

**Combating Social Disadvantage in Social Housing Estates:  
The policy implications of a ten-year follow-up study**

**Tony Fahey, Michelle Norris,  
Desmond McCafferty and Eileen Humphreys**

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## Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES .....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	7
1. INTRODUCTION .....	12
1.1 Purpose of report.....	12
1.2 The original study .....	12
1.3 Rationale for the follow-up study .....	14
1.4 Aims and design of follow-up study.....	16
1.5 Consultative Committee .....	19
1.6 Research team .....	19
2 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT .....	21
2.1 Social housing policy .....	21
2.2 Area-based interventions: origins and policies.....	23
2.3 Rationale for area-based interventions.....	27
3 STRAND 1: SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE SEVEN ESTATES .....	36
3.1 National impact of the economic boom at small-area level.....	36
3.2 Impact on the seven estates .....	37
3.3 Variations between and within estates .....	41
3.4 Conclusion.....	53
4 STRAND 2: AREA-BASED INTERVENTIONS .....	55
4.1 National picture.....	55
4.2 National expenditure.....	56
4.3 Estate-level picture: inventory and sources of funding .....	63
4.4 Scale of spending in estates .....	75
4.5 Impact .....	77
<i>Governance</i> .....	83
4.6 Interventions through social housing .....	87
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	92
5.1 Conclusions.....	92
5.2 Recommendations .....	96
REFERENCES .....	101



## List of Tables

1.	Selected Indicators of Social Change in Electoral Districts in which the seven study estates are located, 1996-2006	37
2.	Remit, Implementation and Spatial Targeting of Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures, 1990-2006	56
3.	Central Government Expenditure on Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures, 1996 and 2006	60
4.	Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Cranmore, 2006	66
5.	Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Deanrock, 2006	67
6.	Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Fatima Mansions, 2006	68
7.	Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Moyross, 2006	69
8.	Current Expenditure on Area-Based Programmes in Four Estates, 2006	74
9.	Targeting and Impact of Area-Based Interventions with Strong Spatial Targeting, 1996 and 2006	79

## **Executive Summary**

This paper presents a policy-focused report on the research project 'Progress and Problems in Social Housing Estates: A ten-year follow-up study'. The project was carried out between late 2007 and early 2009 in seven local authority housing estates in Ireland and took the form of a follow-up to a study of the same estates which had been carried out in the period 1997-1999. The seven estates examined in the study are: Fatima Mansions and Finglas South in Dublin City; Fettercairn, Tallaght, in South County Dublin; Deanrock estate in Togher, Cork City; Moyross in Limerick City; Muirhevnamor in Dundalk and Cranmore in Sligo town.

### *Objectives*

The study sought, first, to assess the impact of the recent economic boom on social conditions in the seven estates, and second, to examine the growth and significance of 'area-based interventions' as responses to social disadvantage in the estates, taking account of national trends in these fields. Area-based interventions are measures which direct special resources at neighbourhoods that have been selected on the basis of their social disadvantage. An economic downturn had arrived by the final stages of the study, but its effects were only beginning to emerge as fieldwork was completed and did not form a focus of study.

### *Change in the estates*

The study found that the combined effect of economic boom and area-based interventions on the estates over the study period was, with some exceptions, substantial and positive, though at a time when the country as a whole was experiencing rapid economic growth, only one estate (Fatima Mansions) improved sufficiently to narrow the gap with the national average. Some of the diversity in social conditions within and between estates that had been observed in the original study in 1997-99 was reduced by the regeneration of worst-off areas (e.g. Fatima Mansions). Other estates developed reasonably well without major special programmes (e.g. Fettercairn). However, in some estates crime and social order problems persisted and, in one instance (Moyross), these problems worsened to the point where they brought a new wave of housing failure in spite of advances on other dimensions and a history of strong community development in the locality.

For the most part, it is not possible to separate out the effects on the estates of general change in social and economic conditions from those of area-based interventions. Some interventions left an obvious positive legacy (as in the case of the re-built Fatima Mansions), but even in those cases it is difficult to assess which aspects of interventions were most important (for example, as between re-building of housing and the upgrading of social services), or what role was played by side-effects of the intervention such as the displacement of problem residents to other areas.

#### *Area-based interventions: inputs*

One objective of the study was to try to quantify the inputs to area-based interventions, both nationally and in the estates in the study. It found that:

- In 2006 there were 23 national-level programmes that, to varying degrees, could be counted as providers of area-based interventions. They accounted for €968.8 million of public expenditure, of which €688 million was direct expenditure and €280 million consisted of tax breaks for commercial development in run-down urban areas.
- In the estates in the study, there was no pre-existing information on the overall level of expenditure deriving from these programmes. This lack of information on inputs from distinct but overlapping interventions in individual neighbourhoods is an important issue as it forms a barrier to effective planning and evaluation of these interventions.
- The study carried out a detailed analysis of area-based interventions operating in 2006 in four estates: Fatima Mansions, Moyross, Cranmore and Deanrock. It found that these interventions were generally multiple and varied and were complex in organisation and funding, though with differences between the estates on these counts.
- The number of community organisations which received funding in 2006 was 22 in Moyross, 16 in Fatima Mansions, 15 in Cranmore and five in Deanrock.
- The national funding sources that the estate-level organisations drew on were also numerous: 17 in Fatima Mansions, 15 in both Moyross and Cranmore, and 11 in Deanrock. Twenty-one of the 57 organisations and projects in the four estates drew on three or more sources of funding in 2006 and the majority drew on at least two sources.
- In all four estates, community development projects played an important role in assisting local organisations to access funding and to handle the complex administrative tasks that that funding gave rise to. Much of their work was focused on

interfacing between community organisations and agencies of the state and this role impinged on the resources they could devote to other work in their communities.

- On a rough estimate, public funding provided by national programmes to these interventions in 2006, expressed in per household terms, averaged €3,096 across the four estates, ranging from a low of €921 per household in Deanrock to a high of €3,985 per household in Moyross. These amounts do not include funding provided from sub-national sources (e.g. local authorities) or from philanthropic bodies.
- The Community Employment scheme is a core element of much of the area-based social provision now in place in Ireland and its contribution in that regard should be more clearly recognised and incorporated into the rationale for providing it and the bases on which it is evaluated.
- Progress made to date 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. Examples of good practice in all these areas can now be found in the estates in the present study and more widely in Ireland. The challenge is to build on these examples of good practice so that they become mainstream and central parts of the social services system rather than scattered examples existing on the margins.

#### *Area-based interventions: impact*

This study did not conduct original evaluation of the outcomes of area-based interventions but drew on existing evaluations and local observation to reflect on overall impact.

Evaluations of many individual programmes have found them to be effective in their own terms. However, a collective view of programmes gives rise to concerns. The rationale for area-targeting of expenditure is not always clear, there is a confusing proliferation of programmes and schemes, overall responsibility is fragmented, funding streams and local governance arrangements are overly complex, the funding principles they operate are often inflexible in the light of local conditions, and while in principle they aim to empower communities in practice they are often rigidly controlled by centrally defined eligibility criteria and accountability regulations. Some streamlining of programmes has recently been introduced (such as the amalgamation of the Community Development and Local Social Development programmes into a single Local and Community Development programme). Reductions in public expenditure are also likely to impel consolidation, as was recommended by the McCarthy report in 2009 (Special Group Public Service

Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, 2009) and has been promised in the programme for government adopted by the newly elected government in February 2011. Undoubtedly, questions of fragmentation in local governance, especially vis-à-vis local authorities, still remain. In addition, monitoring of programmes is excessively concerned with inputs and processes rather than outcomes. In regard to inputs, monitoring is generally restricted to discrete projects and there are no mechanisms for arriving at an overview of what all local interventions taken together amount to in particular neighbourhoods.

*Recommendations:*

- Targeting of social programmes by area rather than by population category should be utilised only where there is a clear rationale and an effective methodology for employing this approach;
- Interventions in particular areas should be assessed collectively as a response to local need and in light of area-wide information on existing publicly-funded inputs and of the shortcomings in those inputs which interventions are intended to rectify;
- Progress has been made in recent years in improving the information-base on social need in local areas but the mapping of public service inputs on a small-area basis is weak and needs to be developed to the point where it can provide adequate contextual information for the planning of additional local interventions.
- The structure and governance of interventions could be simplified and greater responsibility could be given to local authorities in the local coordination and management of programmes.
- Community engagement, local decision-making and local autonomy have been enhanced to some degree through area-based interventions, despite continuing limitations in local democracy. It is important that gains in these areas are not lost in re-institutionalising ABIs.
- Where spatial targeting is used, programmes should be required to show that they have good methods for selecting areas, that they have effective means of identifying and reaching the neediest within those areas, and that they can monitor whether and to what degree they have actually reached the areas and groups they target.
- 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.

- Estate regeneration programmes should avoid excessive focus on capital programmes (refurbishment or replacement of dwellings, rehabilitation of the physical environment, provision of community buildings) to the neglect of services. The balance between capital and current expenditure in area-based regeneration schemes should be based on good diagnosis of what is needed in those areas rather than on *a priori* preference for capital or current expenditure. Particular attention should be paid to appropriate services for acutely disadvantaged families and individuals which should be regarded as central to regeneration schemes rather than as additions at the margins.
- The Community Employment scheme, which provides job-placements for the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people in order to help them get back to work, has become an important source of labour for much area-based social service provision in poor neighbourhoods and its role in that regard should be more clearly recognised and evaluated.
- Many examples of intensive, high-quality support services for acutely disadvantaged households can be found in disadvantaged areas but these need to be extended more fully into the mainstream social services system.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of report**

This document presents a policy-focused summary report on the research project 'Progress and Problems in Social Housing Estates: A ten-year follow-up study'. The project was carried out between late 2007 and early 2009 in seven local authority housing estates in Ireland and took the form of a follow-up to a study of the same estates which had been carried out in the period 1997-1999. The original study was directed by the same core group of social researchers as the present follow-up [see T. Fahey (ed.) *Social Housing in Ireland: A study of success, failures and lessons learned*, Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 1999, for an account of the original study.]

The purpose of the present report is to extract aspects of the findings from the study of most relevance to policy makers and make recommendations for policy. It draws from a number of research papers on major aspects and strands of the study prepared by the members of the project research team. The full set of research papers is being finalised and edited for publication as a book-length, integrated academic volume on the study. The present summary was compiled by Tony Fahey, Michelle Norris, Des McCafferty and Eileen Humphreys but much of the material it contains is taken directly from the research papers and other material provided by research team members.

### **1.2 The original study**

In 1997-1998, a team of social researchers studied social conditions in seven local authority housing estates in Ireland – three in the Dublin area and one each in Cork city, Limerick city, Sligo town and Dundalk. The study sought to examine and explain the differing levels of success of these estates in social and community terms and to draw implications for policy, with reference especially to policy on social housing provision and management. It paid particular attention to the landlord role of local authority housing departments. This focus was adopted in view of a widespread concern at the time that poor management of housing estates had contributed to the problems of the sector and needed to be rectified. Placing the seven case study estates in the larger context of social housing in Ireland, the study found that most local authority housing had been successful and had created vibrant neighbourhoods which had merged seamlessly into the general fabric of Irish life (as indicated, for example, by the degree to which local authority housing

had been privatised through tenant purchase schemes and had experienced strong buyer demand in the overall housing market).

The study also found, however, that some estates or portions of estates had failed, in the sense that they were in low demand among tenants, had waiting lists of residents who wanted to get out, and showed physical signs of neighbourhood decay (defaced and boarded-up buildings, rubbish, absence of foliage, etc). Social disadvantage was quite widespread among residents in local authority housing estates, but housing failure was more spatially concentrated: it was absent or slight in some estates but was a major feature of others, and even in the least successful of the estates, there was considerable internal micro-variation so that conditions were much worse in some roads or blocks of flats than in others within the same estate. While instances of failure, particularly in extreme forms, were few in number, they tended to have high social visibility and a disproportionately negative impact on the *image* of local authority housing. In the seven estates studied in the project, conditions were representative of these patterns in that, alongside widespread and high levels of social disadvantage in general, the quality of the neighbourhood environment ranged from the quite good to the quite troubled and did so within as well as between estates.

Taking account of general patterns of disadvantage within social housing, the original study sought to examine how and why some segments of social housing failed. It found that physical factors – the location, build quality, housing type and size of estates – were of secondary significance and that social factors were the primary proximate influence. As a general rule, people were willing to live in poor buildings if the quality of community and neighbourhood life was good, but they were unwilling to live in good buildings if they considered the quality of community/neighbourhood life to be poor.

The core factors that defined the quality of community and neighbourhood life for residents had to do with various aspects of social 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. The typical view of residents in locations most affected by these factors was that while community was strong and supportive in the area, the social quality of the locality was undermined by small groups of highly disruptive neighbours. Residents considered that they suffered doubly from the disruptive minority – first, because they were often the direct victims of their actions, and second because the

disruptive few undermined the reputation of estates and gave rise to a stigma which affected all residents equally. While the distinction drawn by residents between the 'sound' majority and the few disruptive troublemakers undoubtedly oversimplified reality, it nevertheless seemed to capture an important part of the dynamic of decline in unsuccessful estates.

While the majority of residents often considered themselves the victims of troublemaking minorities within estates, those troublemakers, viewed from a different perspective, often emerged as victims themselves. They typically came from dysfunctional family backgrounds or suffered from problems such as mental illness, personality disorders, drug or alcohol dependence or a persistent history of personal failure and low self esteem. They thus had needs and entitlements that needed to be taken into account in devising remedies for problem estates.

The study concurred with the criticisms of the historically poor estate management record of local authorities but also found that moves towards a more hands-on responsive management approach had been in place since the early 1990s. The impact of that development had not become evident by the time the study was carried out.

The conclusions and recommendations of the study highlighted the need for social housing policy and practice to focus on social order issues and move them to the top of the agenda in efforts to regenerate problem estates. It pointed in particular to the need to put in place both preventive and treatment measures that would target those who were the cause of disruption and provide them with the supports and controls that would enable them to integrate more effectively into the community. However, it also emphasised the importance of not overstating the prevalence or severity of social problems in local authority housing, in view of the large segments of the social housing sector where these problems were absent or slight.

### **1.3 Rationale for the follow-up study**

In the ten years after the original study was carried out there were two major strands of change that are likely to have affected the seven estates. One was the boom in the Irish economy that took off around 1994-95 and was only beginning to affect the estates when the original study began in 1997. During this boom, which lasted until 2007, Ireland had among the fastest growth rates in the developed world and moved from high

unemployment in the late 1980s and early 1990s to virtually full employment by 2007. As these developments unfolded, a number of questions arose including to what degree the benefits had filtered into poorer neighbourhoods, including our study estates, and what could be learned from their experience about the effects of rising national prosperity on deprived urban areas generally.

The second key development was the growing reliance in public policy on area-based interventions as a means to alleviate disadvantage and promote social and economic progress in deprived areas. This development was common to many countries and reflected a widespread international view that characteristics of poor places as well as poor people needed to be taken account of and tackled by anti-poverty policy. In the social housing field it coincided with a widespread international shift away from new build to regeneration of existing run-down estates. In Ireland, the interest in area-targeted measures expanded from the early 1990s and gave rise to a large and diverse range of programmes originating in a number of government departments and agencies. While these programmes have generally been closely monitored from a rule compliance viewpoint and some have been subjected to outcome assessment, the usual practice in monitoring has been to focus on inputs and processes rather than outcomes and to look at programmes individually rather than at their collective scale and impact. In fact, schemes of this type have proliferated to the point where they now encompass a wide array of activities that are difficult to list and count, much less view in an integrated way. This background led to a view in this study that it would be useful first to provide a national overview of the scale and nature of area-based anti-poverty programmes in Ireland (a bird's eye view at a national level) and, against that background, to provide a local perspective on what these programmes amounted to in the seven study estates (a local-level view of what they mean on the ground).

Prompted by interest in these issues, core members of the same team that had carried out the original study re-assembled in 2007 in order to design and carry out a ten-year follow-up study of the same seven estates. Additional members were subsequently added to the team (see below). Design work and the securing of funding took place in the latter part of 2007, field work was carried out in 2008 and early 2009, and analysis and write-up extended through the first half of 2009.

#### **1.4 Aims and design of follow-up study**

The seven estates examined in the original study were: Fatima Mansions and Finglas South in Dublin City Council area; Fettercairn, Tallaght, in South County Dublin; Deanrock estate in Togher, Cork City; Moyross in Limerick City; Muirhevnamor in Dundalk and Cranmore in Sligo town. The overall aim of the follow-up study was to assess the nature and impact of the socio-economic and policy developments outlined in the previous section on these estates, viewed in national context, and to draw implications for policy. The thoroughness of the assessment that was possible was limited by various data limitations, particularly the absence of rigorous, comprehensive data on social trends in the seven estates and the lack of appropriate controls that would enable the impact of various factors to be isolated. Nevertheless, sufficient information, both quantitative and qualitative, was available to enable us to outline major features of change and to add substantially to our knowledge of how area-based initiatives operated in Ireland and more particularly in the study estates. The period which the study sought to encompass consisted of the decade between 1997-99 and 2007-09, though it drew on Census data for 1996 and 2006 for monitoring social change in the estates over the period.

The recent sharp downturn in the economy had become evident by mid-2008, part way through the fieldwork for the study, though the scale of that downturn did not become clear until the end of that year and the beginning of 2009. This downturn means that the study estates are now located in a very different national and international context than that which obtained over the previous ten years. The boom is definitely over and a recession that might endure for some time is now fully arrived. The present study has persisted with its main aims despite these changed circumstances: it still focuses primarily on the boom years and the effects of rising national prosperity and growth in area-based initiatives on the study estates. However, it has also sought to draw out lessons for policy on disadvantaged areas in the present, very different, circumstances, where living standards are under pressure, unemployment has soared again, and social spending programmes are facing cutbacks. All of these circumstances point to the possibility not only that social disadvantage in general will worsen in poor neighbourhoods, but also that a new wave of housing failures could arise in particularly vulnerable areas, thereby adding an additional layer of disadvantage onto those areas. Although the present study cannot present any information on the effects of the changed economic and fiscal circumstances on the study estates, the lessons it contains on interventions that helped improve conditions in those areas during the good times can be useful as the need for effective interventions increases

in the more challenging years ahead, even as the funding available to pay for them shrinks.

The study sought to fulfil the aims set out above by means of a two-stranded approach – a *social strand* focusing on socio-economic change in the estates and a *policy strand* which aimed to document and analyse public interventions in the estates, particularly those that could be classified as area-based interventions. The specific objectives of these two strands were as follows.

*Strand 1: economic boom and socio-economic change in the estates*

1. Document change in social conditions in the study estates under a number of headings: employment, unemployment and living standards; housing standards and the built environment; social order; family, quality of life and general well-being, neighbourhood and community; relationships with state agencies
2. Locate these changes within broader social and economic trends in urban areas in Ireland.

The methods used for this strand consisted of qualitative assessment and direct observation of social conditions in the seven estates, complemented by analysis of aggregate statistical data in order to locate the estates in their wider social context. Particular use is made of the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) from censuses 1996 and 2006 both to describe the local urban context of the individual study estates and to track changes in patterns of deprivation in Irish urban areas in general. In some of our estates, the area units for which SAPS data were available (Electoral Divisions, EDs) closely matched estate boundaries, and in others, the SAPS area units were larger than the estates. In the latter cases, this exercise had value in revealing trends in the wider neighbourhoods in which estates were located.

At the suggestion of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, one of the funders of the study, it was agreed that, in view of the often intensive consultation and data collection that has occurred in many local authority estates over recent years, any new collection of data from residents in the estates should be limited and should be confined to situations where the required information was not already available from other sources. The study would concentrate, rather, on drawing together all the existing reports and compilations of information already generated on the estates, and on national programmes

that were relevant to them, and would use these as the major sources for assessing social conditions and policy impacts in the estates. These sources would then be complemented by a number of additional types of data, namely:

- a) local observation and resource inventories, including photographic recording of the local environment;
- b) interviews with key informants such as local community activists, local officials, gardaí, clergy, etc;
- c) analysis of local official records and data, where available and accessible (e.g. evaluations of estate regeneration or community development schemes, documents arising from community initiatives such as regeneration consultations, oral histories, local surveys of health and well-being, etc.)

