas, even though approximately 40 properties elsewhere sit vacant for as long as two years. Community members have voiced concerns about the Council's slowness in allocating properties because empty properties attract anti-social and criminal behaviour. Problems with drug use, under-age drinking and graffiti also persist in Mahon, but compared to the previous problems on the estate, such as the extreme rate of unemployment, they can be addressed by the community and the Council. Dennis Coffey, a local community worker, commented on how graffiti in the area is being reduced. He categorises graffiti into four types: mild graffiti; territorial graffiti; vulgar graffiti and organised graffiti. He has personally painted over graffiti and he estimates that they have reduced graffiti by 45%.

The area's successes have also complicated the provision of new affordable and social housing. Land sales to private developers have severely reduced the quantity of available sites for future local authority accommodation or development. Developers do make contributions to social housing, but they are generally monetary rather than physical. As a result, the proportion of social housing in Mahon has been declining steadily over the past decade. Although this reflects the area's overall improvement, it also poses challenges for future community sustainability. Without increases in social housing, gentrification will progressively change the community balance. Although this is not intrinsically positive or negative, if a balanced housing mix is desired for the community, officials will have to determine the appropriate mix and strive to achieve it, based on community needs and preferences.

Mahon brings to light two important complications of policies that improve conditions in disadvantaged areas. First, although it is cheaper and easier to provide social housing in undesirable, isolated areas, if the Council decides to keep providing housing in these types of areas it will continue to create communities that concentrate poverty and reinforce social exclusion. Therefore, it is vital that the Council works to provide housing in areas like Mahon where jobs, infrastructure and social services already exist. Second, funding allocation policies based on aggregate social statistics effectively penalise communities for improving. Mahon is not featured in the 2006 Index of Deprivation. Even though this underscores Mahon's successful transformation, it also means that the community will receive less government funding. Addressing these challenges is the next important step in Mahon's ongoing transformation.

References

- Acheson, N. (2004). *Two paths, one purpose: Voluntary action in Ireland, North and South: A report to the Royal Irish Academy's Third Sector Research Programme*. Dublin, Ireland: Royal Irish Academy, Institute of Public Administration.
- Anderson, R., Musterd, S., Galster, G., & Kaupinen, T. (2007). What mix matters? Exploring the relationship between individual's incomes and different measures of their neighbourhood context. *Housing Studies*, 22(5), 637-660.
- ARK (1998). Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. Queens University, Belfast and University of Ulster.
- Bailey, N., Haworth, A., Manzi, T., & Roberts, M. (2007). *Creating and sustaining mixed income communities in Scotland: a good practice guide*. Coventry/York. Chartered Institute of Housing/Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Bartley, B., & Kitchin, R. (Eds) (2007). *Understanding contemporary Ireland*. Sidmouth, England: Pluto Press.
- Berube, A. (2005). *Mixed communities in England: A US Perspective on Evidence and Policy Prospects*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Berube, A. (2005). *Transatlantic perspectives on mixed communities*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Cairns, E., Van Til, J., & Williamson, A. (2004). *Social capital, collectivism-individualism and community background in Northern Ireland*. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Belfast
- Cosgrove, S. (2005) A Study of Community Participation in the RAPID programme. Dublin: Area Development Management Limited.
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government / Forfas (2007). *Implementing the NSS: Gateway Investment Priorities Study Final Report*
- Grainger, P. (2007). *Sustainable Communities: A Case Study from India*, (York April 11th-13th, 2007) Northumbria University, School of the Built Environment Housing Studies Spring Conference: Housing and Sustainability
- Gray, P. (2008). Housing; Challenging Times. *Chartered Institute of Housing National Journal*, 28.
- Green, G., Grimsley, M., & Stafford, B. (2005). *The dynamics of neighbourhood sustainability*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Hogan, P and O'Mahoney J (2005). *Lessons from Large-Scale Housing Schemes and SDZs* The National Housing Conference. (South Dublin Country Council)
- Holmes, C. (2006). *Mixed communities. Success and sustainability*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- International Fund for Ireland. (2007). *The shared neighbourhood programme*. Community Relations Council <http://www.internationalfundforireland.com/antrim.html>

