



LIVING TOGETHER 3: CARRAN CRESCENT

**Housing
Executive**

An investigation of case studies and strategies for promoting
safe, prosperous, integrated, sustainable communities



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Foreword

We are pleased to present this report, one of three that the Housing Executive has agreed to publish as part of research carried out by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). Over the last four decades media attention has focused upon the segregated nature of housing in Northern Ireland. This segregation is most pronounced within the social housing sector and ways to resolve this challenge have been debated and researched by many. With the 'Shared Future Agenda' set out in the Good Friday Agreement and recent policies to bring communities closer together we are delighted that the focus of research should move towards communities.

As Northern Ireland moves forward in the aftermath of a period of conflict, the need for research and forward looking debate on the future of integrated, balanced and sustainable housing solutions is well formed. The Housing Executive welcomes the fact that the focus of this study has been to identify communities that are working together and the wider issues that affect segregated areas. We are particularly delighted to work alongside the ICLRd in producing a series of studies on both sides of the border that focus on areas where residents and stakeholders have come together for the improvement of the area.

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

All six studies will be available soon as part of an overall publication and this will also be available on the ICLRd website..

Abstract

This document investigates initiatives and policies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to improve and build subsidised 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 faced by communities, District Councils and central government agencies working to promote or provide mixed housing, and the strategies that have helped address these challenges and opportunities to create and maintain neighbourhoods that are safe, prosperous and open to all. A final synthesis report, is also available to policy makers and practitioners and will also be used in ICLRD training programmes.



Introduction

Over the last 40 years, Ireland, north and south, has experienced dynamic changes in demographics, settlement patterns, the economy, migration, socio-economic conditions and political attitudes. Major shifts have also occurred in how both jurisdictions finance, construct, deliver and manage subsidised housing. Previously, the two governments promoted social housing as a temporary stepping stone for home ownership, a place where families could save money until they were ready to move into permanent accommodation. 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, particularly in the north, sectarian paramilitary activities and ethnic intolerance.

As throughout 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 policy by improving conditions in existing housing estates and providing new mechanisms for delivering subsidised 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.

This study investigates initiatives and policies to improve and build subsidized housing in mixed communities through the lens of six case studies that range in size, location and history. Together, they provide a cross section of the types of challenges faced by communities working to promote or provide mixed housing, of strategies that have helped address these challenges and of opportunities to create and maintain housing that is safe, prosperous and open to all of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland's residents.

Methodology

The particular history of an area and often 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 programmes to promote balanced communities, this study presents its findings as a series of case studies. Each case is unique, but they provide 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, conference calls and focus groups with key stakeholders and community members at each site and in surrounding neighbourhoods. Multiple site visits and meetings with local officials and policy makers

complemented these interviews. Draft versions of the cases were distributed for comments to community representatives, government officials, estate managers, private developers and academics. Annex 1 provides an overview of the work undertaken in the preparation of this study. The research team also 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 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 in 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 provide economic and social progress and stability in the 21st century as well as a policy objective in its own right.

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	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

*Figures taken from the 2001 Census from Clondermot 1 and Victoria Super Output Areas and Hollymount 2 Output Area 95MM180004.

These case studies are written to document good practices and to help others learn from what is a challenging process with many opportunities in any city or smaller town. Together the cases show the importance of: community empowerment and leadership; carefully adopting policy initiatives that have physical implications for the larger neighbourhood context and local opportunities; and consistently demonstrating incremental results on the ground.

This series of case studies and the synthesis report are part of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) ongoing initiative to support the development of collaborative approaches to cross-border and inter-jurisdictional spatial planning and local and regional development through joined-up analysis and research. Funding from the Irish Government, through the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive have supported our core research programmes which bring together a multi-disciplinary research team drawn from five academic and research organisations throughout the island of Ireland.

Acknowledgements

The ICLRD would like to convey our sincerest thanks to the numerous interviewees at 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 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 mapping the housing developments in each of the case study areas.