*Strand 2: The nature, scale and impact of local area-based interventions*

The policy strand of the study sought to outline the growth of international interest in area-based anti-poverty initiatives since the 1960s, provide a national overview of these initiatives in Ireland, trace their presence and significance in the study estates, and draw conclusions on their value for combating social disadvantage. At the national level in Ireland, the challenge this objective posed was to delimit what could be counted as area-based anti-poverty initiatives and quantify their total scale. To that end, the study took the year 2006 as the reference year and sought to assemble information on the design and expenditure of all national programmes that could be counted as area-based and as having an anti-poverty focus. It thereby sought to arrive at a bird's-eye view of this whole field of activity in Ireland in the year 2006. In the counterpart examination of the study estates, the goal was to provide a local view of the same field in the same year though, as we shall see below, the impact of certain regional and local programmes, along with contributions from private philanthropy, meant that what happened on the ground in estates was not simply a local reflection of national programmes. The complexity of estate-level activity and the difficulty in assembling comprehensive, accurate information on relevant schemes were such that the team decided to focus intensively on four of the seven estates – two that clearly had high levels of intervention, and two where relevant initiatives were fewer in number. The analysis of programmes in these estates then proceeded through four steps:

- i. Compile a detailed **inventory** of interventions – i.e. identify and classify every substantial area-based programme in any way related to alleviating disadvantage that

was implemented in the study estates or that reached significant populations within the estates. The main focus was on programmes that received at least some public funding. Programmes funded by private philanthropy were also found in some estates, but as the accuracy and completeness of information on philanthropic supports were uncertain, they are only partly integrated into the analysis.

- ii. Quantify the **inputs** associated with each programme, particularly expenditure, and sum them to arrive at an estimate of total inputs per estate and per household in each estate;
- iii. Examine the **outputs** of the programmes and in so far as the data allow, comment on these;
- iv. In so far as possible, examine the question of programme **impact**. In view of the number and variety of activities involved, the study could not provide formal impact assessment. Nevertheless, it seemed possible to offer some comment on the impact of all initiatives viewed together, if only by assessing their overall scale and fit with the kinds of problems in the estates they sought to address.

## 1.5 Consultative Committee

With the assistance of the Combat Poverty Agency (now incorporated into the Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs), the initial funding agency to offer support for the study, a Consultative Committee for the project was established and met periodically to offer guidance on the design and implementation of the study.

- Kasey Treadwell-Shine (Combat Poverty Agency – chairperson)
- Eddie Lewis (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government)
- Sinéad Pentony (Pobal)
- Jerry Byrne (Dublin City Council)
- Donal Guerin (Cork City Council)

## 1.6 Research team

The final research team for the study was drawn from a number of institutions and consisted of the following:

UCD: Tony Fahey (coordinator), Michelle Norris, Catherine-Anne Field, Aileen O’Gorman

NUIM: Mary Corcoran

UCC: Cathal O'Connell, Joe Finnerty, Alan Egan

UL/Mary Immaculate College: Des McCafferty, Eileen Humphreys, Eoin Devereaux,  
Amanda Haynes, Martin Power

Sligo IT: Perry Share, Jackie O'Toole

Independent: Trutz Haase.

## **2 National and international policy context**

### **2.1 Social housing policy**

The neighbourhoods which are the focus of this study originated as local authority housing estates. It was already the case when we studied these estates ten years ago that much of the housing had been privatised through tenant purchase. Also, the growth of area-targeted schemes has meant that the range of local agencies that are relevant to life within the estates has extended well beyond the local authorities in recent years. Yet, these estates continue to draw much of their identity and character from their origins in the social housing system and from the continuing relationship which many residents have with local authorities as landlords. Even former tenants who have bought out their homes often still think of themselves and their neighbourhoods as having a link with local authority housing departments. This link would be absent in housing estates originating in the private sector. It is therefore relevant to locate the present study in the context of developments in social housing policy.

Like many other elements of the welfare state, the social housing sector has contracted in many countries in the past two decades as cuts in state capital funding have reduced new housing output (Stephens *et al*, 2002). In some cases, such as the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, reduced state funding has been paralleled by various privatization and externalisation measures, such as increased reliance on private sector funding, sales of dwellings to tenants and transfer of ownership or responsibility for management services for the housing stock to alternative providers (Gibb, 2002). Low income and often multiply disadvantaged households are now more heavily concentrated in social housing than was traditionally the case (Scanlon and Whitehead, 2007). The regulatory environment has also changed, though in different ways in different countries. In many cases, reduced government funding has increased the management autonomy of social landlords (Gruis and Nieboer, 2007). However, in the UK, government has subjected social housing providers to greater monitoring, evaluation and regulation and has used both financial incentives and legal enforcement to shape their behaviour (Cowan and McDermont, 2006).

At the time of the original study of the seven estates in 1997-99 the bulk of dwellings in the social housing sector in Ireland (that is, apart from those that had been sold to tenants) were owned and managed by local authorities. The latter, as landlords, had traditionally focused on property management rather than tenant welfare. They had operated with a

hierarchical, rule-based, desk-bound culture and a centralised approach to service delivery (O'Connell, 1999). Although relatively benign and paternalistic, this culture involved minimal interaction with tenants and no partnership or consultation. In addition, in contrast to practice in the majority of EU states, rents were linked to the income of tenants and bore no relation to the costs of providing, managing and maintaining dwellings (Scanlon and Whitehead, 2007). Our study of ten years ago revealed widespread indifference or even hostility towards local authority housing departments among tenants in estates. Despite this and the high rate of poverty among the tenants, a number of the seven estates accommodated vibrant, successful communities. The study at that time also found examples of able and committed local authority housing managers who had begun to develop innovative practice and to engage closely with residents and community groups on estates (O'Connell and Fahey, 1999; Guerin, 1999).

In the decade since then, developments in Irish social housing policy and management have in some ways echoed wider European trends and in other ways have remained distinctive. The role of non-profit housing associations has grown, albeit less dramatically than in the UK. In 1997, non-profit housing associations provided 15 per cent of social housing in Ireland (approximately 15,000 dwellings), and this rose to 18.6 per cent (25,442 dwellings) by 2006 (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, various years; Mullins *et al*, 2003). The *Plan for Social Housing* in 1991 had sought improved management standards in local authority housing and from the late 1990s a plethora of measures to achieve this were put in place (Norris and O'Connell, 2002). Recommendations made in the 1996 policy statement *Better Local Government* further encouraged more strategic, participative and evidence-based management in local authority housing (Department of the Environment, 1996).

One unusual feature of social housing in Ireland is that until recently, the Irish government has funded 100 per cent of the capital cost of social housing construction. This funding increased sharply after 1997 with output doubling in the following decade (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, various years). However, severe contractions in social housing output in the previous decade meant that the base from which this increase occurred was low and the absolute contribution of the social sector to housing supply during the economic boom was relatively small.

A more significant development in this period was the growing reliance on rent subsidies for welfare dependent households in the private rented sector as a form of quasi-social housing support. Starting from a low base in the late 1980s, when the state spent less than €10 million on rent supplements, spending on this form of support rose to almost €70 million by the mid-1990s and ballooned to €440 million by 2008. In the latter year, 74,000 households received rent supplements, which was the equivalent of about two-thirds the population of households in social housing proper. In 2005 government announced that in future most rent supplement claimants of 18 months or more duration would be accommodated in dwellings leased by local authorities from private landlords; and in 2008 it announced that all new social housing will be procured by leasing dwellings from the private sector (Norris and Coates, 2010). This means that the private rental sector now makes a key contribution to accommodating less well-off households that were formerly housed mainly by social landlords. This approach is to the fore in housing some new disadvantaged categories such as immigrants and in the future is likely to play an even greater role in this regard (Fahey and Fanning, 2010). Future studies of disadvantaged housing areas in Irish towns and cities will need to take account of this fact and extend their scope beyond the traditional social housing sector. In addition, lessons about housing for the poor learned from the study of social housing will need to be adapted to apply to disadvantaged housing in the private sector.

## **2.2 Area-based interventions: origins and policies**

Area-based social inclusion measures entail the application of resources, both public and private, to specific geographical areas, as opposed to particular sectors of society, in order to alleviate disadvantage. Such measures first emerged in Europe in the 1960s and were initially inspired by the example of American efforts to tackle the ghettoisation of racial minorities in deprived and marginalised neighbourhoods in US cities. Similarly, the first UK intervention – the Urban Programme – was developed in England in the late 1960s in response to the growing evidence of urban decay in inner cities and fears of social unrest and ethnic tension (Parkinson, 1996). In both Europe and America these programmes have expanded significantly since then, driven by concerns about urban problems and, in Europe, by the availability of EU funding for area-based interventions.

Measures of this kind first emerged in Ireland in the 1980s when unemployment was high, especially long-term unemployment, and means of tackling ‘unemployment blackspots’ were sought. The Third EU Poverty Programme (1989-94) set up pilot schemes with a

broad anti-poverty focus, and from this emerged the Area-Based Response to Long-Term Unemployment, followed in 1994-98 by schemes under the EU's Urban Initiative in North Dublin, Tallaght and Cork. The first area programme for Integrated Rural Development (1988-90), which was established by the Department of Agriculture in twelve pilot areas with a particular focus on community and local enterprise (Walsh *et al*, 1998), was developed to respond to these problems.

From these measures local 'partnership companies' emerged. Twenty of these were established to target urban neighbourhoods and 18 were set up for rural areas. The rural partnerships were generally known as 'Leader partnerships' because they were the institutional mechanism used at local level to administer the EU-funded Leader Initiative with the objective to promote bottom-up rural development. In addition, 33 community groups emerged to carry out similar work in small towns outside the large concentrations of disadvantage targeted by the partnerships (Walsh *et al*, 1998). The number of these organisations grew during the 1990s and into the early 2000s, rising to over 90 partnership and Leader companies by the middle of the 2000s. These local partnership companies are non-statutory agencies, managed by representatives of government, business and the third sector, which are tasked with devising multi-dimensional plans to address spatial concentrations of disadvantage. They focus especially on (1) combating long-term unemployment; (2) assisting the development of local economic and employment projects, particularly by promoting social economy projects and entrepreneurs within low-income communities; and (3) supporting more traditional community development projects, particularly for vulnerable groups (Teague, 2006). This remit is implemented principally by providing grant aid to relevant local community based organisations and also through support for these organisations from partnership staff. In response to concerns about the proliferation and fragmentation of diverse local development activities, the government initiated a 'local Cohesion Process' in 2004, the purpose of which was to achieve greater integration of local development companies, align their area boundaries with those of local authorities and provide more complete coverage of disadvantaged areas. This process was slow to evolve, but to date it has resulted in the reduction of partnership and Leader companies from over 90 to 54.

Another major area-based initiative was the Community Development Programme, which was introduced in the early 1990s to fund community development resource centres in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It emerged from funding schemes for interventions of this

type which were initiated in the early 1980s and which grew into the principal source of revenue for community development activity in Ireland (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh, 1990; Geoghegan and Powell, 2006). By 2009 there were some 180 community development projects around the country, but as the condition of the public finances worsened in 2009, their number was reduced to 164 in 2010. Partly in response to financial pressures arising from the recent fiscal crisis and partly in order to rationalise provision, two major local development programmes – the Community Development Programme and the funding programme for the partnerships (Local Development Social Inclusion Programme) – were integrated into a single programme in 2010. This new programme, called the Local and Community Development Programme, will be implemented by non-profit agencies called Local Development Companies (LDCs), which in most cases have developed from the amalgamation of Community Development Projects and Partnerships. The operational area of the 54 LDCs will cover the country as a whole, although within these areas their work will focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods and groups.

The most significant social benefit that emerged as the economy took off in the 1990s was the reduction in unemployment and in particular long-term unemployment. Nevertheless, concentrations of unemployment persisted in some localities, albeit at lower levels than previously, and some urban neighbourhoods continued to display patterns of cumulative disadvantage. Economic and labour market interventions (job search, training for the unemployed, addressing low educational qualification, small-scale enterprise development) have therefore remained a central focus of many area-based interventions, particularly the local partnership companies. Some area-based measures, such as the Local Employment Service, have also sought to support the long-term unemployed to access jobs. The Community Employment and Jobs Initiatives schemes have also had additional neighbourhood-level benefits because the work placements they provide for the long-term unemployed have served as an important source of staff for community services. Poor neighbourhoods have gained disproportionately from these benefits since they are prioritised in the allocation of resources under these schemes (Geoghegan and Powell, 2006).

From the mid-1990s, mirroring the trend in the UK, the scope of area-based initiatives expanded beyond the early focus on job training and employment initiatives to include issues such as family breakdown, lone parenthood, child behavioural problems, drug abuse, crime and anti-social behaviour, and the high incidence of health problems among

disadvantaged sub-groups in the population. Examples of such new programmes which emerged in Ireland in this period include Springboard and Family Resource Centres in the area of family support, the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme and the National Childcare Investment Programme in child care, and the Youth Diversion Programme, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund and Special Projects to Assist Disadvantaged Youth in youth work.

While the area-based initiatives just outlined were wholly new and grew up external to the existing mainstream social services, there was also a category of interventions which overlapped with mainstream services and were 'area-based' in that they sought to 'bend' mainstream services to favour poor neighbourhoods. For instance, from 1984 eight separate programmes to provide pre-school services and grant aid to schools serving a disadvantaged student body were put in place. Following a review in 2005, these were integrated under a single support programme for qualifying schools called Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) (Department of Education and Science, 2005). Similarly the Remedial Works Scheme was established in 1985 to fund the regeneration of run-down social housing estates. In 2001 two new area-based measures were established which similarly focused on channelling existing mainstream funding towards disadvantaged areas – RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development), which is responsible for urban areas, and CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais), for rural areas. These programmes seek to promote local development planning and have small amounts of new funding to improve the physical, social and community infrastructure of the target areas. However, their main remit is to increase the attention given to poor neighbourhoods in the allocation of mainstream government funding (Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2006).

All of the area-based measures just mentioned have an anti-poverty character in that they target expenditure or services on poor areas with the intention that the resulting benefits flow directly to poor households in those areas. There is another category of measures which are also directed at disadvantaged neighbourhoods and have a certain anti-poverty character but which do not seek to benefit poor households directly. These programmes seek to improve conditions in poor neighbourhoods by increasing the general level of investment in those areas so as to draw in stronger businesses and services or a higher proportion of residents with secure jobs and incomes. In Ireland, the main examples of such initiatives were the Urban Renewal Scheme, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme

and the Rural Renewal Scheme. These schemes provided tax breaks to owner occupiers and landlords who purchased new or refurbished residential or business premises in designated urban and rural areas. The schemes thus operated on the basis of tax revenue forgone rather than actual expenditure. Disadvantaged households were generally unable to participate in such schemes since they would lack the incomes to benefit from tax breaks or to acquire borrowings for investment (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2005). Yet these measures could indirectly improve the lot of poor households in poor neighbourhoods by improving the physical and socio-economic profile of the locality, bringing in new services and amenities and generally reducing their isolation from mainstream society.

### **2.3 Rationale for area-based interventions**

As area-based programmes proliferated, the range of rationales for adopting spatial targeting as a basis for social service delivery has also grown. None of these rationales is uncontested and there is a great deal of uncertainty as to whether area-targeting of social and welfare services can offer any real advantages over more traditional social inclusion measures which target sections of the population rather than territorial units. It is useful to note what these rationales are in order to recognise their influence in the Irish context, while also noting the doubts that arise as to whether the thinking on which they are based is valid in this context.

One important rationale for area-based interventions is that, if poverty is concentrated spatially, then confining interventions to the worst affected areas offers 'efficiency' and 'completeness' in reaching poor individuals (Turnstall and Lupton, 2003). A rationale along these lines became stronger in Ireland in the 1980s due to changes in the geography of poverty, including the emergence of unemployment 'blackspots' as well as spatial concentrations of vulnerable groups such as drug addicts and lone parents (Walsh, 1999). However, for this justification to hold, both the *rate* and the *incidence* of poverty in the targeted areas must be high. In other words, most of the population in these areas must be poor, and most of the poor must live in them. The lower the rate of poverty in the designated areas, the greater the number of unintended beneficiaries that will be included (inefficiency in targeting); on the other hand the lower the incidence of poverty, the fewer poor people who will be included (incompleteness). This problem with area-based targeting has been recognised for a long time. For example, Townsend (1979: 560) pointed out that, in Britain, 'however we care to define economically or socially deprived

areas, unless we include over half the areas in the country, there will be more poor persons or poor children living outside of them than in them’.

It has been argued that the geography of poverty in Ireland, and specifically the low incidence of poor households in relatively high-risk areas is such that spatial targeting is inefficient and incomplete (Watson *et al*, 2005). The targeting rationale is also undermined somewhat by the relatively dispersed settlement pattern. In disadvantaged rural areas, poverty tends to be widely dispersed and characterised by problems of under-employment (rather than concentrated unemployment), social isolation in a context of population decline and demographic imbalance, poor infrastructure, and poor accessibility to services. Hence, several commentators argue that however useful the area-based approach may be in urban areas, it is inappropriate in the rural environment.

Closely linked to the targeting rationale for area-based interventions is a rationing rationale which justifies the provision of funds to certain areas and the exclusion of others on grounds of scarcity of resources. According to Walsh (1999), this was an important consideration in the initial development of area-based initiatives in Ireland in the 1980s, when (as is the case again now) there were severe constraints on public expenditure. Rationing may be primarily motivated either by a desire to close the gap in living standards and opportunities between poorer and wealthier areas (i.e., re-distribution consideration) or, alternatively, in order to maximise the return on investment (an efficiency argument). Depending on the relative weight given to these two considerations, designation of areas for funding purposes will be based on needs (in the case of a redistribution focus) or on criteria such as the area’s potential or capacity to deliver a programme and absorb the available funding available (an efficiency focus). Where there is an efficiency focus, potential and capacity to benefit are typically assessed on the basis of competitive bidding and the production of strategies and action plans – with the consequences that the most disadvantaged areas may be marginalised from the process and gain little benefit (Tunstall and Lupton, 2003).

A third rationale for area-based interventions relates to the widely researched phenomenon of neighbourhood or area effects. These refer to the cumulative and qualitatively different effects for people, infrastructure and organisations arising from the concentration of poverty at neighbourhood level (Tunstall and Lupton, 2003; Watson *et al*, 2005). Here, the idea is that it is worse to be poor in a poor area than in a mixed area and

that living among poor neighbours compounds the disadvantage arising from one's own poverty (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001). Problems sometimes said to be linked to area effects include lower incomes, higher rates of physical and mental ill-health, deficiencies in child development, behavioural problems in children, and alienation from mainstream society. In addition, as Kleinman (1999) points out, negative externalities arising from concentrated deprivation (e.g., more crime) can also impact on the wider society. According to this line of argument, it is appropriate to respond to people-based poverty by providing resources to households through such mechanisms as social welfare payments, childcare, and housing, but area effects mean that these measures may not be enough to change the trajectory of places characterised by concentrated poverty. As we will see later, there is no consensus that neighbourhood effects are as significant as some would argue, but nevertheless they have been pointed to as a justification for additional interventions at the area level to support individuals and families, organisations (businesses, public institutions, voluntary bodies) and infrastructure (Tunstall and Lupton, 2003; Watson *et al*, 2005).

The fourth rationale for area-based interventions relates to small-scale piloting of innovations in the design and delivery of programmes, which also tied into notions of localism as an advantage in efforts to tackle local problems. Here, the potential to develop good models which by-passed the rigidities of existing local government but could subsequently be mainstreamed in policy and practice is often a criterion for funding over and above that which might arise from level of need or development potential in a neighbourhood. In Ireland, area-based initiatives based on local development partnerships were conceived initially, at least in part, in these terms. The importance of innovation as an objective of area-based initiatives was strongly influenced by the availability of EU funding for local development from the late 1980s. All EU Community Initiatives included a requirement for innovation in policy or practice as a criterion for funding. This emphasis arose in part from a view in central government (particularly the Department of the Taoiseach) that central decision-making was too remote and local government too inflexible to resolve intractable local social problems (Haase and McKeown, 2003). By allowing local communities to experiment with employment creation and anti-poverty actions outside of the constraints of existing structures, the hope was that both central and local administration could learn from their experience and adapt mainstream programmes accordingly. The Local Employment Service, for instance, was piloted in this way and subsequently mainstreamed. However, while Sable's (1996) review of local partnership

companies in Ireland highly lauded their innovative capacity, other studies have questioned the extent of learning that these initiatives produced (Haase and McKeown, 2003).