- Irish Council for Social Housing. (2008). *Working for Good Governance*. Dublin: Irish Council for Social Housing
- Jarman, N. (2005). *No Longer a Problem? Sectarian Violence in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Kearns, A. & Mason, P. (2007). Mixed tenure communities and neighbourhood quality. *Housing Studies*, 22(5), 661-691.
- Minton, A. (2002). *Building balanced communities. The US and UK compared*. London: RICS
- Monk, S., Crook, T., Lister, D., Rowley, S., Short, C., & Whitehead, C. (2005). *Land and finance for affordable housing: The complementary roles of social housing grant and the provision of affordable housing through the planning system*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Monk, S., Crook, T., Lister, D., Lovatt, R., Ni Luanaigh, A., & Rowley, S. (2006). *Delivering affordable housing through Section 106: Outputs and outcomes*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Murtagh, B., & Cush, C. (1997). *From the margins to the mainstream*. Top of the Hill (2010)
- Murtagh, B. (2004) *Collaboration, Equality and Land-use Planning*, *Planning theory & practice*. 5(4), pp453-469
- Murtagh, B. (2002). Research Update: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: *Social Activity Interaction in Northern Ireland*, Number 10
- Murtagh, B., Graham B., & Shirlow, P. (2008). *Authenticity and stakeholder planning in the segregated city*. *Progress in Planning*, 69(2) pp41-92
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2007). *2006 House condition survey*. Main Report. Belfast: Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
- Neighbourhood Renewal. (2007). *Newsletter, A Message from the new Minister for Social Development*, Department for Social Development, Issue 3
- News Letter, Belfast. (2008). *Executive: Ignoring sectarian divisions*.
- NISRA & CSO. (2008). *Ireland North and South: A Statistical Profile*. Government of Ireland: *Central Statistics Office and Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency*,
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2007). *Long-term international migration estimates for Northern Ireland (2005-06)*, Belfast: NISRA
- Norris, M., & Redmond, D. (Ed) (2007). *Housing contemporary Ireland: Policy, society and shelter*. Dordrecht: Springer
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (2005). *Sustainable communities: Homes for all: A five year plan from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*. London: ODPM

Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (2006). *A shared future: First triennial action plan: Improving relations in Northern Ireland. Making it happen-Implementing the policy and Strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland.*

Peace and Place. (2006). *A symposium exploring peace in the home community and the Urban environment.* Centre for Peace Studies, University of Tromso CPS, Working Paper No. 9, 2006

Roberts, P. (2000). *Sustainable Communities and Housing.* Housing Studies Association Conference. York: April 2000

Roberts, P. (2007). *Delivering Egan: Implementing the review and creating sustainable communities.* SURGE Research Seminar, Coventry.

Robinson, D. (2004). *Communities and cohesion: What's housing got to do with it?.* Housing Studies Association Spring Conference. Sheffield Hallam University

Rowlands, R.; Murie, A.; & Tice, A. (2006). *More than Tenure Mix: Developer and Purchaser Attitudes to New Housing Estates.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Chartered Institute of Housing

Shuttleworth, I., & Lloyd, C. (2006). *Mapping Segregation on NIHE Estates.* Belfast: NIHE

Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007). *Our shared future.* West Yorkshire: Crown

Tunstall, R. & Fenton, A. (2006). *In the mix: A review of mixed income, mixed tenure and mixed communities.* London: English Partnerships/Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Housing Corporation

Watson, J. (2006). *Understanding planning gain: What works?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Williamson, L. (2007). *Economic and Social Data Service: Guide to data sources for Northern Ireland, I.I.*