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CARRAN CRESCENT WINNER OF THE
NATIONAL UK HOUSING AWARDS
'OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD'

Carran Crescent

The Enniskillen bomb, which exploded on Remembrance Sunday, 1987, killed eleven people as they assembled around the town's cenotaph. At least another 63 people were injured in the blast, nine of them seriously. Two decades later, Northern Ireland has progressed since the dark days of the Troubles and an Enniskillen housing development has received national and international acclaim for a pioneering and innovative approach to mixed community living, supported by the government's Shared Future policy agenda. Carran Crescent, branded the first socially integrated housing scheme in Northern Ireland, is located on the outskirts of Enniskillen and was the winner of the national UK Housing Awards 'Outstanding Achievement Award' in 2007, jointly held by the Chartered Institute of Housing and Inside Housing.

The award and the government branding have generated a good deal of local, national and international media attention, to the point that Carran Crescent residents have expressed interview fatigue. This public interest has also generated resentment from some neighbouring and other estates in Northern Ireland, which have been mixed and largely peaceful for decades. Some residents feel that the publicity and investment in Carran Crescent are unwarranted and that their own estates have been neglected and underappreciated despite maintaining peaceful relations throughout and after the Troubles. Most residents at Carran Crescent come from the neighbouring estates and expressed that the quality of the new homes was the key reason for moving to the estate. In this sense, some see Carran Crescent as a dressed-up version of an existing phenomenon - an area of peaceful coexistence among Catholics and Protestants - marketed as successful government policy. At least one resident had no idea about the government's shared living programme when she moved into Carran Crescent.

In fairness, however, sectarian violence and segregation continue to plague many estates throughout Northern Ireland and, in order to promote the new Shared Future policy, it was essential that the first purpose-built development be successful. Therefore Carran Crescent is conservative both in scale - just 20 units - and in its location in an already mixed, socioeconomically stable and peaceful area. The real challenge will be rolling out a similar programme in more deprived, existing estates with a history of sectarian violence.

Unfortunately, Carran Crescent is already displaying signs of a potential problem of the Shared Future policy. If just two households from the Protestant community move out, the settlement will no longer fit the prescribed definition of 'mixed', thus calling into question Carran Crescent's success as a Shared Future pilot project. Due to the small nature of the development each household that changes religion would mean a 5% shift in the religious make-up of the estate. Socially engineering the population mix within estates, however, is both illegal and undesirable, and there is no way to ensure that families from one background that move out will be replaced by a family from the same background. Indeed this is a problem throughout Northern Ireland where all social housing is allocated on the basis of a Common Selection Scheme, which has stringent rules in terms of needs-based housing allocations barring any ethnic or religious discrimination.

Nevertheless, Carran Crescent has had a number of early successes. The composition of the new community is a microcosm of the diversity of Northern Ireland and its political and economic progress in recent years. It is also beginning to generate some of the political and popular good will that will be essential to the project and the programme's continued success. Units in the development are highly valued and the voluntary neighbourhood charter is set to expand into neighbouring areas.

I. Background

During the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, people's housing choices were influenced and limited by security and safety, leading to the segregation of social housing with 94% of social housing sector neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland being over 70% Protestant or Catholic. Socio-political and religious segregation is manifested through the display of flags, emblems, bonfires, kerb painting and paramilitary murals, which demarcate territory as belonging to one group or the other. Furthermore, while few migrant workers came to Northern Ireland during the Troubles, the cessation of the conflict and the Accession Treaty allowing new member states into the EU created a period of economic improvement for Northern Ireland, rapidly transforming its workforce and increasing diversity as migrants from other EU countries arrived. Racial segregation has become common in addition to the existing entrenched religious segregation, particularly in urban settings.



The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 instilled public confidence in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and the launch of the Shared Future agenda in 2005 showed strong support for mixed community housing. Political stability, coupled with public support and confidence enabled the Housing Executive and its partners to pilot a Shared Future development around integrated housing, which was previously unthinkable. This shift in policy thinking and policy making ultimately led to the development of Carran Crescent, the first of five new build Shared Future schemes of similar size in Northern to be located in non-contentious areas. In August 2008, a major new initiative was also launched to support shared housing in existing estates by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Housing Executive and the Department of Social Development. Thirty shared neighbourhoods are to be developed in partnership with existing communities over the next five years in a programme managed by the Housing Executive. The IFI contributed £698,000