A fifth rationale for area-based initiatives is that they can improve the effectiveness of anti-poverty policy by integrating and co-ordinating public services at local level and by making them more responsive to local conditions. The argument here in part is that stand-alone policies in discrete areas such as education, health, housing or labour market up-skilling do not respond to the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and need to break out of the 'silo approach' that keeps them apart. In Ireland, mechanisms have been set up at national level to coordinate the government's social inclusion agenda (e.g., the National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy 2007-2016 and the Office for Social Inclusion), but there is a view that area-based approaches at local level are also needed to achieve coordination in on-the-ground delivery. Examples where this thinking has been applied include the integration of enterprise support with training and the integration of training, personal development and job search with support for childcare and parenting. The area-based approach has also been thought of as a way of counterbalancing the highly centralised system of design and funding found in mainstream policy areas such as health, education, and welfare and as a means to customise programmes to local needs and provide more flexibility and speed in responses (Commission of the European Communities, 1989). However, from the earliest days of these programmes, instances of successful local integration have been hard to find and the more common view is that they have simply added further to the stock of discrete local activities. Part of the problem here has been the retention of centralised accountability at programme level which inhibits the scope for local adaptation and integration with activities from other programmes (Haase and McKeown 2003; Walsh *et al*, 2005).

A final aspect of area-based programmes is their role in mobilising local potential through community development and in empowering the poor by including them in decision-making. From the inception of local partnerships in Ireland, central government, through the Department of the Taoiseach, viewed them as having an important role in promoting participative democracy and in complementing representative democracy as exercised through the electoral system (Sable, 1996). In more recent times in Ireland and other countries, government emphasis on community development has shifted somewhat

towards concerns with volunteering and active citizenship, but area-based initiatives continue to be identified as a key means to secure these objectives.

## **2.4 Evaluations of area-based interventions**

Provision for evaluation is included in the funding and design of many area-based initiatives and was a requirement in all EU-supported programmes. As a result these measures have been subject to more extensive scrutiny than many mainstream public services. However, most of the evaluations that have emerged as a result have limited value in that they focus on inputs and processes rather than outcomes or, if outcomes-oriented, are methodologically weak. They frequently lack good baseline data, rely heavily on opinions gleaned from stakeholders, or in instances where there is good before-and-after measurement, lack control groups which would indicate what might have happened in the absence of intervention. As a result many of these evaluations have failed to reach robust conclusions about the value of the ABIs. This is not unique to ABIs in Ireland but has also been highlighted with regard to ABIs in the UK, such as Single Regeneration Budget (Rhodes, *et al*, 2005; O'Reilly, 2007); and for diffuse, complex interventions such as those commonly found in community development, international evidence as to 'what works' is generally weak (Bamber *et al*. 2009: 5). This reflects the particular challenges associated with evaluating complex, community interventions.

In Ireland, a weak record of evaluation has been found particularly in major programmes of local development and local social inclusion (key evaluations include Honohan, 1997; ESF Evaluation Unit, 1999; Haase and McKeown, 2003; Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2007). On the one hand, evaluations typically recognised that organisations such as partnership companies and community development programmes often did a great deal of work and that at least some of this work could be said on an anecdotal basis to have had clear local benefits (e.g., Honohan, 1997:70; Haase and McKeown, 2003:8-13, Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2007). Overall, however, there were repeated expressions of concern about a number of persistent features of these programmes. These included:

- the confusing proliferation of local development organisations through which funding was delivered and the consequent difficulty of keeping track of what they were doing or of what they thought their role was;
- their weak integration into existing local government and local social services;

- their tendency to shift away from innovation, advocacy and local empowerment (their original primary remit) into direct service provision;
- where useful innovation did occur, the lack of mechanisms for translating the benefits and lessons learned into mainstream services (for a summary of evaluations on these issues, see Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2007:16-21).

The tendency to shift from innovation and ‘bending’ mainstream programmes into direct services provision may be linked, in part, to pressure to show outputs and outcomes in the monitoring and evaluation of local interventions.

One of the most persistent and serious difficulties these evaluations identified was the lack of mechanisms for assessing the impact of programmes. This theme was strongly voiced, for example, by Haase and McKeown, who called for ‘a fundamental rethinking of the whole monitoring framework’ (Haase and McKeown, 2003:37) and was reiterated by Fitzpatrick and Associates (2007). The latter noted that, although €7.3 million had been allocated to performance monitoring in the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme for the period 2000-06 (which accounted for 2.6 per cent of total expenditure on the programme – Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2007:78), it was still difficult to identify what had been achieved by the partnership companies responsible for its delivery:

[T]he greatest weakness of the Partnership experiment is lack of ability to state definitively in an evidence-based manner, after 15 years of implementation, what impact they have had as a programme on the communities in which they are established. Evaluators have generally concluded that, while there is no doubt that the areas have developed over time, it is more difficult to demonstrate what the Partnership’s distinct contribution has been over and above what might have occurred anyway because of economic growth or other interventions (Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2007:23).

The McCarthy report, compiled in 2009 to provide a guide to cutbacks in public expenditure in the face of the current fiscal crisis, highlighted problems of proliferation of non-statutory local social organisations which supported policy implementation at local level (it counted 870 such organisations, although not all of these had a specific remit to serve disadvantaged areas) as well as a lack of evidence on their impact (Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes 2009, Vol 1:17-18, Vol II:37-9). It proposed a radical consolidation of both local and national delivery systems (mainly, at local level, by encouraging mergers of organisations and devolving disbursement of

funding to local authorities, and at national level, by abolishing one of the government departments involved in administering these programmes and merging its functions into other departments). It also recommended that the number of programmes be reduced, in light of the lack of demonstrated impact of the total package of programmes (Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes 2009, Vol I:17-18, Vol II:37-9). More recently, the programme for government adopted by the new government following the general election in February 2007 has promised to integrate community development and enterprise supports into local government but details on what this will entail have yet to emerge (Government of Ireland, 2011).

In terms of specific area-based initiatives (as opposed to the more institutionalised mechanism of the local partnership approach and associated programmes), a review of existing evaluations highlight both positive and negative aspects of initiatives. The Springboard programme has been the subject of one of the more rigorous evaluations of the area-based programmes under examination here (McKeown, Haase and Pratschke, 2001). This programme was designed to provide early intervention supports to families that were at risk of requiring child protection interventions. It was established in 1998 with 15 pilot projects around the country and was still in pilot phase when the evaluation study was carried out. The evaluation found that the majority of families in the programme showed significant gains in a number of carefully measured indicators of well-being over a year-and-a-half participation period. While the study, for ethical reasons, did not include a non-intervention control group, the authors nevertheless concluded that the gains in well-being among the majority of programme participants were marked, and were such as could not be achieved other than through a high level of effectiveness in the programme (McKeown, Haase and Pratschke, 2001).

The present study supports the general conclusion from much research that the interventions which have the most positive impact are those which are *preventive* in focus (Murphy, 2010). Besides Springboard, area-based programmes of this type include the Family and Community Services Resource Centres Programme, which aims to prevent family breakdown and particularly the entry of children into the care system (McKeown *et al*, 2001). The early reviews of the Local Drugs Task Forces were negative, but more recent analysis of their work in preventing and combating drug misuse and ongoing drug dependency is much more positive (PA Consulting Group, 1998, 2001; National Drugs Strategy Team, 2002; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2006).

By contrast, many of the area-based programmes which were more broadly targeted have not been positively evaluated. For instance, the evaluation of RAPID by Fitzpatrick and Associates (2006) indicates that its early years were dominated by detailed local development planning, and the target communities were disappointed when the funding provided failed to match the expectations generated. Similarly an early evaluation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) attributed disappointing progress in the provision of new childcare places to the lengthy planning required for programme set-up and the building of capacity among the community sector providers of these services (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003). Research on the early years of the Urban Renewal Scheme found that it achieved strongly positive results in combating dereliction in target areas but few tangible socio-economic benefits for low-income local residents (KPMG, 1996). Research on its impact since 2000 and on the Rural Renewal scheme has reached more negative findings. It indicates that take-up of these incentives was significant and, in the context of the property boom in this period, they were associated with significant deadweight (investment which would have occurred without the incentives) and generated an over-supply of housing (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2005). The available evidence on social housing regeneration schemes such as the Remedial Works Scheme indicates that where the problems of target estates relate primarily to the built environment, these interventions have been successful. However, because they only provide capital funding, social landlords face significant difficulties in raising funding for regeneration programmes which aim to address social and economic decline (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006).

## **2.5 Area-based initiatives in the seven estates study**

In the light of the background just outlined, the contribution of the present study to the analysis of ABIs derives from its local area-based focus. As mentioned earlier, the study did not seek to assess the impact of programmes, since the deficiencies in information required for such assessment that have been highlighted in many previous studies still exist and made it impossible to track impacts with any degree of reliability. Rather, it sought to document ABIs from a community viewpoint rather than from the perspective of discrete programmes; that is, to establish what such activities taken together amount to on the ground in specific disadvantaged neighbourhoods, principally in terms of the totality of expenditure, types of services or initiatives delivered and, to some extent, types of outputs achieved. The programme perspective that is normally adopted in this field, by contrast,

looks at initiatives and their significance primarily through a programme lens. This means that, typically, little or no attention is paid to the operation of parallel programmes in the same localities, resulting in an inability to assess that which matters most from a community viewpoint, namely, the collective significance of all programmes taken together rather than the separate significance of each programme taken in isolation. This focus on ABIs collectively, viewed from the perspective of the communities that receive them rather than the programmes that provide them, represents one of the key contributions of this research on ABIs in the seven estates.

### 3 Strand 1: Social change in the seven estates

#### 3.1 National impact of the economic boom at small-area level

In order to establish the national context in which social change in the study estates might be viewed, the present study drew on an analysis by Trutz Haase of census data for 2006 on national patterns of social change at the small-area level, updating previous work which had examined trends for the period 1991-2002. This work was carried out as part of continuing development of the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation, an instrument for measuring the spatial distribution of affluence and deprivation in Ireland that was first applied to the 1986 Census. The area-units on which this analysis is based consist of Electoral Divisions (EDs), the smallest spatial units for which census data are available throughout the country. The methodology for the index has been revised on a number of occasions to reflect international best practice and the Index has been recalculated for each census since 1986 (for an alternative approach to the measurement of spatial deprivation which focuses on individual indicators rather than a combined index, see Callan *et al*, 2007: 125-151). In particular, the number of indicators was increased and refined to take account of the distinctive nature of disadvantage in Ireland, and the statistical methodology underpinning the calculations was made more robust (Haase and Pratschke, 2005).

At the national level for the period 1986 to 2006, analysis of this Index shows the following major findings:

- ❑ The advent of economic boom from the mid-1990s had a positive effect in virtually all areas of the country. In absolute terms, poorer areas improved considerably, but because of widespread improvements in all areas their *relative* position remained generally unchanged.
- ❑ Dublin Inner City was the only region where deprived areas showed relative as well as absolute improvement. This distinctive pattern in Dublin was caused by an influx of new, well-off residents into previously deprived areas, much of it prompted by the availability of new tax-incentivised apartment accommodation. These areas now contain a mix of better-off and poorer households and so have countered previous trends towards spatial segregation of the poor in Dublin.

- ❑ Parts of Limerick city showed distinctively lower levels of improvement than the national norm.
- ❑ The greatest increases in affluence occurred between 1996 and 2002, though the general rise continued at a slower pace up to 2006.
- ❑ Affluence grew in concentric rings around the main urban centres, effectively in the urban commuter belts. With the exception of Dublin inner city, cities in general did not improve as much as the rest of the country.

### **3.2 Impact on the seven estates**

It is possible to extract from the database on the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation an approximate statistical picture of changing social conditions in the seven estates. This is done in the present section, while the next section provides the results of our direct observations on an estate-by-estate basis. A limitation of the statistical analysis in the present section is that, while for two of the seven estates (Fettercairn and Finglas South) the boundaries of the EDs on which the analysis is based coincide with those of the estates, for the other five there are varying degrees of mis-match between ED boundaries and estate boundaries. The lack of fit is particularly pronounced for the two estates in provincial towns (Cranmore in Sligo and Muirhevnamor in Dundalk). Here the EDs in which the estates are embedded are larger than the estates by a considerable margin and the data are of limited value in tracking trends in the estates. In the other five estates, however, despite some looseness of fit between ED and estate boundaries, the data provide a useful means of assessing the nature and direction of social change either in the estates themselves or the larger neighbourhoods in which they are embedded.

A selection of indicators from this analysis is presented in Table 1, focusing on the period of concern to the present study – 1996-2006. The first indicator in the table is the absolute scores on the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation for the two years. This Index is constructed from 14 separate indicators of social conditions in EDs, five of which relate to demographic profile, five to social class composition, and four to labour market situation. Scoring on the Index can be presented either in absolute terms, in which case the same scale is used for every year and scores can be directly compared across years, or in relative terms, in which case the scoring for each year is calculated relative to the average national score for that year. Only the absolute scores on the Index are reported in Table 1. These scores are constructed in such a way that the mean score for the whole country in 1991 was set to zero and forms the baseline against which other years are measured,

while the standard deviation was set to 10. The outer limits of the Index are -50 and +50, with the majority of EDs falling within a considerably narrower range. The mean scores for Ireland shown in Table 1 for 1996 and 2006 are higher than zero, indicating an overall improvement nationally since the baseline of 1991. Table 1 also presents data on three of the individual indicators that are components of the Index – the percentage of the adult population with third-level education, the male unemployment rate and the percentage of families headed by lone parents. These are included to illustrate the kinds of items the overall Index takes account of. (Note that the data on unemployment used here are based on census measurement which provides a less precise and usually higher estimate of unemployment than is derived from the standard official source used for this purpose, the Quarterly National Household Survey. The less precise census measure is used here because QNHS data are not available at small-area level and so cannot be applied to the study estates.)

The absolute Index scores for the seven estates or their larger neighbourhoods shown in Table 1 reveal an improvement in social conditions in all cases. In Ushers C+D, in which Fatima Mansions is located, and in Fettercairn, the improvement was large and was over three times greater than the improvement at national level. Deanrock had the smallest improvement but it was operating from a higher base than the other estates – it both started and ended the period with the strongest Index scores. Ballynanty-Moyross was at a similar level to Fatima Mansions and Fettercairn in 1996 and it improved somewhat by 2006, but the improvement was small in relative terms and left this area with a markedly weaker score in 2006 than the other estates, a gap which did not exist in 1996.

**Table 1 Selected Indicators of Social Change in Electoral Districts in which the seven study estates are located, 1996-2006**

EDs in which estates are located	Absolute Index* Scores			Third level education			Male unemployment rate			Lone parent rate		
	1996	2006	Change 1996-2006	1996 %	2006%	Change 1996-2006	1996 %	2006 %	Change 1996-2006	1996 %	2006 %	Change 1996-2006
Ushers C+D Fatima Mansions	-21.6	-2.5	19.1	10.9	28.3	17.3	45.1	19.4	-25.7	51.2	58.4	7.2
Finglas South B+C South Finglas	-16.8	-9.6	7.2	3.5	10.7	7.2	34.4	18.6	-15.8	23.5	51.6	28.1
Tallaght – Fettercairn	-21.3	-3.7	17.6	3.8	10.5	6.8	52.1	22.8	-29.3	36.8	53.3	16.5
Togher A Deanrock	-6.2	-4.9	1.3	9.5	11.6	2.1	28.0	16.7	-11.3	23.8	42.4	18.6
Ballynanty- Moyross	-17.9	-14.3	3.6	4.9	6.0	1.2	40.9	28.8	-12.1	37.8	63.9	26.1
Dundalk Rural Muirhevnamor	-4.0	2.2	6.2	16.3	23.0	6.7	23.0	16.6	-6.4	18.0	37.9	19.9
Sligo East Cranmore	0.4	4.5	4.1	19.1	25.7	6.6	25.3	15.3	-10	23.2	35.9	12.7
Ireland	5.2	10.4	5.2	19.7	30.5	10.8	16.4	8.8	-7.6	13.8	21.3	7.5

Note: \*Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation (Haase and Pratschke, 2005)

Similar patterns hold with the next two indicators in the table, the percentage with third level education, which rose in all estates, and the male unemployment rate, which fell in all estates, in some instances quite sharply. In Fettercairn, for example, the percentage with third level education rose from 3.8 per cent in 1996 to 10.5 per cent in 2006, while the fall in the male unemployment rate – from 52.1 per cent to 22.8 per cent – was quite dramatic. While all the estates showed an increase in the percentage with third level education, the absolute extent of the increase was less than the national increase in all cases except Fatima Mansions. In the latter instance, those with third level education increased by 17 percentage points compared to a national increase of 10.8 percentage points.

The fall in male unemployment in the study estates was generally greater than the corresponding national fall. Even in Ballynanty-Moyross, where improvement in social indicators was generally weaker than in the other areas, the decline in the male unemployment rate was 12.1 percentage points compared to a national decline of 7.6 percentage points. This reflected the general national pattern that the greatest relative improvement in unemployment occurred in previous unemployment blackspots. Yet it is also notable that despite the large declines which occurred in male unemployment in the study estates, all of them ended up in 2006 with male unemployment rates that were considerably higher than the national norm. This is in keeping with the previously noted national pattern that despite large absolute improvement in many social indicators in deprived areas, their relative position on those indicators in national rankings remained more or less unchanged.

The third indicator, the percentage of families headed by a lone parent, reveals a different direction of development as it shows that all the study estates increased their rate of lone parenthood, sometimes to quite high levels. In Fettercairn, for example, the percentage of households headed by a lone parent increased from 36.8 per cent in 1996 to 53.3 per cent in 2006. This suggests that while many aspects of social change in the period 1996-2006 helped improve social conditions in the estates, there were counter-trends such as increased family disruption that tended to increase the social and economic vulnerability of families in these areas.

### **3.3 Variations between and within estates**

Alongside the shared direction of social change shown for most of the estates in Table 1, there are also evident differences between them, as revealed both by the quantitative data and by our observations and interviews on the ground. We now briefly outline the patterns of similarities and difference between the estates, taking account also that the estates were not internally uniform but that it is difficult to capture in a precise way the detailed variations in social conditions between different parts of individual estates.

#### *Cranmore*

Cranmore had a population in 2006 of approximately 1,500-2,000 people, living in 511 standard single-family houses. Our 1997-98 research revealed that the estate had a poor public image in the Sligo area but internally was quite diverse: some parts of the estate (particularly one area, Bank's Drive) were dilapidated and were in low demand but others had an attractive, settled appearance. The estate also had the advantages of being well located close the centre of the town and a strong tradition of community involvement and pride.

The present study found that the estate had stabilised in some ways by the mid-2000s but still had significant social problems and continued to have a poor image in the Sligo area. The Bank's Drive of the estate was taken over and refurbished by Clúid housing association in 1998 and was given a new name. By 2008 house prices had increased greatly within the estate, with houses fetching €120,000-€160,000 in that year compared to €28,000-€32,000 in 1997. However, prices were still significantly below the national and regional average. The ED in which Cranmore is located (total population 5,334 in 2006) was characterised by high levels of unemployment (25.3 per cent) and single parent households (35.9 per cent) in 2006 (see: Table 1). According to the managers of community and public services interviewed for this study, the estate still presented issues of early school leaving, high unemployment, high welfare dependence, and antisocial behaviour.

A regeneration of the estate beyond Bank's Drive began in 2004. The social aspect of regeneration focused on building community capacity through the establishment of the Cranmore Community Co-op and developing interagency engagement between community, voluntary and statutory organisations. During the past decade a large number of community

services have been established in the estate, many of which are concerned with family support and youth work. The physical aspect of regeneration commenced with the refurbishment of some dwellings, the de-tenanting of others, landscaping and the provision of a playground. However, progress on regeneration stalled as it became caught up in issues about roadway developments around the eastern edge of Sligo town which would have cut into Cranmore estate. By 2010 funds allocated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the regeneration of Cranmore were not released because of differences between the Department and Sligo Urban Council on the roads issue. As a result, work on the capital aspect of the programme came to virtual halt and the estate is now disfigured by boarded-up housing that was scheduled for demolition or refurbishment but is not now being worked on. Ambitious regeneration programmes, once embarked on, can be disruptive to an estate, and the Cranmore experience illustrates how the drawbacks can intensify if the unforeseen events cause the programme to stall part-way through and is left in a partly-completed state.

### *Deanrock*

In the original study in 1997-98, Deanrock emerged as the most successful of the seven estates. It was in high demand among tenants, despite suffering the disadvantage that the original build quality of the dwellings in the estate was poor. The present study indicates that Deanrock's position of relative advantage compared to the other estates has continued, and indeed has been enhanced by the recent demolition of blocks of flats of poor build quality that had been the most problematic dwellings in the estate in the past (though, as the previous study found, even these dwellings had been in considerable demand among tenants because of the generally good reputation of Deanrock as a neighbourhood). As a local authority housing manager stated:

The one thing about Deanrock, and it has to be noted as the one outstanding thing which has helped, is the knocking of the flats... the majority (but not all) of the problems being experienced by the residents of Deanrock Estate were associated around the flats...

The popularity of Deanrock among residents and its good image in the wider community were highlighted by the increasing number of houses bought by tenants in the estate, and the relatively high prices commanded by dwellings that had previously been purchased by

tenants and were now trading in the open market. At the height of the property boom in 2006-07, estate agents in the locality reported selling prices for houses in Deanrock in excess of €300,000, a remarkable fact given the modest physical qualities of the dwellings. Local observers claimed that while housing in Deanrock experienced a certain price penalty because of its local authority associations, that penalty was modest, at no more than 10 per cent or so. This again emphasises the degree to which Deanrock, like many other local authority estates in urban areas in Ireland, had merged into the general fabric of urban life and avoided the negative connotations that are often assumed to be attached to social housing.

It is notable also from Table 1 above that this positive outcome for Deanrock and its surrounding area in Togher was not conditional on a distinctive population profile compared to the other estates. While it was better than some of those estates on some counts it was by no means consistently the best: it did not have an unusually high percentage of the population with third level education, a distinctively low male unemployment rate or a distinctively low proportion of families headed by lone parents. This is to reinforce the point made in the original study a decade ago: one cannot read off the success or attractiveness of a social housing estate from its scores on the usual indicators such as the educational levels, employment rates or family circumstances of its residents. Rather, additional factors intervene to enhance or reduce the resilience of the local community in the face of forms of adversity that are common throughout the sector. It is these factors, which centre on the presence or absence of small numbers of extremely disadvantaged households in the estates and the consequent presence or absence of social order problems that strongly affect the quality of neighbourhood life and dictate the difference between success and failure of estates.

### *Fatima Mansions*

Fatima Mansions was one of the more troubled estates in the 1997-8 study and was viewed by residents as having reached a crisis point due to poor quality dwellings, hard drug misuse and general anti-social behaviour. Since then it has been completely transformed by a top-to-bottom regeneration programme which commenced in 2004 and, in physical terms, was completed in 2009. As the plan envisaged, the existing blocks of flats in the estate were demolished and replaced with a mix of new, high-quality social and private housing and new

community facilities, financed and delivered on the basis of a public-private partnership. The regeneration process drew on extensive consultation with residents. Their representative body (Fatima Groups United) was centrally involved in its design and took part in the implementation of the social regeneration plan. It coordinated efforts to change the poor public image of the estate by encouraging positive media reporting and organising public events.

The improvements in the social profile of Fatima Mansions outlined in Table 1 are reflected in the positive views of residents. In interviews for the present study, one resident mentioned that ‘things are better, people have been lifted, there is pride in the idea that “We’re from Fatima”’. Another reported that ‘[Regeneration] makes a difference to our appreciation of ourselves, it lifts our spirits and lightens our hearts’, while another was enthused that continuity of the community had been maintained in the midst of change:

It’s great, you still think you are in the flats only for you live in a house, you know what I mean because you see everybody that you were born and reared with, your neighbours and all. So it stills seems like Fatima only that you are in your own little comfortable home with your central heating and your back garden.

Although the physical transformation of the estate is the most visible manifestation of regeneration, certain key social changes were also fundamental to its success. Action by the Gardaí and Dublin City Council to address anti-social behaviour, as part of a wider reform of housing management, was especially influential, and some community activists point in particular to a small number of evictions of problem tenants as key turning points. In addition, strong community services were developed in the areas of drug treatment, family support, childcare and education, which were funded by the various government area-based programmes and also via the PPP. The quality of such services was particularly high in this case and many were innovatively designed. This reflects particularly impressive capacity among community activists in this estate and their related success in securing funding for these services.

While Fatima Mansions can be counted as a successful regeneration in its own terms, several features limit its wider relevance or raise questions about its long-term future. The first is that the estate is small and its social housing component became considerably smaller as a

consequence of the regeneration. Ten years ago there were 320 social housing units in the estate. By 2009 there were 150, alongside a projected total of 70 affordable dwellings and 396 private apartments. The very smallness of the present social housing community in the estate gives it a manageability and community character that is unlike that found in the other estates in our study, all of which are now considerably larger than Fatima Mansions. In fact, it is difficult to isolate the effects of the reduction in social housing in the estate and compare its significance with other possible influences on the outcome of regeneration, but it is unlikely that similar reductions will take place in estate regeneration plans in the future. The second distinctive feature of the Fatima Mansions scheme was the interlinkage between the regeneration plan and the property boom of the period. The terms of the public-private partnership that financed and carried through the physical regeneration and that provided cash resources to fund social aspects of the plan were predicated on inflated land values, high demand for private housing and easy credit for development purposes. These all disappeared with the bursting of the housing bubble in 2008-09. Thus, Fatima Mansions scheme is likely to have been a one-off which has little prospect of being replicated elsewhere, and even at that has not fully evolved into the mix of public and private housing that was originally envisaged (Norris and Redmond, 2009).

A third question mark arising over the Fatima Mansions case is one that arises in all instances of highly localised urban regeneration schemes, particularly those that are successful in their own areas. This is the degree to which, rather than solve social problems in disadvantaged neighbourhoods these schemes simply displace them to other neighbourhoods which then become the new bottom rung on the ladder (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2005). In the case of Fatima Mansions, the key question is whether the new population of social housing tenants is not only smaller than that which preceded the regeneration but also is socially more selective. Analysis of the broad social profile of the post-regeneration tenant population suggests that extreme forms of selection have not occurred – those tenants are just as disadvantaged in broad terms as were those that lived in the estate in the pre-regeneration period (Whyte, 2005). However, broad social indicators do not pick out the small numbers of extremely disadvantaged and highly disruptive residents whose presence or absence can have a disproportionate impact on the quality of community life in neighbourhoods. Activists in Fatima Mansions accept that regeneration in the estate did entail a certain element of exclusion of

such households, achieved in part through a small number of what they regard as crucial evictions. Some 'difficult' households continued to live in the estate after regeneration and are successfully coped with in the context of the better general environment and improved social services now present in the estate. Yet, there is a view among activists that despite the much improved resources at their disposal in the post-regeneration set-up, they could not have coped with the number and range of problem households found in the estate prior to regeneration and so depended on a certain measure of displacement for the regeneration to work. It is likely also in the long run that competition for social housing in the estate and the high level of community capacity it now possesses will have the effect of restricting access to the estate for disruptive households. These factors together mean, therefore, that displacement has played a certain part in the success of Fatima Mansions. While that success is real and is not to be taken for granted, it is qualified by the consequences of displacement for other less fortunate neighbourhoods in that part of the city.

The final feature of Fatima Mansions that must be noted is the uncertainty that now exists about the future of the private apartments and thus about the eventual trajectory of the entire estate. Private apartment buildings account for some two-thirds of the current stock of dwellings. They were completed and came on-stream as the Dublin property market crashed, with the result that the expected buyer demand never materialised. The majority of the apartments are now vacant. This outcome has meant, in the first instance, that the 'community dividend' that, as part of the original PPP plan, was expected to derive from the profits of the private component of the PPP development – that is, payments of the order of €5.6 million from the developer to the local community – have largely failed to materialise and are unlikely now to emerge as originally envisaged. There is also the question of what is to become of the vacant apartment blocks in question.

### *Fettercairn*

The Fettercairn estate is located in West Tallaght and was built in the early 1980s. It originally consisted of 692 two-storey, standard houses, but this has since expanded due to the construction of infill housing. The study of ten years ago found that the tenancies in the estate were in moderate demand, with a very low number of long-term voids. However, the environment was dilapidated, unemployment was high, and the estate was isolated from

commercial services. Drug use, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour, in particular joy riding and vandalism, were central concerns for residents. The local authority responsible for the estate – South Dublin County Council – had been created only in 1996, arising from the breaking up of the former Dublin County Council into three separate authorities. Residents carried over an attitude of suspicion and hostility towards the local authority as a legacy of their previous experiences.

By 2009 Fettercairn stood out as an estate that had matured and settled in the absence of any major regeneration or capital investment programme, although it had benefited from funding of community facilities under the Urban programme . The indicators set out in Table 1 confirm the progress that had taken place. In 1996 the estate appeared as vulnerable as Moyross or Finglas South but by 2006 it had developed in a more positive direction. By then, turnover of residents in the estates was low, demand for new tenancies was high, levels of tenant purchase had risen and house resale prices had converged with the norm in the wider Tallaght area.

This outcome arose in part because of development of the wider Tallaght area, in particular from the new commercial services in the Square shopping centre and Tallaght Village, and the provision of the Luas light railway. Since South Dublin County Council took over as landlord, it has reformed housing management arrangements and relations with residents have improved. Some physical improvements have been undertaken in the estate – rotten windows have been replaced, central heating installed and new infill housing and walls strategically constructed in order to close off alleyways and increase the surveillance of green areas which were previously sites for anti-social behaviour. Although the scale of these developments was small, they have succeeded in addressing the relatively modest problems with the quality of the built environment found in the estate. Public and community services have expanded significantly in the estate over the past decade and are distinguished by a remarkable degree of inter-agency work, exchange of information and cooperation. South Dublin County Council in particular has played an important role, both in innovating and improving on its own services and in working with and coordinating the services of other agencies. Local Gardaí interviewed noted a dramatic reduction in drug dealing and joyriding – evidenced by the reduced number of burnt-out cars in the estate – although problems of

vandalism persist. Improved community policing has played a key role in this development and in fostering better relations between the Gardaí and residents, as has better estate management and management of anti-social behaviour by South Dublin County Council.

The generally positive story that emerges from Fettercairn is significant as it indicates how an area that was vulnerable for much of its early existence can settle down and grow out of its vulnerabilities – a process that historically has been much more common in local authority housing than is often recognised. In addition, it represents a distinctive pattern of policy intervention that has proved highly effective. This is a pattern of a large number of small actions that were not conceived of as part of a major, high-spend regeneration programme but were nevertheless innovative and responsive to local conditions. These actions acquired added value by virtue of the creative, coordinating role of the local authority, and indeed could be said to demonstrate how good local government should operate in disadvantaged areas and what an energetic local authority can achieve.

### *Finglas South*

Finglas South spans a large area, comprising seven clusters of estates and covering most of the EDs of Finglas South B and C and all of Finglas South D. Our 1997-98 research reported high levels of anti-social behaviour in the estate, similar in many respects to Fettercairn. However, the maturation and settling down which has been evident in Fettercairn over the past decade is less to be seen in Finglas South. As the data in Table 1 above suggest, general social indicators have improved in the area. However, social order problems remain, new levels of serious violence have emerged in the form of inter-gang killings, and tensions between local young people and the Gardaí have persisted. These outcomes mean that Finglas South has diverged from Fettercairn to some degree over the past decade and now is a less settled neighbourhood than Fettercairn has become.

In 1998 Dublin City Council established a project team tasked with identifying and eliminating the urban design features which have contributed to anti-social behaviour. In 1999 this team produced a report which identified a number of key community concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and using, the poor quality of the built environment, lack of housing options for locals other than social housing, and poor relations with the City Council.

The resulting regeneration scheme focused on removing problematic public spaces, closing entrances/exits to the estates with infill social, affordable and private housing, narrowing roads to reduce opportunities for joy riding and to provide car parking for residents, and the provision of community facilities, including a new Civic Centre which accommodated a local housing management office, a youth centre and childcare centre. This was funded by an innovative mix of sources, including direct public grant aid, a 'financial contribution' from older people who sold their houses and were provided with tenancies in Dublin City Council's sheltered housing for older people, the proceeds of sales of affordable housing built on Council-owned land, and a Public Private Partnership scheme which facilitated the construction of social and affordable housing and a hotel on Council-owned land. The head of the local area partnership company suggested that Dublin City Council 'played an absolute blinder the way they tapped into and used resources and made things happen'.

A Dublin City Council housing manager who was interviewed in 2008-09 suggested that these developments have:

had a significant impact in terms of the relationship building that we talked about, in terms of people getting used to the face, you're known in the locality or whatever, you can go out and about and you build up the necessary relationships, not just with the residents but even with the guards and that type of partnership.

However, interviews with residents indicate that, from their perspective, relations remain poor. Many of their concerns related to the extent of anti-social behaviour on the estate and to how this issue is handled by the Council and the Gardaí.

Despite the appointment of local area officers responsible for addressing low level anti-social behaviour such as graffiti, litter and illegal dumping, our visits to Finglas South revealed extensive problems of this type on these estates, together with a large number of boarded-up houses, which contributed to an air of dereliction. Council staff explained the large number of vacant dwellings with reference to cuts in the maintenance budget and the refusal of offers of housing by applicants who wished to remain in rent supplement supported, private rented accommodation. Residents felt that serious anti-social behaviour has increased in the estate,

and killings arising from inter-gang feuding have occurred to a degree that was absent ten years ago. For instance one resident reported:

... people are afraid to leave their houses in the night time. People just swerve up and down, going down with their cars [joyriding]... there'd be houses, certain roads ... they're just no go areas in the night time.... The other thing that intimidates people as well, and that's one of the big differences as you said from ten years ago, is gangs hanging around 24/7 when it used to be a weekend thing, but it's all day, every day.

A community worker highlighted the difficulties which the prevalence of anti-social behaviour created for his work:

you would know from the amount of 'tit for tat' murders that have taken place in the area over the last while, there is certainly a serious problem of gangland activity in certain areas that undermines a lot of the work that's been done. And it probably also undermines in no small way the willingness of people to maintain their contact with residents associations or to be community representatives or to put themselves out there in the community because they can end up being targeted and they're afraid.

Residents complained that Dublin City Council has proved slow in tackling these problems, and levels of evictions are low, partly because many of the perpetrators are living as owners in tenant-purchased accommodation over which the Council no longer has control. Relations between the residents of Finglas South and the Garda Síochána were also extremely strained in the estate. Interviewees expressed the view that the Gardaí were 'out of their depth in the area' and highlighted the lack of co-ordination between the community Gardaí, the Drugs Squad and the Garda Emergency Response Unit. A Community Safety Forum has recently been established in the area in an attempt to address the latter issue.

### *Moyross*

If Deanrock was the outstanding case of an estate that had continued in a positive trajectory that was already present in 1997-98, Moyross was at the opposite extreme. The original study had highlighted it as an estate that seemed to be recovering from a previous long history of decline. The housing department in Limerick City Council had emerged at that time as one of the most progressive and effective in responding to the problems of its social housing estates, including Moyross. The estate had an established framework of strong and effective community organisations, partly under the influence of the Paul Partnership, which was

founded in Limerick City in 1990 under the EU's Poverty 3 programme (Walsh *et al*, 1998:121-162). Problems of social order were undoubtedly present in the estate but the council, the residents and the community organisations had together seemed to be responding well to those problems since the mid-1990s. The council seemed to have been particularly successful in bringing back to life a section of the estate (the Glenagross area) that had been blighted by anti-social behaviour and was being abandoned by tenants in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The council's achievement in this area by the second half of the 1990s was highlighted in our previous study as an example of effective regeneration of social housing (Norris, 1999:119-20)

At around the turn of the present decade, however, conditions in Moyross took a serious turn for the worse as it was affected by a wave of criminality and violence arising from inter-gang feuding. A key precipitating event was the murder in Limerick city centre of a prominent local gang member in November 2000, which is said to have been the result of a falling-out between the victim and a lifelong associate. Subsequent tit-for-tat violence between feuding family-based gangs resulted in up to ten murders in Limerick over the following eight years (*Irish Examiner*, 8 April 2008). Other acts of violence in Limerick also grabbed national attention, especially a fire-bomb attack on a car in September 2006 in which two children were badly burned. Many of these incidents (including the fire-bombing of the car) occurred in Moyross or involved people from Moyross, but other estates in the city were also affected. This gave rise to a perception that the poorer parts of the city were afflicted by out-of-control, gun-wielding criminals to a degree never before seen in any city in Ireland. Demand for housing in Moyross (as in certain other estates) fell off, and there was virtually no market for the housing that previously had been bought out by tenants. For instance, prices for housing in the few sales that did occur were reported by local estate agents to be in the region of €50,000- €60,000 in the best parts of Moyross, which were only about a fifth of prices for similar housing in Deanrock.

In reaction to a growing public sense that Limerick was in a state of crisis, the government commissioned a special report on the city in November 2006 (the Fitzgerald Report) which focused on social conditions in Moyross and the other local authority estates in the city most associated with violent crime. This report painted a bleak picture of neglect, decline and

disorder in these estates and the incapacity of existing structures and services to deal with the scale of problems experienced. On the recommendation of this report, the government set up the Limerick Regeneration Agencies in 2007 (a northside and a southside Regeneration Agency) to take charge of bringing the worst-affected local authority estates in Limerick back to acceptable standards. As we have already noted, the data in Table 1 above show that some improvement in the social profile of Moyross occurred between 1996 and 2006 but the scale of improvement was slight compared both to the national average and to the other estates in our study. As a result, Moyross was clearly the most disadvantaged of the seven estates in 2006, a distinction it did not have ten years previously. Community activists interviewed for this study believed that criminality and associated intimidation were the key cause of the estate's recent decline rather than disadvantage *per se*. Residents had also become more critical of the housing management service provided by Limerick City Council, particularly because of what they saw as its failure to take action against crime and anti-social behaviour. The Gardaí were criticised on the same grounds. Despite this a large number of innovative community services have been established on the estate during the last decade, and the problems in Moyross seemed to have arisen in spite of a reasonably high level of community activism in the estate rather than because such activism was absent.

### *Muirhevnamor*

Muirhevnamor is an estate in Dundalk that is large by provincial town standards. As is the case with Cranmore, its local image is not especially good but it does not have the severity of problems found in the worst-off of the large city estates such as Moyross or Finglas South. In the original study ten years ago, it stood out for its high level of community activism, exemplified by the community's success in developing a Gaelscoil, the only one in Dundalk at the time (Ó Cinnéide, 1999:217), but it also had a certain level of anti-social behaviour.

The intermediate position of Muirhevnamor in the ranking of the seven estates in the original study still holds. General improvement is evident in the estate, and certain important services have developed. One of these is the local Springboard project, which is notable not only as a local instance of a service designed to support small numbers of highly vulnerable families that nationally has been found to be effective, but also because it is located in the grounds of the local primary school and thus achieves a degree of integration with the school system which is lacking in similar services in other estates. The continuing vitality of local community

life is instanced by the community's success in developing an impressive boxing club which was completed in 2004 on the basis of funding received from a range of sources. In response to social order problems, Louth County Council and Dundalk Town Council had jointly appointed an anti-social behaviour officer with a remit to cover the north of County Louth. The brief for this role was to intervene early and in a non-aggressive way in cases where local conflicts and complaints concerning anti-social behaviour had emerged. While the effectiveness of this method of intervention has yet to be established, it is at least significant as an indication of willingness and intent.