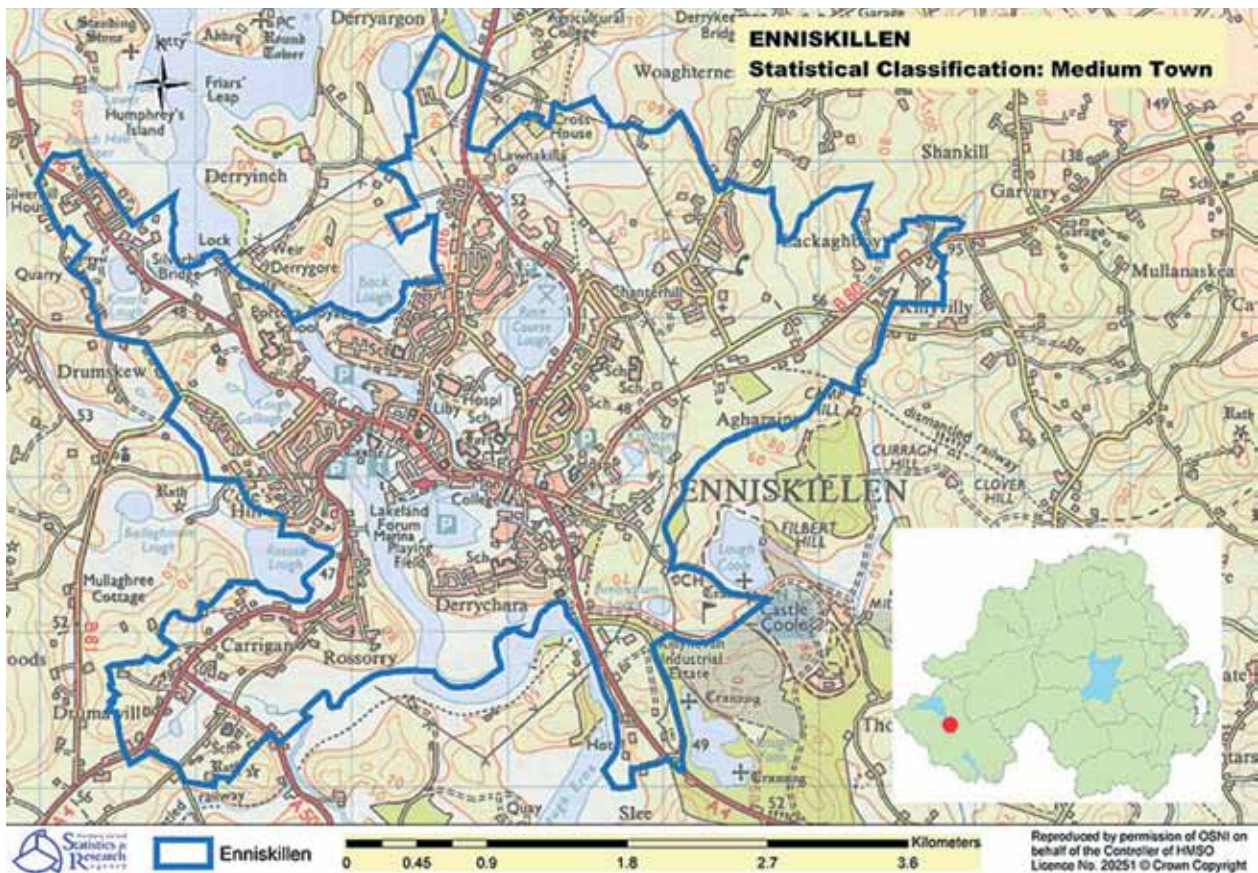
for grants to enable community organisations to celebrate diversity and bring residents together in areas that already had some form of mixing.

Carran Crescent, the first new build project completed under the principles of the 2005 Shared Future policy document, consists of 20 general needs social properties: ten 2-bedroom houses, six 3-bedroom houses and four bungalows. The £2 million project was developed by Ulidia Housing Association in partnership with the Housing Executive and is surrounded by three larger housing estates: Drumbawn, Drumbawn Close, and Drumbeag. Similar in design to other parts of the surrounding estates, Carran Crescent is located on a cul-de-sac, giving it a small, neighbourhood feel with all units facing inward.