Because of the large and relatively deprived status of Muirhevnamor in the social housing system of the north-east, it has become the focus of extensive planning for regeneration. However, slow progress on this planning has become a source of tension between residents and Dundalk Town Council. A large part of this difficulty turns on conflicting views on what regeneration should entail. The Town Council, acting under direction from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, has expanded the area to be included in regeneration plans to incorporate a wider locality in which the estate is located, while resident representatives strive to focus more narrowly on the distinctive and serious problems in the estate itself. Furthermore, initial plans for the estate itself produced by the Town Council, which followed extensive consultation with residents, contained proposals for demolition of some housing that residents claim lay outside of anything they had discussed or proposed. In general, the experience of regeneration planning in Muirhevnamor has shown how it can increase tensions between residents and the local authority, despite extensive efforts to base it on local consultation.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Both the quantitative and qualitative data for the seven estates indicate that they experienced a general improvement in social conditions over the years of the economic boom. In one case – Moyross – improvement on some social indicators was counterbalanced by a sharp worsening in social order conditions, largely associated with an upsurge since 2000 in drug use and crime in the city, particularly drug-related crime, and reflected in tit-for-tat killings among criminal gangs. For various reasons, this particularly affected the large local authority estates in the city, including Moyross. In the other estates in our study, however, the picture was

generally more positive. Some estates fared particularly well – Deanrock, in keeping with its already existing upward trajectory, Fatima Mansions because of the massive regeneration programme which was carried through in that estate, and Fettercairn because of a mix of normal maturation, a considerable history of community development effort, good management approach by the local authority and the spill-over effects of development in the local region (such as the growth of Tallaght Town Centre and the construction of the Luas public transport system). The remaining estates fared less well, though the outcomes were still clearly positive on balance. Yet despite widespread improvement, problems of stigmatisation and marginalisation of parts of the estates and of sub-sections of the community remain. There is evidence that internal estate stratification is still salient. Respondents noted the continuing problem with motivating and integrating young men, many of whom are early school leavers. The presence of poorly functioning families on some estates remains a challenging problem. Interventions to improve the situation of these two groups are highly labour-intensive, and often precariously funded so that there is no sense of continuity of provision.

There is considerable evidence of sustained engagement by residents in attempts to improve the quality of life on some estates. This is evident, for example, in resident involvement in regeneration programmes and voluntary provision of local sports. But in other cases, residents are more inclined to be passive rather than active, and to display a considerable degree of alienation from their neighbours and key service providers. How to engage these social housing residents remains a challenge.

Residents' capacity to act in their own interests has improved over the years. The emergence of positive role models across the estates, the higher completion rates in education and the employment uptake during the boom years all give cause for celebration within these communities. However, service providers across a number of estates expressed concern about the limits of the developments and the persistence of various forms of dependency. These limits have serious ramifications for welfare provision, particularly now that the state faces a severe fiscal crisis. The pathologising of the estates in the media continues, though in some instances the communities have been relatively successful in challenging the ways in which they and their estates are represented.

## 4 Strand 2: Area-based interventions

### 4.1 National picture

As mentioned above, no standard definition of the concept of area-based programmes is available and there is no tradition in anti-poverty policy of treating area-based interventions as a type of policy instrument that shares common objectives or methods. This lack of a standardised view of these interventions is itself significant, as it reflects the *ad hoc*, piecemeal manner in which they have grown up over the past two decades and the absence of a strategic approach to their role. For the purposes of the present project, they were taken to consist of publicly funded programmes that were intended to combat disadvantage and targeted on areas because they were identified as disadvantaged. As mentioned earlier, programmes of this type can seek to combat disadvantage either directly by targeting services or benefits on the poor who live in poor neighbourhoods or indirectly by encouraging better-off residents or businesses to move into those neighbourhoods, thus improving their socio-economic profile. Since most mainstream social services are not area-targeted in this way, area-based programmes, for the most part, can be thought of as ‘add-ons’ to the mainstream system. In addition, however, there is also a category of area-based programmes which seek to ‘bend’ the delivery of mainstream services so that they give special attention to poor areas (as identified above). The latter overlap with the mainstream system and do not have quite the same ‘add-on’ character as the majority of the area-based programmes that emerged in recent decades. Nevertheless, they are counted here as coming within the scope of area-based programmes.

The loose definition just set out did not yield a precise means of drawing boundaries that would clearly mark off a set of programmes as ‘area-based’, largely because programmes varied in the emphasis they place on spatial targeting. Some defined it as fundamental and clearly specified the areas they aimed to reach (as in the RAPID programme which identifies as its target specific Electoral Districts that have been measured as falling below a specified deprivation threshold). Other programmes did not accord a central role to spatial targeting but merely indicated with varying degrees of emphasis that some priority in allocation of resources would be accorded to deprived areas. In addition, even though some programmes gave a strong role to spatial targeting in their design, when it came to implementation the

targeting criteria were in some cases relaxed so much that delivery of the programmes actually became quite diffuse and embraced large areas of the country. The present study drew a distinction between programmes that, nominally, were strongly targeted in spatial terms and those that were weakly targeted. It must be acknowledged that in some cases this distinction has limited significance in practice since nominal attention to spatial targeting in some programmes turned out to have limited real significance at implementation stage.

Based on the approach just outlined, Table 2 presents a list of the national area-based social inclusion programmes that were in operation between 1996 and 2006, classifies them as 'strong' or 'weak' in spatial targeting terms, and identifies the key implementation strategies they employed. A total of 23 such programmes were in operation in 2006, of which nine had been in place in 1996 and 14 had come into existence since then. Just under half of the programmes are classified as strongly targeted in spatial terms (in the nominal sense described earlier) and the majority were grant schemes which funded the provision of services by other agencies, usually in the voluntary or non-profit sector. Most of the programmes, such as Springboard, family and community resource centres, the National Childcare Investment Programme and the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, were single purpose measures which fund only one type of intervention. The Partnerships, CLÁR and RAPID provided grant aid for a variety of initiatives and also engaged in local development planning. CLÁR and RAPID, together with DEIS and the Remedial Works Scheme, can be thought of partly as special schemes for disadvantaged areas but are also, in a sense, extensions of the normal mainstream social services system in that part of their function was to intensify the provision of mainstream public services in poor neighbourhoods. The Urban, Rural and Village and Town Renewal Schemes do not consist of direct expenditure but provided tax breaks for private sector investment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

## **4.2 National expenditure**

In seeking to quantify national expenditure on the area-based programmes identified in Table 2, it proved possible to deal only with expenditure from central government. A range of sub-national bodies, such as the local authorities, the Vocational Education Committees

**Table 2 Remit, Implementation and Spatial Targeting of Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures, 1990-2006**

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Remit / objectives</i>	<i>Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>Implementation Agencies</i>	<i>Spatial Targeting</i>
CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais)	2001-ongoing	Concentrate public expenditure on the most disadvantaged rural areas	Planning, grant aid	Local government, voluntary sector	Strong
Community Development Programme	1990-ongoing	Develop a network of community development resource centres	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
Community Employment and Jobs Initiative	1994-ongoing	Employment experience and training for the long-term unemployed	Grant aid, social security benefits	Public sector, voluntary sector	Weak
Community Services Programme (called the Social Economy Programme until 2006)	2000-ongoing	Support social enterprises to deliver local services and employment opportunities for the disadvantaged	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) – eight separate measures until 2005	1984-ongoing	Overcome educational disadvantage by additional investment in schools with a disadvantaged student body	Planning, grant aid	Schools	Strong
Dormant Accounts Fund	2001-ongoing	Disburse unclaimed funds from credit and insurance institutions to alleviate poverty	Grant aid	Local government, voluntary sector	Strong
EOCP (Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme)	2000-2007	Provide childcare to enable parents to return to education or employment	Planning, grant aid	Private sector, voluntary sector	Weak
Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme	1994-ongoing	Combat disadvantage and improve the function of the family unit	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
Local Government Social Inclusion Units	2001-ongoing	Enable local government to tackle social exclusion	Service provision, grant aid	Local government	Weak
Local Drugs Task Forces	1997-ongoing	Facilitate community based response to drug problems	Planning, grant aid	Voluntary sector	Strong
Local Employment Service (LES)	1995-ongoing	Promote employment re-integration of the long term unemployed	Service provision, grant aid	LES directly, voluntary sector	Strong
Local Partnership Companies	1991-ongoing	Support local economic and employment and community development projects	Planning, service provision, grant aid	Partnerships directly, voluntary sector	Strong

National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP)	2006-ongoing	Improve the supply and quality of early childhood care and education. Support disadvantaged families	planning, grant aid	Private and voluntary sector	Weak
Programme of Grants for Locally-Based Community & Voluntary Organisations	2004-ongoing	Grants to community groups for equipment, education, training and research	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development)	2001-ongoing	Concentrate public expenditure on the most disadvantaged urban areas	Planning, grant aid	Local government, voluntary sector	Strong
Remedial Works Scheme	1985-ongoing	Grants for refurbishing run down social housing estates	Grant aid	Local government	Weak
Rural Renewal Scheme	1998-2006	Promote the development of commercial and residential buildings	Fiscal relief	Private sector	Strong
Special projects to Assist Disadvantaged Youth	1988-ongoing	Support out-of school projects for young people	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
Springboard	1998-ongoing	Provide intensive support for children at risk	Grant aid	Voluntary sector	Weak
Urban Project	1996-2006	Improve living standards in disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Service provision and grant aid	Local government, voluntary sector	Strong
Urban Renewal Scheme	1986-2006	Promote the development of commercial and residential buildings	Fiscal relief	Private sector	Strong
Youth Diversion Scheme	2001-ongoing	Divert young people from crime through community programmes	Service provision and grant aid	Gardaí and voluntary sector	Weak
Young People's Facilities and Services Fund	1998-ongoing	Promote the development of commercial and residential buildings	Grant aid	Local government, voluntary sector	Strong
Village and Town Renewal Scheme	1998-2006	Promote the development of commercial and residential buildings	Fiscal relief	Private sector	Strong

and the sub-national administrative units of the Health Services Executive also contributed significant funding to special area-based services for disadvantaged areas, sometimes through co-funding of activities also supported by central government and sometimes through separate projects. The range and number of funding heads and forms of support provided by these sub-national bodies were so great and so often tied up with other services and funding programmes that it was not possible to disentangle them in any comprehensive way. Therefore they are not included in the national picture in this section, though they are included as part of the estate-level picture presented later. Philanthropic funding could not be included at national level for the same reasons but it also is at least partly incorporated later in the estate-level analysis. The implication of the lack of central-level data on sub-national programmes is that short of replicating our analysis of the individual estates presented below for every disadvantaged area in the country, there is no way of arriving at a comprehensive national summing up of the amount of public funding devoted to area-targeted anti-poverty measures in Ireland at present. What is presented in Table 3 is a next-best alternative – an estimate of central government expenditure in this area in the year 2006 – but the exclusion of spending by sub-national public agencies which this approach involves is likely to represent a significant undercount of the total at national level (though not at local estate level reported later). While it is often recognised that difficulties in estimating outputs and impacts are a feature of public spending programmes, here also we have to point to problems in quantifying expenditure inputs, a problem which does not auger well for the potential for good strategic management of the field of activity involved.

Community Employment and Jobs Initiative schemes are included as area-targeted measures because of the priority accorded to disadvantaged areas targeted by the Partnerships in decisions regarding the allocation of CE schemes. However, the nature of expenditure on CE and JI schemes gives rise to a question whether all of that expenditure should be included in our measure of area-based spending. The issue here is that these schemes can be thought of as ‘add-ons’ to the social welfare system: they target the long-term unemployed and lone parents who are outside the labour market and provide them with work placements in non-profit or public bodies which carry a stipend amounting to approximately 110 per cent of their weekly welfare payments. The objective is to draw those individuals into work-and-training schemes that are designed to reintegrate them into the labour market (we will return later to the question of how effective the schemes are in achieving this objective). Almost two-thirds of expenditure on these schemes is accounted

for by replacement of the welfare benefits that participants were previously in receipt of (the balance is accounted for by the 10 per cent add-on to those benefits that participants receive plus training costs and overheads). Thus, since a large part of CE and JI expenditure would have occurred anyway in the form of welfare payments had those schemes not existed, a case could be made that only the net added cost should be counted as area-based expenditure. Since we preferred to err on the conservative side in estimating area-based expenditure in this study, that is the approach we have adopted here. Based on national data on the numbers employed by those schemes and estimates of average welfare payments they otherwise would have received, we calculated that 65.9 per cent of total expenditure on the schemes could be counted as welfare-benefit replacement, with the balance of 34.1 per cent making up the add-on element. *Only the 34.1 per cent of CE and JI expenditure that makes up this add-on element is counted here as part of our area-based expenditure totals.*

Table 3 presents data on expenditure for the programmes listed in Table 2. These programmes accounted for €641.2 million of central government spending in 1996 and €968.8 million in 2006, an increase of over 50 per cent over the period. However, the increase occurred at a time of rapid growth in both public expenditure as a whole and the wider economy and represented a small *decrease* relative to those benchmarks. The figure for 2006 was equivalent to 7.18 per cent of social security spending and 0.55 per cent of GDP, which represented a decline of about one-third in these ratios compared to 1996. The Urban, Rural and Village and Town Renewal Schemes, as outlined earlier, are indirect anti-poverty measures in that they do not directly target the poorer segments of the population in poor neighbourhoods but seek rather to incentivise business investment and better-off residential settlement to move into such neighbourhoods. They accounted for 29 per cent of area-based expenditure in 2006. If we excluded these measures and focused on those which were intended to benefit the poor directly, total area-based expenditure falls to €688 million in 2006 and €239 million in 1996. Of this total for 2006, some €393 million was accounted for by programmes that utilised relatively weak spatial targeting criteria and so would be expected to show only limited concentration in deprived areas, while the balance of €295 million (excluding the tax expenditure programmes represented by Urban Renewal and Village and Town Renewal) amounted to €295 million.

**Table 3 Central Government Expenditure on Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures, 1996, 2006**

	Expenditure in €m (2006 prices)		Type
	1996	2006	
<b>Strong Spatially Targeting</b>			
CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais)		23.0	Capital
DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)	11.4	50.8	Current
Local Drugs Task Forces		16.0	Current
Local Employment Service (LES)	6.2	23.2	Current
Partnerships and employment pacts	18.9	47.6	Current
RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development)		4.1	Capital
Rural Renewal Scheme		90.6	Capital
Urban Renewal Scheme <sup>1,2</sup>	402.3	256.2	Capital
Urban Project	12.8		Mixed
Village and Town Renewal Scheme <sup>2</sup>		24.5	Capital
Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund <sup>2</sup>		40.0	Mixed
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>451.6</b>	<b>576.1</b>	
<b>Weak Spatial Targeting</b>			
Community employment and jobs initiative <sup>3</sup>	158.1	124.0	Current
Community Development Programme	8.0	20.2	Current
Community Services Programme		37.1	Current
Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme		40.0 <sup>4</sup>	Mixed
Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme	0.3	30.5	Current
Local authority social inclusion units		1.0	Current
Programme of Grants for Locally-Based Community & Voluntary Organisations		3.0	Mixed
National Childcare Investment Programme		3.8 <sup>4</sup>	Mixed
Remedial Works Scheme <sup>6</sup>	21.0	120.7	Capital
Special projects to Assist Disadvantaged Youth		3.3	Current
Springboard		2.6 <sup>5</sup>	Current
Youth Diversion Programme	2.2	6.7	Current
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>189.6</b>	<b>392.7</b>	
<b>Total (strongly + weakly spatially targeted)</b>	<b>641.2</b>	<b>968.8</b>	
Total as % of total public expenditure on social security	10.6	7.1	
Total as % of GDP	0.8	0.5	

Notes: Expenditure data includes only central government spending and excludes spending by local government and sub national government agencies. <sup>1</sup> this includes spending on the operational areas of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority and Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. <sup>2</sup>These schemes did not involve direct government expenditure, but rather tax reliefs and associated tax revenue foregone. As data for tax revenue foregone in 2006 are not available, the estimate here is based on annual average tax revenue forgone between 1999 and 2004. <sup>3</sup>Total expenditure has been reduced by 65.9% to take account of the value of social security benefits covered by the wages of participants, because this expenditure would have been incurred in the absence of these schemes. <sup>4</sup>These schemes funded both private (for profit) and community/voluntary (non-profit) childcare facilities. The data here relate only to community/voluntary facilities, as these are more likely to have been targeted on disadvantaged areas. <sup>5</sup> Refers to expenditure in 2007. <sup>6</sup>This scheme funded the Ballymun Regeneration project among other social housing estates regeneration projects.

Source: Government of Ireland (1998, 2008), Pobal (2007), Goodbody Economic Consultants (2005), ministries' annual reports and information provided by ministries.

It is notable that the volume of spending accounted for by the programmes listed in Table 3 is large. As the target populations for this spending varied greatly from programme to programme and in most cases are not precisely quantified, it is not possible to express the expenditure in terms of spending per person or per household of target population. However, an illustrative indication of what the expenditure might entail can be provided by estimating what the expenditure per household would be if it were wholly directed at the most disadvantaged households. If, for illustrative purposes, we excluded the tax expenditure programmes listed in Table 3 and focused on the €688 million accounted for by the other programmes in the table and if we were to assume that this expenditure were concentrated on the 10 per cent of households in the country that were most disadvantaged (approximately 147,000 households), we would arrive at estimate of average spend per household in that category for the year of €4,680, or €90 per week, a not insignificant amount. If we were to limit our attention to the share of that spending accounted for by programmes with strict spatial targeting criteria (i.e. those most likely to be concentrated in the kinds of disadvantaged areas represented by the estates in our study), the spend per household in 2006 would fall to €2,009, or €39 per week. These annual expenditure estimates of €4,680 and €2,009 per disadvantaged household derived from national data provide approximate upper and lower bounds of the expenditure we should expect to find when we move to the parallel estimates generated at estate level presented later in this chapter.

These estimates are of course only illustrative since it is a feature of the programmes that they do not measure expenditure in these terms and, as we shall see further below, do not necessarily target the most disadvantaged households. The estimates are not intended as recommendations that ABIs be abolished and the funding converted into cash payments to households. However, it is important that full and accurate costing of programmes (including staffing, capital and overheads) be carried out, that costings for programmes with similar objectives targeted on particular neighbourhoods be placed alongside each other and (where justified by overlapping goals and remits) that they be aggregated to arrive at total expenditure amounts, and that appropriate metrics (such as expenditure per household in the targeted areas or per targeted beneficiary) be used to indicate the scale of expenditure. In the present instance, the illustrative estimates per disadvantaged household referred to indicate that the scale of the spending on ABIs at national level is substantial enough to make a significant difference to disadvantaged segments of the population if it were well directed and well deployed to meet their needs.

Due to the proliferation of separate area-based programmes described in the preceding section, spending in 2006 was channelled through many more conduits than was the case in 1996. Furthermore, the proportion of this spending derived from EU funding schemes declined as Ireland's economy improved in this period. Table 3 also reveals a shift in the distribution of area-based spending in favour of strongly spatially targeted measures (as defined in Table 2). Spending on these grew by 29 per cent between 1996 and 2006, whereas spending on weakly spatially targeted measures grew by 1.07 per cent, largely because contraction in spending on the Community Employment and Jobs Initiative Schemes cancelled out increased spending in other areas. This is related in turn to a marked fall in long-term unemployment during these years. The growth of schemes that were strongly targeted in spatial terms benefited state bodies rather than community and voluntary sector agencies, particularly in local government and education, as many of the schemes of this type established from the mid-1990s channelled spending through these sectors. Although spending on programmes implemented by the community and voluntary sector also expanded between 1996 and 2006, by the latter year a larger proportion of this spending was linked to service provision (principally childcare, family support and addiction services), whereas in the former most of the schemes relevant to this sector funded more general community development activities.

Table 3 also categorises measures as mainly capital (funding for buildings and infrastructure), mainly current (subsidies for the running costs of agencies) and mixed (capital and current). Only six of the 24 measures were mainly capital investment, but these were generally high spending programmes and accounted for 47.6 per cent of total area-based expenditure in 2006. This is a slight decline in relative terms from 1996, when measures of this type accounted for 53.6 per cent of total spending on area-based programmes. Six of the programmes were mixed. The balance of 12 programmes focusing mainly on current expenditure accounted for 43.9 per cent of total spending.

### **4.3 Estate level picture: inventory and sources of funding**

In order to establish what the national programmes just examined represented on the ground, the present study selected four of its seven case-study estates and sought to survey the nature and extent of services funded by area-based programmes and the expenditure associated with them in 2006. Fatima Mansions and Moyross were selected as two estates where expenditure on these programmes was at the higher end of the

range and Deanrock and Cranmore as two where it was at the lower end of the range. The results of this exercise are presented estate by estate in Tables 4 to 7 below.

### *Method*

The compilation of these tables proved to be a complex and time-consuming matter – and the poor level of information on the activities under examination itself proved to be a revealing aspect of the exercise. Although standard auditing controls on the disbursement of funds seemed tight and effective, auditing information was not compiled into a form that allowed for the collation of information of the total level of spending on ABIs in particular estates. Only the Combat Poverty Agency and the Department of the Environment and Local Government were able to provide comprehensive breakdowns of all the ABI investment funded in the seven estates. This information gap reflects a key aspect of management of the programmes that we will highlight further below – their diffuse targeting mechanisms. For the most part, operational areas for programmes were so broadly targeted and so loosely incorporated into the rationale and design of programmes that they provided no platform on which to build tight spatial tracking of expenditure. In consequence, even though these programmes were conceived of as spatially targeted, tight spatial tracking of expenditure generally did not exist, and because of this the information base for estimating expenditure in particular estates was not available.

Generally, the lack of central information required us to rely on information collected at estate level to estimate the scale of local spending. This first required that we identify and contact every local agency connected with the estates that might have received funding under these programmes and to compile from them an inventory of relevant activities and interventions that affected the estates. The second step was to request data on annual expenditure – and as the fieldwork was underway in 2008 it was decided to adopt 2006 as the reference for this purpose since annual accounts were more likely to be available for that year.

Some of these organisations, such as family support and child care centres, were formally established single-purpose entities and in some cases it was a reasonably straightforward matter to establish how much funding they had received in 2006. However, the more common situation was that there were complex interlocking arrangements between organisations and it often proved difficult, if not impossible, to apportion expenditure or other supports between them. This complexity reflected the multiplicity, complexity and

time-limited character of much of the funding supports that were available from external sources. Within all of the estates, community organisations such as community centres or community development projects had emerged that acted as the interface between local groups and the external funding world. They provided umbrella services in helping local organisations to apply for funding, handle accounting and reporting requirements, employ staff, locate and access premises and deal with administrative matters such as payroll and insurance. In some cases, external funding would be secured through a community centre and then funnelled to the organisation on whose behalf it had been sought, while in other cases, the community centre would assign staff or allow access to premises or other facilities so that a smaller organisation could apply for funding and deal with any monies they received themselves. Staff employed under the Community Employment scheme, which as we saw earlier at national level represent a major form of support for community activity in disadvantaged areas, also provide many examples of inter-organisational functioning. In Fatima Mansions, for example, 29 CE staff were at work in various organisations in the estate in 2006, but a single umbrella organisation – Fatima Groups United – acted as their direct employer and distributed their services to the local organisations that were the intended beneficiaries.

Such complexities in local flows of funding and other resources between organisations were so many and varied that we felt it might mislead more than it would illuminate to allocate expenditure amounts to each organisation or activity individually. Rather, we sought first to identify all the organisations or projects in the four estates that either received some funding or were allocated some staff resources (such as CE workers) from national or sub-national area-based programmes for sustained periods (that is, over weeks or months) at some time in 2006. We then sought to identify the external funding streams that could be traced as the ultimate source for these supports and to estimate the sum of the funding from each stream arriving into each estate. In order to link this analysis back to the national data on area-based programmes presented in Tables 2 and 3 above, we attempted to connect locally identified funding streams with national funding programmes. However, local groups were often better able to identify the government department or agency from which blocks of funding came, than the specific funding programme involved. Consequently, our tabulations sometimes identify the source department or agency rather than the source programme. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, estate-level funding streams from public sources do not always emanate solely from the national level but may include at least part-funding from local authorities or other sub-national bodies such as

regional administrative units of the Health Service Executive. These funding streams are included in our tables and the tables thus embody a somewhat broader representation of area-based programmes than is contained in the national picture presented earlier.

Thus, with reference to the year 2006, we sought to create for each of the four estates, firstly, a list of organisations or projects that received public funding support; second, a check-list of external funding sources that provided those supports, and third, a sum-total of the expenditures on the supports of these kinds added together for each of the four estates. On the basis of the totals for estate-level expenditure arrived at from this exercise and taking account of the numbers of households in each estate, we were then also able to estimate the expenditure per household that the total external support for each estate represented.

A feature of this approach is that the picture of estate-level activity we present here concentrates on organisations that are sufficiently established to merit funding or the allocation of significant resources such as CE workers to support their work. Excluded are the large numbers of voluntary organisations that are active in a more intermittent or *ad hoc* manner within estates, many of which interact with or are supported by the more formal layers of organisations in various ways. In fact, for many of the community development organisations and projects we identify, work with less established voluntary activities is often a major part of their role. Thus the organisations we count are best thought of as the formally organised tip of an iceberg of community activity that is present within estates, the bulk of which consists of less established niche activities that may be difficult to detect for all but those directly involved.

The data on expenditure by the organisations we examined relates principally to current expenditure. Major public capital investment was also a significant feature in some of the estates around this period but because its deployment in individual estates tends to occur in large chunks over short and widely spaced intervals, its scale and impact cannot be represented meaningfully in data for a single year. Therefore, major capital projects are excluded from our tabulations of the data but we comment in passing on their significance in individual estates. In some cases current spending proved impossible to distinguish from small capital spending (on for instance fixtures and equipment) so small elements of capital expenditure are included in the tables.

**Table 4 Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Cranmore, 2006**

Area based project	Function	Funding programme/ agency																
		Community Employment Scheme	Delivering equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)	Fund	Dormant Accounts Programme	Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme	Health Services Executive	Local authority	Company	Local Partnership Service	Local Employment (area based)	Other Statutory Source	Private and Philanthropic Sector	Programme of grants for locally based community and voluntary organisations	Remedial Words Scheme	RAPID	assist disadvantaged	Vocational Education Committee
Abbey Quarter Community Centre	Youth work, childcare	X				X				X			X					
Abbey Quarter Community Employment Scheme	Education for adults	X																
Cranmore Community Co-op	Community development			X											X			
Cranmore Regeneration Project	Estate regeneration			X			X							X				
Foroige the CRIB	Youth work					X												
Jobs club/ jobs initiative/ back to work enterprise scheme	Employment							X	X									
Mercy College School	Education for children, sports		X												X			
North Connacht Youth and Community Services	Youth work	X								X						X		
Resource House Project	Family Support, childcare	X			X	X		X		X	X							X
Sligo Family Support Ltd.	Family support, childcare				X	X												
Sligo Leader Partnership	Community development, youth work, recreation							X										
Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership	Sport & recreation	X					X	X										
Sligo Social Service Council Ltd.	Family support, childcare	X					X			X								
St Anne's/ Avalon Centre	Youth work, eldercare	X					X								X			

**Table 5 Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Deanrock, 2006**

Area-based project	Function	Funding programme/ agency										
		Delivering equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)	Family & Community Services	Community Employment	Health Service Executive	Local Drugs Task Force	Ogra Corcaí	Other Statutory	Pobal	Vocational Education	Young Peoples' Facilities and Services Fund	Youth Diversion programme
School	Education for children	X										
TACT (Youth Diversion Programme)	Youth work			X								X
Togher Community Centre	Community development			X								
Togher Link Up	Drug misuse					X						
Togher Family Centre	Family Support Childcare		X		X		X	X			X	
Togher Special Youth Project (SPY)	Youth work						X		X			

**Table 6 Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Fatima Mansions, 2006**

Area-based project	Function	Funding programme/ agency											Private/philanthropic Sector				
		ARK Children's Cultural Centre	Cityarts	City of Dublin Youth Services Board	Client Contributions	Community Development Programme	Community Employment	Combat Poverty Agency	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)	Fatima Regeneration Board *	Health Services Executive	Irish Youth Federation		Local Drugs Task Force	Local Authority	Local Partnership Company	National Childcare Investment Programme
Community Employment Scheme	Employment, training for adults						X										
Digital Community Project	Education, training for adults								X								X
Equality for Women Project	Education, training for adults													X			
Fatima ArkLink	Arts, youth work	X									X						X
Fatima Children's Day Centre	Childcare				X					X		X			X	X	
Fatima Groups United	Community development					X						X					
Fatima Health Initiative	Health promotion							X	X								
Fatima Homework Club	Education for children, childcare								X				X		X	X	
Fatima estate regeneration	Regeneration												X				X
Fatima Regeneration Board	Regeneration												X				X
Fatima Youth Initiative	Youth work									X							
Rialto Community Drug team	Drug misuse									X		X					
Rialto Family Centre	Family support, childcare									X		X					
Rialto Learning Community	Education, training for children																X
Rialto Youth Project outreach project in Fatima	Youth work			X						X							
Schools	Education for children								X								
Towersongs	Arts, culture		X								X		X				

Note: funded by the private sector via the public private partnership project for the regeneration of the estate.

**Table 7 Services Funded by Area-Based Social Inclusion Measures in Moyross, 2006**

Area based project	Function	Funding programme/ agency													
		Community Development Programme	Community Employment (DEIS)	Delivering equality of Opportunity in Schools	Dept of the Environment	Local authority	Health Service Executive	Local Employment Service	Local Partnership Company	Other statutory source (area based)	Other Statutory source (non area based)	National Childcare Investment Programme	Private/ philanthropic	Vocational Education	Youth Diversion Programme
Adult & Community Education	Education for adults		X										X		
Bernardos	Family support, childcare		X				X					X			
Blue Box Creative Learning	Education for children			X			X						X		
Bursaries & Scholarships	Education for adults							X				X			
CCYDG/ Youth Diversion Project	Youth work, support for ex offenders		X											X	
Céim ar Céim (probation service)	Training, support for ex offenders								X				X		X
Community Development Programme	Community development	X	X												
Corpus Christi Parish Community Employment Scheme	Access to employment, training for adults, service provision.		X												
Limerick Youth Service Youth Intervention Project	Youthwork		X				X				X		X		X
Moyross Action Centre	Welfare rights, community development							X							
Moyross Community Development Network	Community development	X													
Moyross Community Enterprise Centre	Community development, support and premises for community projects, estate management		X			X	X	X		X					
Moyross Development Company	Community development, support for community and enterprise projects										X		X		
Moyross Estate Management	Housing management, resident participation regeneration				X	X		X	X						
Moyross Integrated Childcare	Childcare, education for children						X	X			X				
Moyross Obair	Assess to employment, training							X							

Moyross Partners*	Umbrella body for community groups									X						
Northside Learning Hub	Education for children, youth work								X				X			X
Respond! Childcare	Childcare										X		X			
Respond! Housing Initiative	Housing for vulnerable families				X	X	X				X					
School	Education for children			X					X		X					
Suaimhneas	Homelessness				X		X									
We're OK (Northside youth initiative)	Youthwork								X							X

Note: \*received no significant funding in 2006.

The tables also identify activities which drew on funding provided by private sector and philanthropic bodies, although as is explained in the next section, we could not be sure we had a full picture of these sources of revenue. We comment in the next section on those estates where it is clear that philanthropic funding clearly was of major significance.

### *Findings*

The results of the analysis of estate-level activity in the four estates are presented estate by estate in Tables 4 to 7. Looking first at general patterns revealed by these tables, a number of significant features emerge.

- The number of community organisations which were funded by area-based programmes in 2006 is large: 22 in Moyross, 16 in Fatima Mansions and 15 in Cranmore. Deanrock is somewhat of an outlier in this regard as only five community services were in operation in this estate in 2006.
- The national funding sources the estate-level organisations drew on were also numerous: 17 in Fatima Mansions, 15 in both Moyross and Cranmore, and 11 in Deanrock. The multiplicity of these funding sources translated into complex funding arrangements at local level. Twenty-one of the 57 organisations and projects listed drew on three or more sources of funding in 2006 and the vast majority drew on at least two sources. Funding arrangements for area-based services in Cranmore and Moyross appear particularly complex, as do arrangements for funding family support services in all estates.
- All community based services in the estates relied to a considerable degree on Community Employment and Jobs Initiative Schemes for staff. In Cranmore, Deanrock and Moyross, a number of community based services employed staff of this type. In Fatima Mansions, a single umbrella body for community based services (Fatima Groups United) employed all of the CE/JI staff at work in the estate and assigned them to the various community services active in its area. However, these workers accounted for a smaller share of staffing in community services in Fatima Mansions than in other estates.
- The large role played by Community Employment, both as a scheme in itself and in the role it plays in providing workers for other community programmes, means that it had a special place in the whole system of area-based interventions. Nominally, it is an active

labour market measure, that is, a means to support the long-term unemployed and lone parents to gain skills, develop networks relating to employment and make the transition back into the mainstream labour market. Evaluations of CE have shown that it has not been effective in these terms, even at times of buoyant demand in the labour market (Indecon International Economic Consultants, 2002; O'Connell, 2002). As a result calls have been made for it to be scaled back or abolished, and it has been argued that the numbers employed on CE schemes should have fallen to low levels when overall employment growth was strong in the first half of the 2000s (Grubb *et al*, 2009). However, in times of recession the case for CE-type employments schemes becomes stronger and they can be viewed as a useful means to add value to the social welfare system. With a modest additional expenditure over and above that which clients would receive in any event as social welfare recipients, they provide two social benefits: (1) it gives a valuable role in their communities to CE workers, many of whom otherwise would be marginalised and economically inactive, and (2) it helps sustain valuable social services and community organisations in disadvantaged areas. Viewed in these terms, the case for the CE scheme becomes stronger, and at least suggests that the terms under which it should be evaluated should not be restricted to those that arise under active labour market policy in the strict sense.

- A large proportion of the projects funded by the area-based initiatives in these four estates provide key social services. Bearing in mind that some projects carry out several functions, 23 are concerned with child-care, family support and youth work services. Cranmore is serviced by a particularly large number of services of this type. A further 11 services are concerned with the provision of education and training for adults, enabling them to access paid employment and combating drug misuse. Fatima Mansions has a particularly large number of projects of this type.
- An important positive feature of services provided in the estates is the inclusion within them of a range of preventive interventions designed to support families and individuals (especially young people) at high risk of seriously negative outcomes. Both the present and the original study of the seven estates emphasise the role of small groups of troublesome households or individuals in the dynamics of local neighbourhood decline and highlight the need for services to support them and minimise the disruption they cause to neighbours. (Note that this emphasis differs from that raised in the 'underclass' literature, as described and criticised in the Irish case by Nolan and

Whelan (2000). Here we highlight small sub-groups of acutely disadvantaged households that are found within disadvantaged communities rather than general processes of cultural differentiation and detachment from mainstream society that the 'underclass' approach says are characteristic of disadvantaged communities as a whole. The view adopted here of the acutely disadvantaged as marginalised minorities within poor neighbourhoods is consistent with the view of the majority in those neighbourhoods as at high risk of poverty but otherwise as sharing the same basic cultural processes of mainstream society.) Chief among the services which have grown up to meet such needs are family support interventions (such as the Springboard projects) which aim to intervene early and provide positive supports to families where children have been identified as at risk of neglect or abuse and thus as likely to come to the attention of the child protection services. None of our seven estates had family support services of this nature ten years ago, but now all have such local services (though the Deanrock version is somewhat less intensive and more weakly targeted than the others and already existed in a less developed form ten years ago). There also has been considerable development of services that target teenagers at risk of getting into trouble with the criminal justice system. These are now also present in all of the estates reviewed, and while not as recent or novel as family support services, they are now more extensive than ten years ago.

These developments address what was identified as a central weakness in the policy response to social conditions in the worst-off local authority estates highlighted in our study ten years ago – the under-provision of services aimed at including and integrating problem or dysfunctional families and individuals, particularly those emphasising early intervention. Many of these were likely to be seen as 'troublemakers' by the mainstream of local residents and thus were often marginalised and regarded as deserving of eviction or exclusion. The emphasis on the extent and range of preventive services now in place to support families and young people in these circumstances is unlikely to be adequate, though there is yet no standard methodology for determining what the level of provision should be. However, real progress is evident in the estates in these areas and this progress must be counted as a significant achievement of the overall system of area-based programmes in Ireland.

- Eight projects in the four estates are concerned with community development and support for community services, of which five are based in Moyross. Interviews with the staff of these projects indicate that most of their time is devoted to support for

community services, particularly by helping voluntary/community organisations to access funding and providing them with premises. Four estate regeneration and estate management projects are also based in the four estates, the mandate of which overlaps to an extent with the community development projects. Although estate management and estate regeneration projects generally include the relevant local authority and other statutory agencies, community development projects are independent of government.

The funding streams identified in Tables 4 to 7, which emanate from government, accounted for the majority of the income of the organisations involved. Private and philanthropic sources also made contributions in certain cases, though with the exception of Fatima Mansions that contribution was generally small. Some organisations in the estates derived small amounts of income from charges they levied on users of services, and four in Moyross received private philanthropic support in 2006. The exceptional role of private funding in Fatima Mansions arose partly as a consequence of the public-private partnership through which the estate regeneration was financed. The terms of this partnership provided that in exchange for access to development land for private housing in the estate, the private developer who undertook the project contributed a 'community dividend' to local community, to be managed by Fatima Regeneration Board. This community dividend was originally set at €5.6 million, to be handed over as the private elements in the development were realised. As mentioned earlier, the recent crash in the property market in Ireland has raised doubts over the commercial status of the private housing in the estate and thus over the final amount of the community dividend to be paid. Nevertheless, sums provided to date have been an important resource for Fatima Regeneration Board. Particular projects in Fatima Mansions have also received large support from private philanthropy in the form of Atlantic Philanthropies. As we detail further below, these resources, when added to the public funding streams that have benefited the estate, have placed Fatima Mansions in an exceptionally well-resourced position compared to the other estates and have enabled it to provide a range and level of services to residents that are unmatched elsewhere.

#### **4.4 Scale of spending in estates**

The results of the costing of area-based expenditure at estate level in some cases echoed those at the national level in terms of the broad magnitude of expenditures, while in other

cases estate-level expenditures were considerably below the benchmark estimated earlier (namely, expenditures per household in 2006 had expenditure been targeted on the 10 per cent most disadvantaged households in the state). The data are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 Current Public Expenditure on Area-Based Initiatives in Four Estates, 2006**

Estate	Total Expenditure (€)	Estimated no of Households <sup>1</sup>	Expenditure per Household (€)	Expenditure per household indexed to average
Cranmore	1,337,892	511	2,618	85
Deanrock	309,370	336	921	30
Fatima	536,679	150	3,578	116
Moyross	4,041,135	1,014	3,985	129
All Four Estates	6,225,076	2,011	3,096 <sup>2</sup>	100

Note: Expenditure on Community Employment and Jobs Initiative Schemes was adjusted to remove the benefit replacement element which is estimated at 65.9 per cent of total expenditure on these schemes. Quoted amounts for these schemes thus equate to 34.1 per cent of total expenditure on these schemes (see text, p. 33). <sup>1</sup>Because estate boundaries do not correspond to the small areas used for the census of population, and there is no definitive information available from other sources, the number of households had to be locally estimated for each estate. <sup>2</sup>This is the average of expenditure per household weighted by the size of the estate, or alternatively is equal to total spending across all four estates divided by the total number of households.

This table demonstrates that public expenditure on area-based initiatives in the four estates totalled €6,225,076 in 2006, or €3,096 per household. This estimate of per household expenditure in the four estates is considerably below the illustrative national expenditure estimate arrived at earlier on the basis of an assumption that all spending from national programmes were concentrated estimates. Expenditure per household in both Fatima Mansions and Moyross was above this average, but in both cases per household expenditure was also below the level which might be expected based on the national expenditure estimates presented above. In Deanrock and Cranmore, by contrast, area-based spending was significantly below the norm in the two other estates – €921 per household in the former and €2,618 in the latter. In both estates this low expenditure reflected extensive reliance on the Community Employment Scheme for staffing community projects, whereas use of (comparatively more expensive) salaried staff was more commonly employed to implement ABIs in Moyross and particularly in Fatima Mansions. The low expenditure in Deanrock understates the funding received by organisations based within that estate as many of the clients for their services were drawn from the wider Togher area rather than Deanrock itself. In keeping with the methodology we employed in all the estates, expenditures for Deanrock were adjusted downwards so as to include only the share accounted for by Deanrock residents.

In some cases these public funds were supplemented by private and philanthropic funding and, as already mentioned, investment by the latter was especially large in Fatima Mansions – it amounted to the equivalent of approximately €4,500 per household in that estate in 2006. ABIs in Moyross received funds from a philanthropic foundation established by the businessman JP McManus and by the Dell computer company, although we were unable to capture the value of this investment. As mentioned above, in Deanrock and Cranmore the private and philanthropic sectors did not make a significant contribution to funding area-based services.