1.1 Socioeconomic Conditions

The estate is located approximately 2.5 miles north of the centre of Enniskillen, a town with a population of around 14,000, in the middle of Fermanagh District Council in the south west of Northern Ireland. Erne Ward, the ward that encompasses Carran Crescent and its surrounding estates, had an estimated 2,860 residents in 2003. According to 2005 national deprivation statistics, Erne Ward is not in the bottom 10% of any measure of deprivation and it experiences about average deprivation levels overall. It is the 280th least deprived ward out of 582 wards (48%). In some areas, the population fares particularly well; the area has well above average scores for proximity to services (78%), quality of environment (87%) and educational attainment (68%). The area ranks more poorly in terms of income (23%), employment (38%) - at the time of the 2001 census, only 58% of the working age population was employed - and particularly crime and disorder (13%).

Compared to many other housing estate locations, however, the area is a model living environment. As a result, 61% of housing units are owner-occupied and many residents have taken advantage of the Housing Executive 'right to buy' scheme. At the time of the 2001 census, 71% of residents were from Catholic backgrounds and 25% from Protestant backgrounds. Thus, although the estates are mixed, there is a clear Catholic majority. 2001 census data indicate that only 1% of residents were born outside of the United Kingdom or Ireland, but an influx of immigrants has changed the community profile over the last decade. The census also reported only three Irish traveller residents, although the actual figure is much higher.



2. A Shared Future

A Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland issued on 21st March 2005, set the stage for promoting and financing schemes and projects that contribute to reclaiming shared space, reducing tensions at interface areas, promoting shared living, supporting good relations between different communities and tackling poverty and disadvantage. In April 2006, the government launched A Shared Future First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009, which set out priority actions for each Department.

At Carran Crescent's official opening in October 2006, Secretary of State, Peter Hain stated that:

Over the years ... most people live separately ... our children are educated separately. This division and segregation through housing, employment and in schooling has come at a high price for the whole community. We need to change this geometry of relationships - we need to see new models of shared housing and shared schooling. This project here in Carran Crescent addresses the vision of shared communities by identifying ways in which these imbalances in public housing patterns can be addressed and shared housing schemes are achieved¹.

Units were allocated to families from a range of religions and ethnic backgrounds from the social housing selection scheme, which operates across Northern Ireland. The development is home to 20 families, who actively chose to live in a mixed social housing estate and voluntarily signed a neighbourhood charter as an indication of their commitment to the promotion of good relations both within the immediate residence and within the wider area. The Charter emphasises:

- Respecting neighbours and their property;
- Caring for the vulnerable and less fortunate individuals;
- Treating everyone in the area as equal regardless of religious, political, cultural, or ethnic background;
- Taking responsibility for children and their actions;
- Respecting children's rights to play in a safe and happy environment; and
- Respecting the environment and striving to keep it clean and tidy with no dumping, vandalism or antisocial behaviour.

No incidence of sectarian problems has been recorded in the area and residents from the surrounding estates of Drumbeg, Drumbawn and Drumbawn Close have expressed an interest to the Housing Executive in extending the neighbourhood charter into their areas and, as such, having their neighbourhoods openly recognised as receptive living environments for all.

1. <http://www.nio.gov.uk/media-detail.htm?newsID=13701>

2.1 Project Funding and Management

The £2 million development was funded by a grant from the Department for Social Development and private financing raised by Ulidia Housing Association. A Shared Future Housing Officer was jointly funded by the Housing Executive (75%) and Ulidia (25%), and provided housing management support to residents of Carran Crescent, as well as tenants in the neighbouring estates. The Shared Future Housing Officer has facilitated the promotion of the principles of the scheme through a local, joined-up partnership approach, and provided a direct point of contact for residents living on the estate. The Shared Future Officer supported the principles of the voluntary charter and had daily contact with residents. Carran Crescent inhabitants were also encouraged to participate in community development plans for the scheme and the wider area to develop the voluntary charter based on the principles of Shared Future Housing. Unfortunately the funding for the Shared Future Officer is no longer available, which has caused some concern in the area. However, the funding for the Shared Future Officer was always time limited and ongoing support to the residents continues to be provided by the Association's Housing Officer.

2.2 Communication Plan

The issue of segregation was also addressed through the development of a communications plan. The purpose of the plan was to engender support for the scheme's ethos from local churches, schools, and voluntary organisations. The communications plan also contained provisos to ensure the wider community and those households already living in contiguous social housing estates had adequate information on the proposals of mixed-community housing schemes. Effective communication also garnered support through consultations with local politicians. Ulidia Housing Association and the Housing Executive used the plan to ensure stakeholders understood their approach to development, and to increase awareness among the wider community of the mixed-community living opportunities.

2.3 Allocation of the Properties

Under the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme, individuals and families wishing to access social rented accommodation (i.e. Housing Executive, or housing association) are assessed and awarded points based on housing need and extenuating factors. Applicants are subsequently placed onto a Common Waiting List, which is used by both the Housing Executive and housing associations to allocate properties. A number of models were explored to allocate properties at Carran Crescent within the constraints of the Common Selection Scheme that was approved by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board on 31st March 1999.

The Common Selection Scheme has stringent rules regarding allocations solely on the basis of need. Indeed many statements have been made about the rigidity of the scheme and the need to revisit the rules in order to promote and sustain integrated housing. Nevertheless, this is not the sole or even primary obstacle to preferential housing assignments based on religion or desire to live in a mixed community. According to legal advice taken by the Housing Executive, Article 29 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 makes it unlawful for anyone with power to dispose of any premises to discriminate on the ground of religious belief. Allocation of housing accommodation on the basis of religious belief is thereby rendered unlawful. Section 76(1) makes

a general rule that it is unlawful for a public authority to discriminate, or to aid or incite another person to discriminate against a person or class of persons on the ground of religious belief or political opinion. However, Section 76(4) provides an exception to that general rule, which is that the prohibition in 76(1) does not apply to any act or omission that is unlawful by virtue of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998, or would be unlawful but for an exception made by virtue Part VIII of that order. However, at present there is no exception within Part VIII of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order with respect to acts or omissions designed to facilitate inclusivity in terms of housing.

It was therefore determined that all properties in Carran Crescent had to be allocated in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme despite fear that the allocations policy might undermine the principles of the shared living vision. The housing estate is not equally balanced along religious divides, but is instead composed of a social mix, where no one community comprises more than 70% of households. Due to the small size of the community, as few as two reallocations could result in the scheme having a community above the agreed 70% threshold. Nevertheless, according to John Gartland, Chief Executive of Ulidia, 'it was important to use the Housing Selection Scheme as the criteria for all allocations as this is the common process used by housing associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Otherwise the selection of tenants would have been open to immense criticism'. It was very important that the waiting list included applicants from both communities who wanted to live in a mixed area. The location of Carran Crescent was based partially on having the right mix at the top of the waiting list to ensure that the 70% threshold was not exceeded.

An adapted version of the Housing Selection Scheme that supports Shared Future housing allocations was proposed by the Shared Future Advisory Panel, a group of voluntary, public sector and community representatives charged with supporting the Shared Future pilot projects, but has been met with opposition from the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. Altering the allocation process would require an unpopular and potentially illegal legislative change away from a policy based on fairness and need. Thus developing mixed communities while facilitating housing choice and respecting equality laws can be difficult. If the Shared Future policy is to extend to more divided communities, it must be in response to demand from residents, who actively seek to live in mixed areas. Nonetheless, it would be extremely difficult to prevent sectarian-minded households from moving into a mixed estate, although one would assume that they would generally choose not to do so. The Life and Times Survey, carried out annually in Northern Ireland frequently reports that 8 out of 10 people wish to live in mixed areas. However, in part due to legislation, this does not happen. The legislation also makes it difficult to sustain mixed communities within social housing estates, even when desired by the community. At present, 60% of Carran Crescent's households come from Catholic backgrounds, 30% from Protestant ones, and 10% from other backgrounds (an Irish traveller family and an ethnic minority household). By contrast, middle and upper income residents are more likely to live in religiously mixed communities (Boal, 1982; Murtagh, 2000).

Academics and policy makers are debating ways to facilitate some variation to the Common Selection Scheme without changing the legislation. The Troubles and the original claims of discrimination in housing allocations by the Civil Rights Movement campaign in the 1960s resulted in changes to Northern Ireland's housing policy and the enactment of a range of equality legislation. Any amendments to this legislation would be highly contentious and politically difficult. Quota-based housing allocation policies have been used by the Housing Executive in the past to facilitate housing for single people and the elderly, but these did not require an amendment to the legislation.