#### **4.5 Impact**

As outlined earlier, information on inputs to area-based initiatives at estate level is patchy and difficult to fill in with any degree of completeness. It is scarcely surprising, then, that no rigorous assessment can be made of the impact of these initiatives. Writing in 2003, Haase and McKeown found that ‘little is known about the actual impact of the area-based Partnerships and even less about the comparative value of different approaches to tackling poverty and deprivation’ (Haase and McKeown 2003:iii). Their call for a more scientific approach to monitoring has since gone mostly unheeded and the information needed for effective monitoring of programmes is still largely absent. The present study has established that the scale of initiatives deployed in each estate is in most cases collectively large enough to have substantial impact. This in itself is significant since it eliminates the possibility that the programmes were too small to make a real difference. However, it was beyond the scope of a point-in-time study such as ours to generate the trend data and control variables that would have been necessary to provide well-grounded impact assessment. Nevertheless, we can offer some broad comment on a range of issues connected with impact. We do this first by presenting statistical indicators that, taken together with national evaluations of the ABIs and local interviews with activists who implement initiatives in the estates, throw some light on the possible effects of these initiatives. In addition, we comment on three characteristics of these programmes which bear heavily on their effectiveness, namely, their *targeting*, *design* and *governance*.

##### *Statistical indicators*

Indirect evidence on the possible impact of area-based programmes can be derived by examining change in statistical indicators of deprivation at electoral district (ED) level for the ten area-based programmes that adopted the ED as their spatial unit. For each of

these programmes it is possible to identify the EDs the programme selected, calculate the share of the national population that was included in the targeted EDs, and track the average change in the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation in those EDs between 1996 and 2006. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 9. The information on targeting, as measured by population share covered by the different programmes, is a revealing aspect of this table and we return to it in the next section. Here we focus on change in the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation for the period covered by the table, 1996-2006. During this decade the mean score for Ireland as a whole increased by 5.2, indicating an increase in affluence. Improvement was tilted considerably in favour of the most disadvantaged EDs – the 10 per cent of EDs that were the least affluent in 1996 improved by 11.9 points while the 10 per cent of EDs that were most affluent marginally lost ground (a decline of 1.3 points).

Looking at the outcomes in the EDs targeted by the ten area-based programmes, average change was positive in all cases and in all except one case (the Local Employment Service) was at least as good as the national average. However, the gain in these areas over and above the national average gain was modest. In no instance was it as great as that recorded by the 10 per cent of least affluent EDs and in only two instances (CLÁR and RAPID) did it exceed the national average gain by two points or more. At first sight, therefore, it would seem that the impact of the programmes was modest at best in that they did little to add to the general upsurge in prosperity that occurred in Ireland over the ten years 1996-2006. We cannot attach too much significance to this finding since it is possible that the modest average improvement in areas targeted by these programmes conceals larger improvements in particularly deprived sub-areas, perhaps helped by a channelling of resources into the poorest neighbourhoods by the programmes in question. This possibility cannot be tested in light of the poor information on neighbourhood-level distribution of resources by these programmes noted earlier. Rather, a less positive possibility suggests itself – that area targeting of the programmes was poor and did not live up to the logic of strict spatial channelling of resources that ostensibly motivated the whole area-based movement in social policy. It is thus to the question of targeting that we now turn.

**Table 9 Targeting and Impact of Area-Based Interventions with Strong Spatial Targeting, 1996 and 2006**

Intervention	Targeting Criteria	Share of national population in target areas (%)	Mean Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score of Target Neighbourhoods		Change in Mean Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score of Target Neighbourhoods
		2006	1996	2006	1996-2006
CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais)	Severe population decline between 1926 and 1996, averaging 50%	18.1	-0.9	7.0	7.8
Local Development Partnerships (urban)	Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation	74.9 <sup>1</sup>	3.4	9.0	5.6
Local Development Partnerships (rural)	Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation	78.4 <sup>2</sup>	6.2	11.4	5.2
Local Drugs Task Forces	Drug treatment data (especially on opiate dependency); police crime statistics; data relating to school attendance/drop-out and data on social and economic disadvantage	17.7	0.1	6.3	6.2
Local Employment Service (LES)	Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation	56.9	5.9	10.5	4.6
RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development)	Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation Levels of social housing. Designated disadvantaged schools	15.3	-3.8	4.0	7.8
Rural Renewal Scheme	Long-term population decline, low economic growth, lack of urban centres	3.0	0.5	7.2	6.6
Urban Renewal Scheme	Population and economic decline, social problems, dereliction	12.2	-1.3	4.6	6.0
Urban Project	Bidding from 10 most disadvantaged areas	Nav	Nav	Nav	Nav
Village and Town Renewal Scheme	Population and economic decline, social problems, dereliction	5.2	.4	6.5	6.0
Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund	Drugs Task Force target areas and three additional cities and one town	21.9	1.1	6.6	5.5
<i>Comparators</i>					
Ireland as a whole		100	5.2	10.4	5.2
Decile 1 (most affluent)		23.1	21.0	19.7	-1.3
Decile 10 (least affluent)		11.0	-15.2	-3.3	11.9

Note: The neighbourhoods designated under the area based measures all refer to 2006, with the exception of: Local Development Partnerships (rural) – 2008 designation; RAPID – 2005 designation; the Urban Renewal Scheme – refers to all neighbourhoods designated under the lifetime of this programme (i.e. 1985-2006). <sup>1</sup> Percentage of urban population. <sup>2</sup> Percentage of rural population.

## *Targeting*

As mentioned earlier, effective targeting of scarce resources is one of the key rationales proffered by government and researchers for the use of area-based initiatives. In view of the importance of these rationales, the under-development of arrangements for targeting area-based investment in Ireland is striking. Among the 26 local development measures under examination here only 11 adopt explicit spatial targeting criteria, and even then these criteria were often inappropriate, loose or ineffective. For instance, the CLÁR programme defined target areas solely on the grounds of population decline, a poor measure of disadvantage, and the Rural Renewal Scheme was targeted in a similar way.

Weaknesses in targeting were found to be especially evident in four schemes that were designed to support schools in disadvantaged areas when these were evaluated by the Comptroller and Auditor General (2006). This evaluation found that:

- over three-quarters of schools in the country benefited from at least one of the schemes;
- different qualifying criteria were used for each scheme, with the result a school might qualify for some types of support, but not others;
- some targeting decisions were based on information supplied by school principals which raises concerns about the accuracy of this information;
- targeting decisions were rarely reviewed, so schools remained eligible for additional funding, even if their socio-economic profile improved, while there was no mechanism for including those schools whose profiles disimproved after initial targeting decisions were reached (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2006).

These concerns were addressed when the various supports for disadvantaged schools were amalgamated into the DEIS scheme in 2005. They were thenceforth subject to the same targeting criteria (Department of Education and Science, 2005), though it remains to be seen whether they thereby came to be more concentrated on disadvantaged pupils.

Decisions regarding the spatial focus of the partnerships were reached using what was apparently more robust methodology, namely ED scores on the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation (Haase and Pratschke, 2005). More recently this index has also been used to target the Local Employment Service and RAPID. Despite the technical sophistication of the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation, the effectiveness of the targeting it allows for is

hampered by the limitations of the underlying data. It is based on data on the Electoral Division (ED), the smallest area unit for which census data are collected for the whole country. However, these 3,340 units include varying number of residents, and their boundaries, which have not been comprehensively updated for decades, no longer reflect contemporary settlement patterns, particularly in urban areas (Haase and Pratschke, 2005). This issue is currently being addressed by the Census authorities, and it is envisaged that more robust small area census data will be available from Census 2011.

Even given the limitations of EDs as spatial units, the data on targeting of programmes listed in Table 9 above reveal two problems, keeping in mind that these programmes were ostensibly set up to tackle disadvantaged black-spots. First, a number of the programmes have so relaxed their targeting criteria that in fact they embrace over half the population – 74.9 per cent of the urban population in the case of the urban partnerships, 78.4 per cent of the rural population in the case of the rural Leader partnerships, and 56.9 per cent of the national population for the Local Employment Service. In only two instances, the Rural Renewal Scheme and the Village and Town Renewal Scheme, do targeted areas account for less than 10 per cent of the national population.

Secondly, the areas targeted by the programmes are not particularly disadvantaged – and this is true of programmes with a narrower spatial reach as well as those that are more broadly spread. The Village and Town Renewal Scheme, for example, is directed at areas that embrace only 5.2 per cent of the national population, but the average score of those areas on the Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation is far above that of the least affluent decile of EDs (6.5 versus -3.3 respectively in 2006). In fact, in none of the sets of EDs targeted by the programmes is the average affluence score as low as that for the most disadvantaged decile of EDs and in the case of both the rural Leader partnerships and the Local Employment Services, targeted EDs are at least as well off as the national average. Generally speaking, EDs that were served by programmes with a narrower spatial reach showed somewhat larger increases in affluence in the period 1996-2006 than EDs in more widely targeted programmes. However, this cannot be taken to mean that the former showed greater reductions in disadvantage since they were not particularly disadvantaged to start with. Thus, we can conclude that ineffective targeting was a central feature of area-based

anti-poverty measures in this period and greatly reduces the likely impact of those measures on genuinely disadvantaged areas.

### *Design*

In addition to poor targeting, a range of other shortcomings in the design of area-based measures are raised repeatedly in the evaluation literature and are borne out by our observations on the ground in the seven case study estates.

- Funding arrangements under the programmes are generally short-term and on the margins of the mainstream system, while the complex socio-economic problems they seek to address often demand lengthy intervention and attention from mainstream agencies. Individual projects often managed to endure for a considerable time but only because, as programme managers often complained, they spent much of their time and resources making funding applications, juggling with many different, short-term funding streams, and dealing with the complex paperwork involved in this. The complex and constantly shifting parameters of the funding environment meant that many community development projects and organisations at local level had evolved into agencies whose major role was to serve as an interface between funders and smaller, less well-resourced organisations in the neighbourhood.
- The financially insecure, marginal status of many projects did not mean that their activities were on the edges of what is normally counted as mainstream social services provision. In the early 1990s, the bulk of area-based expenditure could justifiably be regarded as marginal in the sense that it was directed at non-mainstream community development or 'once off' interventions such as inner city and social housing estate regeneration. By 2006, however, services such as childcare provision (funded under the EOCP) and environmental improvement (funded by RAPID and CLÁR), which would generally be regarded as mainstream government responsibilities, had come to account for a significant share of area-based expenditure. This gives rise to an impression of area-based programmes not as innovative 'add-ons' to the mainstream system but as means to meet shortfalls in mainstream provision.
- Evaluations of the area-based interventions, and the wider good practice literature in this field, highlight the importance of responsiveness to distinctive patterns of local need and thus of flexibility in programme design (Bamber *et al*, 2010). In reality, many of the area-

based measures examined here fund a restricted range of projects under terms and allocation procedures decided by central government. This tendency is particularly strong in programmes established since the mid-1990s such as RAPID, CLÁR and the EOCP.

- In interviews in all of the seven estates, community activists complained that the reporting requirements imposed by funding agencies were onerous and often differed between funding agencies contributing to a single project. In view of the limited utilisation of the information provided by these agencies for robust evaluation of programmes, the value of these onerous reporting arrangements is open to question.

There were instances in the seven estates where these problems had been overcome, at least to some degree. The Togher Family Centre, for example, which is based in Deanrock, had long struggled with problems of insecure funding but in 2005 it secured a somewhat longer-term funding agreement with the Health Service Executive. This was regarded within the Centre as a major development which had eased the Centre's sense of insecurity and enabled it to plan for the long-term development of the service. In Fatima Mansions the 'community dividend' arising from the Public Private Partnership used to regenerate the estate had enabled local community groups to escape the restrictions of rigid central funding criteria. It thus gave flexibility and local discretion in funding allocations. As a result, innovative community projects were funded and existing community projects continued after previous funding had ended.

### *Governance*

Concerns raised in a number of reports by government and other commentators over the past decade have inspired reforms to arrangements for the governance of area-based programmes at both central and local level (see, most notably, Comptroller and Auditor General, 1996, 1999; National Economic and Social Forum, 1999).

At central level the Cabinet Social Inclusion Committee has been assigned ultimate responsibility for setting priorities in relation to the area-based measures. Responsibility for policy development and programme design has been concentrated on the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, which was established in 2002 (and since March 2010, Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) with this as a major part of

its brief. Responsibility for administering the schemes has been concentrated in an agency called Pobal (formerly Area Development Management Ltd., which was set up initially as an intermediary body to manage the Local Partnership Companies). Pobal operates under the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. In 2006 the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs held responsibility for nine of the 23 area-based measures in operation that year. Responsibility for the remainder was distributed among six other ministries, and seven intermediate agencies (if local government is classified as a single agency) played a role in their management. These numbers represent some degree of concentration in the agencies involved in recent years – Teague (2006) estimates that in 2000 area-based measures were managed by eight separate government departments and thirteen different agencies.

Despite this recent concentration of administrative bodies, central responsibility for the area-based programmes remains fragmented. Cross-departmental co-ordination is rare (the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is an exception), as is evaluation of the effectiveness of existing co-ordination structures before new programmes are introduced (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003). Even those programmes that were brought together under the responsibility of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs tended to retain the identity and procedures they possessed before they arrived into their new departmental home and have been no better integrated than those that are scattered across a number of different departments. The role of Pobal as the national administrative agency for a number of programmes has equally failed to enhance national coordination, since its remit is to act as an administrative conduit for a number of different funding streams rather than as a coordination agency that might seek to impose some order on how those programmes could work together or complement each other in pursuit of common basic goals. Since December 2009, two programmes conducted under the aegis of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, namely, the Community Development Programme and the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme, were terminated and superseded by a new single programme, the Local and Community Development Programme, thus enhancing the potential for coordinated action in this area.

At local level, a series of reforms to the governance of area-based measures has been introduced in recent years. Firstly, between 2003 and 2007, some partnerships and

community groups were amalgamated in an effort to reduce the number of service delivery bodies, ensure that a single body is responsible for delivering these functions in a given geographical area and improve service co-ordination (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2007). Secondly, efforts have been made to integrate local government and the area-based measures. Despite ambitious objectives, this process is characterised by false starts and limited meaningful progress. Its origins can be traced to 1994 when County Strategy Groups were established in each of the major local authorities to co-ordinate the area-based measures. The 1996 White Paper on local government reform recommended that these should be developed into Community and Enterprise Groups tasked with co-ordinating local government and the area-based measures and planning for the integration of the two sectors (Department of the Environment, 1996). However, this was overtaken by the publication of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development report in 1998 which proposed the establishment of County and City Development Boards tasked with the co-ordination of all public services at local government level, including the area-based measures. These were set up in 1999 and afforded statutory recognition by the Local Government Act of 2001.

The impact of these reforms appears to have been limited. Research on the CDBs, published in 2003, acknowledged that they are efficiently run, that they have provided a valuable networking forum and that their service co-ordination strategies fulfil an important planning function. However, it also concluded that 'they have failed to effect greater co-ordination and integration' of area-based social inclusion measures (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003:iv). The lack of robust local level data on the provision and funding of services, including area-based measures, was a contributor to this outcome, but a far more significant driver was the lack of authority underpinning their co-ordination function, coupled with the multiplicity of measures, responsible ministries and government agencies and the underdevelopment of national level arrangements for their co-ordination. In view of these arrangements the report concludes that 'The task that the CDBs... were set was extremely ambitious and perhaps even unrealistic in some respects' (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003:iv). Due to its recent completion, any attempt to assess the impact of the Partnerships' 'cohesion' process would be premature. However, the relatively modest scope of this reform merits comment. Its failure to further integrate the Partnerships with the local government runs counter to the thrust of public policy on this issue, and the rationale behind the decision not to do so is unclear.

The evidence collected at estate level indicates that the failure to streamline governance has also created problems for community groups. Community activists complained that the need to interact with diverse bodies involved in local planning for area based investment placed a considerable burden on their organisations. For example, a resident of Fettercairn who worked as a community development officer for the estate reported that she devoted the bulk of her work time to participating in committees linked to RAPID, the Local Partnership Company and the CDB. Other interviewees highlighted considerable overlap in the local development planning work carried out under the auspices of these three programmes. At the same time, several community activists raised concerns about the possible amalgamation of these bodies into the local government system on the grounds that local authorities may not have the capacity to manage these programmes effectively. The large number of separate funding schemes in operation, the rigidity of their terms and the different and often onerous reporting arrangements employed by different funders also raised significant challenges for community groups. For instance, a community activist from Finglas South complained:

projects are completely flooded with evaluations, checkups, financial audits, personnel audits ... it's time-consuming and in smaller projects the amount of time a team leader who might have been a worker ... puts aside one day a week to do the admin..., that person is now lost to the team and there's a lot of frustration around that, a huge amount of frustration around that ... and people are having difficulty with it.

Variations in the reporting requirements for the different area-based programmes administered by Pobal were also commonly criticised. These variations relate to the range of government departments from which funding originated and which Pobal had to reflect in its administrative procedures for different schemes. Interviewees also complained that inflexible terms for area-based funding schemes decreased the efficiency of projects on the ground. For instance, interviewees working in the drug treatment area highlighted difficulties in accessing funding to address emerging problems such as cocaine use via the Local Drug Task Forces, while local authorities highlighted difficulties in raising funding for the aspects of regeneration projects that did not entail refurbishment / physical works on estates.

## 4.6 Interventions through social housing

So far we have considered area-based interventions of a general kind. However, a particular interest arises in the case of local authority estates in the role of their landlords – the local authorities – in the estates. One widespread (but not universal) change that occurred in the seven estates was a general improvement in the relationship between local authorities and tenants. This was evidenced by positive comment from residents and a decline in the type of criticism and complaint about local authorities that was widespread in the past. Ten years ago most of the complaints we heard from tenants related to the local authority, but in the present study, the focus had shifted to the failings of other service providers in areas such as health, social care and local development.

Our research examined the link between this development and principal social housing management reforms which occurred on the case study estates during the past decade (and which could be seen as part of a wider reform programme in local government over that period – see Forde, 2005). Four categories of reforms in social housing management can be identified:

- the changing role of the social housing officer (re-conceptualisation)
- the entry of the new actors into the social housing sector (externalisation)
- the emergence of more sophisticated strategies to address the physical and social decline of estates (regeneration)
- and reforms to the management of the social housing service (managerialisation).

Improving relations between local authorities and tenants seemed to arise mainly from a re-conceptualisation on the part of local authorities of the social housing management function. As mentioned above, this traditionally was defined as primarily a property-focused, bureaucratic task and delivered in a centralised, paternalistic manner. By 2007, a qualitative shift in interactions between tenants and housing managers was evident, characterised by: greater visibility of managers on estates and the development of stronger relationships with tenants, leading to a more responsive service which has contributed in turn to a strong focus on addressing the problem of anti-social behaviour. The latter is now redefined as a core housing management responsibility, rather than entirely outside the landlord's remit, as had previously been the case. These changes were operationalised by the appointment of local

estate officers, responsible for the management of individual estates or groups of estates in all of the local authorities under examination and the appointment of officials with specific responsibility for combating anti-social behaviour in most of these.

Localisation of housing management has had almost uniformly beneficial impact on the case study estates and we came across many examples of good practice in this regard. Efforts to combat anti-social behaviour have been more mixed. However, where effective action of this type was taken by local authorities and other relevant agencies, such as in Fatima Mansions, it played a key role in stabilising troubled estates. Conversely, where effective action of this type was lacking, for instance in Moyross, this played a key role in further destabilising the estate, despite the continuing strength of community structures there.

The second significant development in the social housing sector during the past decade has been the emergence of more sophisticated regeneration strategies to overcome the physical and social decline of some social rented estates. Ten years ago regeneration strategies had been put in place on some of the seven case study estates but these were heavily focused on physical improvements generally via refurbishment. By 2006 the emphasis of regeneration programmes had shifted in two significant ways. First, although a strong emphasis on bricks-and-mortar issues had persisted, the focus had changed from refurbishment of existing dwellings to their demolition and, in most cases, replacement with new dwellings. For example, the Fatima Mansions complex was demolished in 2003 and rebuilt in 2006, sections of the Cranmore estate were de-tenanted in 2006 in preparation for demolition, the flats in Deanrock were demolished in 2006 and demolition of some sections of the Moyross estate was undertaken as part of a wider programme to regenerate the entire social housing stock in Limerick City. Secondly, a new emphasis on social, community and housing management interventions emerged as part of regeneration strategies. The origins of this development can be traced to efforts to consult tenants about the design of regeneration schemes and the estate management reforms. Subsequently, efforts to diversify the tenure structure of social housing estates, by introducing either private owners or other types of social landlord, became more prominent.