In an interview in 2008 for the Chartered Institute of Housing National Journal Housing, Paddy Gray, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ulster's School of the Built Environment, called for a new policy for designating mixed neighbourhoods that would sit outside the Common Selection Scheme.² Like the Housing Action Areas of the 1970s, an area would be designated once it met certain criteria. The Housing Executive, housing associations, public representatives and potential tenants would all be aware of the special characteristics of these areas which would encourage mixing along religious and ethnic lines. Allocations made outside the current scheme would need to be transparent and carefully managed to preserve a balance of community and individual preference. Families interested in living in religiously and ethnically mixed communities could apply for designated areas, which would have separate waiting lists. Individuals with a stated preference for living in a single identity area would not be placed on these lists. This would ensure a pool of applicants from both communities, which in turn would preserve the balance in each designated area.

2.4 Site Selection

In order to support the success of the first Shared Future development, it was important to build it in an area where demand for social housing was high, community and civic support was strong, and a history of community cooperation existed. Enniskillen was identified on this basis and the specific site was selected as an area that was small enough to be easily managed, with integrated education nearby, and where an appetite for mixed-community living already existed. This demand was particularly important for developing a mixed scheme given the allocation policy and the fact that many households on Enniskillen's Common Waiting List had indicated an interest in living a mixed-community setting. At the time of property allocation in Carran Crescent, 314 families in the Enniskillen area had registered to live in the Shared Future scheme. This is a tribute to the programme's perceived success but also to the careful selection of an appropriate site.

Site selection was particularly important since there was a degree of uncertainty about the scheme's initial success and its sustainability over the longer term. No one had experience in developing or managing Shared Future housing, and sectarian attacks were still occurring in Northern Ireland. To overcome these challenges, the Shared Future Housing Project Team and Advisory Panel comprising representatives from the voluntary and statutory sectors and community representatives in Northern Ireland were established to carry out the site selection. Consultation with the wider community and political representatives was carried out, ultimately resulting in an action plan to implement the Shared Future vision in the actual housing development. Ulidia also worked in partnership with the Community Cohesion Team in the Housing Executive over a period of some 18 months prior to the scheme opening and played a key role in developing the procedures and protocols for the pilot Shared Future Housing projects.

² Housing; Challenging Times Issue 28 July 2008

3. Controversy

As the first Shared Future housing development, Carran Crescent was subject to risks above and beyond those normally faced by housing developments. Any act of sectarian violence, or even general antisocial behaviour on the site could potentially have created a backlash against the Shared Future housing programme. Furthermore, due to the allocation policy, it was essential to select a site where demand already reflected the policy agenda. If households at Carran Crescent become over 70% Catholic or Protestant in the future, many will view the programme and the development as failures. The initial good-will and positive media attention about the development could quickly turn around.

Due to these concerns, Ulidia and the Housing Executive undertook extensive research and consultation to determine an ideally suited location. It was essential that the pilot project succeeded in order to generate support for the larger programme. As a result of this caution, however, Carran Crescent differs little from its surrounding neighbourhoods and its success as a Shared Future socially mixed community is, in effect, a rebranding of an existing phenomenon. Combined with government investment and positive media attention, this has generated some resentment in surrounding communities. According to Charlie McClintock, a resident of the area for 20 years and a community organiser, 'the existing residents in the Drumclay area should have been consulted and involved in the process of creating a Shared Future Scheme. We were already living the Shared Future ideal'.

McClintock also stated that 'the surrounding areas had been mixed for 22 years and when Carran Crescent kicked off there was a lot of concern as it was nothing really new as people in the area had always got on well. Questions were being asked, 'why all the publicity?' This concern was also expressed by residents of the mainly nationalist Cavanaleck area who, according to the local community leader, 'were a bit aggrieved at the publicity surrounding it, as it was not the first mixed scheme in Enniskillen'. In the mainly loyalist estate of Coleshill, two community leaders stated that many youths from mixed areas in Enniskillen come to their estate to express their ethnic identity, such as wearing Rangers tops, which they have to cover up in mixed areas. Some also engage in antisocial behaviour. This may suggest that some sectarian problems are dispersed rather than prevented by mixed communities.