The evidence from the case study estates indicates that adding community development, social inclusion and housing management interventions to estate regeneration generally had

a positive impact. This finding reflects the international experience in this field which indicates that multi-faceted interventions are necessary for effective regeneration (Kintrea, 2007). However, the practice in Ireland of providing these interventions by agencies other than local authorities or other social landlords, which contrasts with the norm elsewhere in Europe, created significant co-ordination problems on some estates. Quite elaborate coordination structures had to be set up in Cranmore and to a lesser extent Fatima Mansions. The international experience is that tenure diversification can help regeneration particularly in very large social housing estates where concentrations of disadvantage can occur. However, in Ireland, estates that would be considered large by European standards are few in number. Among the seven social housing estates in the present study, only Moyross and Fettercairn could be considered large and both already include a large number of non-social renting households as a result of sales of dwellings to tenants. In smaller social estates located in mixed tenure areas, such as Fatima Mansions, the arguments for tenure diversification are less convincing. The Fatima Mansions case also highlights the limitations of tenure diversification as an income diversification strategy. In this case most of the private apartments have been acquired by investors rather than owner occupiers. Kintrea and Muir's (2009) research on Ballymun in north Dublin found that most of the private housing built as part of its regeneration programme was also sold to investors. In many cases these dwellings were let to rent supplement claimants who must be welfare-dependent in order to qualify for this support.

Two further contrasting points can be made about the built environment aspects of regeneration strategies. On the one hand, strategies to redesign the public spaces of estates have become more sophisticated and generally more successful in recent years. For instance in Deanrock and Fettercairn, the strategic provision of in-fill housing closed off alleyways and increased passive surveillance by residents of open areas. Both of these types of spaces had previously been sites for anti-social behaviour. Recent physical regeneration programmes in the case study estates were also guided by detailed master-plans, in contrast to the norm ten years ago. On the other hand, the heavy reliance on interventions focused on buildings, which was evident during our first visits ten years ago, tended to continue. Three of the seven case study estates (Moyross, Fatima Mansions and Cranmore) were extensively refurbished between 1997 and 2006; two (Fatima Mansions and Deanrock) had previously been refurbished in the preceding decade and two (Cranmore and Moyross) were scheduled for

further refurbishment. Nationally a large proportion of the local authority stock was also refurbished. The Remedial Works Scheme financed the refurbishment of 13,576 dwellings between 1985 and 2004, which constitutes 12 per cent of all local authority dwellings in the latter year (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006). In later years, the bricks-and-mortar interventions became more radical and demolition was more commonly used. Among the case study estates, the extent of demolition sometimes seemed to exceed the problems it was intended to address. In Cranmore for instance, a significant number of structurally sound and well designed dwellings were demolished in 2009 to no obvious benefit. By contrast in Deanrock, where the flats complex were highly stigmatised and provided poor quality accommodation and a focus for anti-social behaviour, demolition successfully eliminated those problems. It is also important to acknowledge that demolition is highly destabilising of estate communities. In some estates, such as Fatima Mansions, where community structures are strong they can withstand the effects of this intervention. In Muirhevnamor, however, interviewees expressed concern that if plans for the demolition of large sections of the estate were implemented, this would have a negative impact on the fabric of the community.

The third significant development in the social housing sector in this period was that certain functions which were previously the direct responsibility of local authorities, such as the provision of social housing and the regeneration of estates, were externalised to quasi-governmental, non-profit sectors and in some cases to private sector organisations. For instance sections of Cranmore and Moyross were transferred into the ownership of housing associations as part of regeneration schemes. However, by 2007, some aspects of this externalisation process had been reclaimed by the local authorities as part of their growing strategic management remit, while for various reasons the limits of other aspects of this agenda had been reached.

Rent supplement is an example of the former development. Due to concerns about the escalating costs of this benefit and the poor quality of the accommodation procured under its auspices, in 2004 the government decided that local authorities would take over responsibility for all claims of 18 months or more duration under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). The use of PPPs for social housing regeneration, which had been utilised only in Fatima Mansions, is an example of a local, rather than central government-driven externalisation. Although the PPP regeneration scheme delivered significant benefits in

Fatima Mansions, later schemes along these lines failed in the face of collapsing demand for housing and cast doubts on the transferability of this model to other contexts. Externalisation of social housing provision to housing associations continued during the decade under examination, however, and the local authority officials we interviewed expressed mixed views about this. Some criticised the sector for 'cherry picking' tenants and complained that the inclusion of housing association dwellings in some of the seven estates created logistical difficulties for neighbourhood management and regeneration. Others welcomed the alternative source of housing offered by these organisations and suggested that it would lead to improved service and choice for tenants. One experienced senior local authority manager expressed the hope that they take over as the main providers of social housing in Ireland, as this would enable local authorities to concentrate on strategic planning and would also increase the independence of the social housing sector from central government. However, he raised concerns about the structure of the housing association sector. It consists, on the one hand, of a handful of very large providers which own approximately half the stock and which he suggested 'are as large and bureaucratic as any local authority', and on the other hand, of a multitude of small providers with no paid staff, many of which would have little interest in developing new housing schemes.

The extensive effort at reform of local government which commenced in Ireland with the publication of the White Paper *Better Local Government* in 1996 provides the backdrop for these developments in social housing (Forde, 2005; Meldon, Kenny and Walsh, 2004). The reform programme has sought to enhance local democracy and improve the efficiency of local services. While doubts have been raised about the degree to which the programme has succeeded in its aim of shifting power from central to local government and from local officials to citizens (Forde, 2005), reviews of management reforms at local level have offered broadly positive conclusions (e.g. Boyle *et al*, 2003; Callanan, 2005). However, there has been little analysis of the impact on specific services such as housing, and where assessments have been made they have been based mainly on consultation with stakeholders and measurement of outputs (such as services provided) rather than of outcomes. Our research did not examine these reforms in sufficient depth to assess their impact on housing services. However, it does suggest that some measures have been implemented successfully, but that their impact has been more uneven than the aforementioned assessments imply, both individually and collectively across different local authorities under examination.

## **5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The follow-up study of the seven estates has found that advances were made on the estates during the years of economic boom. These advances were not uniform across estates, and one estate (Moyross) had specific crime and social order problems that counterbalanced modest improvements in other areas. Nor were the advances uniform across social indicators. For example, improvements in average levels of educational attainment and reductions in unemployment in the estates were accompanied by sharp increases in the levels of lone parenthood – to the extent that more than half the families in some estates were headed by lone parents. Furthermore, even in areas where improvements occurred, they were not sufficient to bring the estates up to the level of the national average: their relative national standing generally increased little even in areas where their absolute levels improved. Fatima Mansions was the only one of the seven estates that showed substantial relative as well as absolute improvement – and in that it is similar to a number of other areas in Dublin inner city, the only deprived localities in the state where relative improvement was recorded in the period since the early 1990s.

In the original study in the late 1990s, variation between estates in their broad social composition, as measured by the indicators just referred to, was not as wide as the gaps in the quality of neighbourhood life revealed by close-up observation. Some estates or parts of estates were in high demand among tenants and were well-kept and settled while others were unpopular, had high turnover and were in varying degrees of dereliction. Such internal diversity within the social housing sector between good quality and poor quality neighbourhoods was as striking as the differences between the social housing sector and the rest of the housing system. Some of these variations within the sector have since been modified by regeneration programmes, as in the case of our study estates where the worst instances of poor housing found in the late 1990s have been upgraded. Most notably, the total physical demolition and rebuilding of Fatima Mansions and the upgrade in social services it received lifted it from the bottom of the quality ladder ten years ago to a relatively

good position today. The refurbishment of Banks Drive in Cranmore was on a more modest scale but nevertheless improved the relative position of that area within the estate, while the demolition of the blocks of flats in Deanrock removed the most precarious segment of what generally was (and remains) a settled, stable neighbourhood. Today, diversity within and between estates can still be found and in the case of Moyross, as outlined earlier, a new wave of decline since the early 2000s has affected much of the estate. Otherwise, however, the diversity is less extreme than it was in the past and is now as likely to be a side-effect of partly-completed regeneration as of localised decline in social conditions – as, for example, in the case of Cranmore, where a stalled regeneration programme has left an unsightly pattern of boarded-up housing in parts of the estate which previously were in reasonably good condition.

It is not possible to pinpoint the causes of the observed changes in the estates. Some improvements were a direct benefit of regeneration or improved local services. However, regeneration also usually entails a change in the social composition of the resident population and some of its benefits could be due to displacement, that is, to the movement of problematic tenants out of the area or their failure to gain entry in the first place. In addition, much improvement in the estates resulted from maturation or because of the general rise in employment and living standards which occurred during the boom but it is difficult to estimate how important these factors were or what will happen now that general economic conditions have turned sharply downwards. It is particularly difficult to explain differences between the trajectories of estates that seemed in a broadly similar position a decade ago, as for example in the contrast between Fettercain, which developed reasonably well during the 2000s, and Moyross which seemed to be coping with its difficulties ten years ago but suffered from an upsurge in violent crime from the early 2000s that seriously destabilised the estate.

Our analysis of the area-based initiatives that have constituted the principal policy response to the particular disadvantages of deprived neighbourhoods has found that these now constitute a major area of public expenditure. In 2006, programmes of this kind amounted to some €968.8 million of expenditure, of which €280 million was accounted for by tax expenditure aimed at promoting commercial development in run-down parts of cities and towns. If we omit these development-oriented tax expenditures and focus only on schemes that were intended to benefit poor households directly, the annual spend in 2006 was €688

million, of which some €295 million was accounted for by programmes that nominally at least used quite strict procedures for spatial targeting. The scale and significance of these amounts can be indicated by the illustrative estimate that if the €688 million in expenditure intended to benefit poor households were concentrated on the 10 per cent of households in the country that were most disadvantaged, the average value of those benefits per household in that target population would be in the region of €4,681 per year, of which those programmes which used the stricter versions of spatial targeting would account for €2,009. This is not to imply that spending on these programmes *should* be converted into cash payments to households, but simply to give a rough indication of the scale of funding involved if viewed as an intended benefit for poor households.

Analysis of spending estimates under these programmes in four of the estates included in our study is generally consistent with these national-level estimates. The estimated average spend per household across the four estates in 2006 was €3,096, ranging from a low of €921 in Deanrock to a high of €3,985 in Moyross. While these estimates of expenditure are necessarily crude on a number of counts, they are nevertheless sufficient to indicate that the value of this investment is not insignificant, at least in some cases. It is clear, therefore, that the question of the coherence and impact of the local schemes funded under these programmes is an important one from the point of view of combating disadvantage in deprived areas.

Analysis of the coherence and impact of these programmes in the present study, however, gives cause for concern. Several individual area-based programmes have been shown in independent evaluations to be effective in their own terms, and to provide many instances of good practice in specific areas. Some of these positive instances of good practice have been realised in the period since our previous study of the seven estates was carried out, and they indicate that progress has been made in the range of responses to the problems of disadvantaged areas that are available to policy makers. Valuable capacity has been built up through these programmes which should serve as a useful resource for communities as they attempt to cope with the more challenging conditions now arising as a result of economic recession.

Collectively, however, the programmes are less than the sum of their parts. The justification for the adoption of area-targeting as a basis for programme planning and delivery is rarely made clear, and the degree to which the specific area-targeting mechanisms they utilise are efficient or complete is rarely examined but seems questionable in many cases. There is a confusing proliferation of programmes and schemes, overall responsibility is fragmented, and funding streams and local governance arrangements are overly complex. The multiplicity of programmes has hindered their coherent integration into national anti-poverty strategies. It has also tended to weaken the status of local government within the wider systems of local governance. The programmes are also excessively oriented to inputs and associated accounting controls with little systematic orientation to outcomes or to assessments of impacts. The funding principles they operate (for example, in regard to the balance between capital and current funding) seem to be *ad hoc* and dependent on larger national budgetary priorities rather than the requirements of the problems they seek to address. While in theory area-based interventions are said to facilitate local empowerment, adaptation to local circumstances and community development, in practice they are often rigidly controlled by centrally defined eligibility criteria and accountability regulations. A key weakness in many area-targeted programmes is targeting itself. This weakness arises at two levels: (1) programmes may have poor methods for selecting localities to be included in their operational areas (with the result that some poor areas may be omitted or, as happens more commonly, the range of areas to be included extends too widely), and (2) they may have ineffective means for distributing the benefits of programmes to the neediest groups within selected areas.

Many of these problems have been identified in reviews and evaluations of local social development programmes conducted since the late 1990s. It is a concern to note that while these programmes continued to grow for much of the 2000s, only limited progress has been made in tackling the problems identified. Some of the attempted solutions, such as the setting up of County Enterprise and Development Boards as a means to integrate local development activities, seem simply to have added an additional pillar of complexity to an already over-complex system. The McCarthy report of 2009, which examined areas where public expenditure could be reduced, recommended extensive consolidation of programmes and streamlining of delivery systems in the community development field (Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes 2009, Vol I:17-18, Vol II:37-9). Actions to

improve efficiency and enhance impact broadly along the lines McCarthy recommends clearly are required. At the same time, however, the current economic crisis is causing the need for supportive interventions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to grow. The present study has emphasised the role such interventions can play not just in protecting vulnerable households and communities but also in preventing the kinds of housing failure that previously has created the need for large-scale and expensive estate regeneration schemes. Therefore, as in the case of all social protection expenditure, real need is expanding at present, so that while efficiency gains in this field are possible and desirable, these are unlikely to give scope for cuts in expenditure that could avoid undermining useful activities on the ground.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

These findings lead to the following recommendations:

1. Targeting of social programmes on disadvantaged areas has become an over-used element of social policy in Ireland and should be scaled back to instances where there is a clear rationale and effective methodology for employing this approach. This is not to say that expenditure currently devoted to these schemes should equally be cut back, but rather that the case for targeting it on areas rather than on disadvantaged groups within the population needs to be made in all cases, and where that case is weak, the adoption of more traditional distribution mechanisms should be considered.
2. Possible rationales for area-based programmes are many (efficiency and completeness in reaching the poor, the need to ration scarce resources, the desire to combat 'neighbourhood effects' in poor areas, innovation and experimentation in social programmes, empowering local communities, etc.). However, in many programmes the rationale for adoption of an area-based approach is not clear. For any programme to be mounted on a spatial basis, the precise rationale on which it is based needs to be specified, the methods by which it will overcome the limitations associated with the area-based approach should be detailed, and the milestones and ultimate objectives against which its success can be judged (i.e. how its success or otherwise can be evaluated) should be set out.

3. In considering both rationale and methodology, programmes should not be considered in isolation but in terms of their relationship with other programmes and the degree to which in combination they amount to an effective means to respond to the spatial aspects of social disadvantage.
4. The structure and governance of area-based programmes could be simplified and greater responsibility could be given to local authorities in the local coordination and management of programmes. At national level the large number of individual funding programmes currently in existence should be amalgamated into a smaller number of more generalist schemes, the focus of which reflects the most critical interventions required in poor neighbourhoods, such as: childcare, family support, drug treatment services, support for vulnerable young people, etc. At local level, responsibility for the distribution and monitoring of this funding should be undertaken within the structures of local government. In order to improve the capacity of the sector to carry out this function, the Local Development Companies which have recently replaced the partnership companies should be amalgamated into the City and County Development Board system. The Children's Services Committees now being piloted in four local authorities under the national umbrella of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs provides a further model of local coordination which shows promise and might be replicated in other areas.
5. Community engagement, local decision-making and local autonomy have been enhanced to some degree through area-based interventions, despite continuing limitations in local democracy. It is important that gains in these areas are not lost in re-institutionalising ABIs. The linkage of ABIs to local government structures and processes and the simplification of local governance arrangements could reduce the rigidities that arise from existing centralised controls and ease the pressure to 'chase' funding from central sources. Increased powers of decision-making at local level could thus enhance the potential for genuine participation of local civil society. This recommendation is in keeping with objectives of empowerment and social inclusion from the grass roots.
6. A key weakness of spatially targeted programmes is their targeting methods. The spatial units to be included in their operational areas are often defined only loosely, if at all, and the tendency over time is to extend the spatial scope of programmes, thus reducing the intended benefits of targeting since there is then no effective means of ensuring that

programmes reach the neediest groups. The latter weakness – failing to reach the neediest – is difficult to overcome because of the wide geographical dispersion of social disadvantage. Programmes that utilise spatial targeting, therefore, should be required to show that they have good methods for selecting areas, that they have effective means of identifying and reaching the neediest within those areas, and that they have means of knowing whether and to what degree they have achieved successful outcomes in this regard. It is acknowledged that the neediest are often difficult to reach or to draw into engagement with services that are designed to support them. More attention may need to be given within area-focused initiatives, therefore, to the development of mechanisms to secure the participation of the neediest.

7. The Community Employment scheme is a core element of much of the area-based social provision now in place in Ireland. While this scheme has been shown to be ineffective as a means of channelling people back into the mainstream labour market (its core nominal objective), it has yielded important benefits, both in giving a useful social role to those it employs, and in providing staffing support to a wide range of community organisations in disadvantaged areas. These aspects of the CE scheme need to be more clearly recognised and to be incorporated into the rationale for providing it and the bases on which its effectiveness is assessed (i.e. programme evaluation).
8. Progress made to date 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 disadvantage areas. This progress should be sustained and further developed. General social inclusion supports and services also need to be adequately provided but on their own these are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the minorities of poor households that suffer from acute multiple deprivation. The households in question are those in which the usual problems of poverty (low incomes, lack of access to jobs, low education, inadequate housing) are compounded by a range of additional factors such as poor mental health, drug or alcohol addiction, family disruption, poor capacity for parenting, conflict with neighbours, and so on.
9. The core areas in which these preventive services should be provided are three-fold:

- i. Health, particularly in regard to services such as family support, mental health and addiction treatment (in view of the high rates of occurrence of these problems among acutely disadvantaged households).
  - ii. Education, especially for services targeted at those suffering multiple deprivation; should be less classroom-based and school-bound than current DEIS services, and more effective in reaching out to involve parents, other relatives and the wider community as well as children themselves. In addition it is desirable that interventions in this area be able to draw on a wider range of skills in dealing with extreme disadvantage than are available within the largely pedagogical focus of current school-based programmes.
  - iii. Criminal justice, especially for effective methods of community policing, with a focus on creative responses to young people at risk of running into trouble with the criminal justice system (though in some cases also, the requirement extends to problems of serious crime). These would include capacity to offer more intensive services over a longer period of time where necessary, and more attention to, and capacity to engage in, preventive action (e.g. by identifying children at risk earlier, structuring interventions around families, etc.).
9. Examples of good practice in all these areas can now be found in Ireland and instances could also be found in the seven estates in our study. The challenge is to build on these examples of good practice so that they become mainstream and central parts of the social services system rather than scattered examples existing on the margins.
10. Acutely disadvantaged households should be given high priority in social inclusion policy, primarily because they are in extreme need and are therefore entitled to support on welfare grounds. But their problems also often have spill-over effects at neighbourhood level in the form of various kinds of anti-social behaviour that reduces quality of life for those who live around them. These types of 'neighbourhood effects' are often the single most important source of *collective* disadvantage in poor communities, over and above disadvantages that arise for residents at household level. The role played by the acutely disadvantaged in the dynamics of neighbourhood decline in poor areas provides an

important additional justification for giving them a high priority in service provision, in addition to the justification that arises from the extreme distress they suffer themselves.

11. While targeting of services for the disadvantaged on an area basis should be less widely used, efforts to combat disadvantage that are focused on the neighbourhood level, such as estate regeneration schemes, are necessary and useful in many cases. However, these need to avoid excessive focus on capital programmes (refurbishment or replacement of dwellings, rehabilitation of the physical environment, provision of community buildings) to the neglect of services. Public funding agencies are often more willing to provide one-off capital grants (which may be quite large) rather than commit to long-term annual services expenditure even where the latter is what is required to address key problems in disadvantaged areas. The balance between capital and current expenditure in area-based regeneration schemes should be based on well-informed diagnosis of what is needed in those areas rather than on a *priori* preference for capital over current expenditure.
12. Arising from this, the concept of 'estate regeneration' needs to be redefined so that it gives central place to the development and provision of appropriate services for acutely disadvantaged families and individuals. Plans for the delivery and long-term funding of these services should be placed at the centre of regeneration schemes and should not be left as additions to be tacked on as regeneration schemes get under way.

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