In addition to creating resentment in pre-existing mixed communities, the process also brings into question the success of the Shared Future agenda. Residents have expressed that it was the new and high quality construction that drew them to Carran Crescent, not the mixed living. One resident, who was very positive about the development, stated that she was unaware that Carran Crescent was a 'shared area' when she moved there.³ Other residents were also drawn from surrounding estates. One resident, who along with his family was attracted by the housing stock, mentioned that, although a Catholic, he grew up without incident in a nearby Protestant area. Thus the programme may have been successful because the surrounding neighbourhood already met the criteria for success.

3. Despite the resident's claim, the Charter and the background to Shared Future Housing were explained to each resident before they signed for their tenancy. All of the residents signed a statement that, 'the "Shared Future Housing" has been explained to me through a letter and by representatives of Ulidia Housing Association and the Housing Executive. I fully understand the concepts of "Shared Future Housing" and the Neighbourhood Charter. I am willing to support Carran Crescent as a Shared Future Housing Scheme and participate in the development of a Neighbourhood Charter'.

In terms of management, community members have criticised the area's lack of community facilities. Ulidia is building more houses and has asked the local community association to provide these facilities. A new community group was formed in February 2008 to incorporate Carran Crescent and the immediate surrounding estates. The community, called Drumcarran, produces a newsletter. Concern was also expressed that Ulidia is based in Belfast which is over 70 miles away so are not local. In fact, there are no locally based housing associations in Enniskillen. The one local contact, Shared Future Housing Officer Gordon Magrath, had his funding withdrawn the 31st March 2008.

4. Successes and Challenges

Despite these criticisms, Carran Crescent has successfully put the Shared Future agenda on the minds of surrounding residents and local politicians, as well as those throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. While the resentment of some surrounding residents is disheartening, it also reflects a general desire to be acknowledged and supported for living in peaceful, mixed communities. Given that housing allocations in general, and mixed neighbourhoods more specifically, must be based on community demand, this is a good sign. The ability to generate demand for socially mixed housing throughout Northern Ireland will be a measure of its success.

Another positive outcome has been the interest of neighbouring residents in expanding Carran Crescent's neighbourhood charter to their own communities, particularly in the surrounding estates. All 20 of the households, who moved into the new development, signed the voluntary neighbourhood charter. No flags, emblems, sectarian symbols or graffiti have been posted, no complaints have been logged with Ulidia Housing Association, and no crimes have been reported to the Police Service. The scheme has now been open for two and a half years and residents have generally expressed contentment with it.

Finally, the Carran Crescent housing scheme is an accomplishment for the housing sector, and for the wider community in Northern Ireland. Prior to political stabilisation, Carran Crescent would have seemed almost impossible to achieve. While shared neighbourhoods have long existed, such as those surrounding Carran Crescent, the government was not previously prepared to promote shared living and it is still far from feasible in many areas of Northern Ireland. As the programme expands and generates positive results, however, it may begin to gain greater acceptance and become more plausible in more areas.

Undoubtedly, major challenges lie ahead. The current economic climate has placed considerable uncertainty on funding arrangements for various elements, integral to the success of the scheme, such as the Shared Future Housing Officer post and community policing posts. This budgetary constraint is an evolving issue and poses serious challenges for the wider housing sector, in addition to the success of shared living initiatives. Furthermore, the programme has yet to be tested in more controversial and contested areas. Carran Crescent is a successful but cautious step in the process of encouraging and supporting shared communities throughout Northern Ireland. Given the costs of failure and the potential political and social pitfalls, however, it is best to proceed with caution.

Appendix - Case Study Fieldwork and Interviews

The ICLRD research team conducted a series of site visits, interviews and focus groups. Each site was visited at least twice, once in 2008 and in 2009. Community representatives and local officials took our researchers on tours of facilities, housing units and community open spaces. Representatives of Ulidia Housing and the Housing Executive have also participated on the project's steering group, offering guidance and support.

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Interviews included: representatives from the Ulidia Housing Association, residents, local and central Housing Executive officials, community leaders in Carran Crescent and surrounding estates, representatives of the loyalist and nationalist communities, public representatives.

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