

BALLYMUN MASTERPLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1998 – 2005



Dublin City
Baile Átha Cliath



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INTRODUCTION

BRL was established during 1997 by Dublin City Council and the Department of the Environment and Local Government to develop and implement a Masterplan for the physical, social and economic regeneration of Ballymun.

In the seven years since the Masterplan was published in March 1998, we have answered many questions about its objectives and the implementation process. This publication is designed to answer the most frequently asked of these questions.

As time goes on we find that the most frequently asked questions tend to focus on the broader vision for Ballymun rather than on the detail of the new housing which seems to speak for itself in terms of quality and beauty.

We have included some recent aerial photos so you can see what has been achieved. When these aerial photos are compared to the original Masterplan drawing it is easy to see how close the end product is to the original design and it is also easier to see and believe how much Ballymun has managed to achieve already through its regeneration programme.

Ballymun owes a great deal of thanks to the City of Dublin and to the Government of Ireland for allowing Ballymun the freedom and resources to come up with its own solutions and implement its own Masterplan. This freedom to implement the Masterplan over a long time-frame has meant that Ballymun was given the chance it needs to succeed.

We are now about 60% through the implementation stage of the Masterplan and are on target to complete the physical regeneration elements of the project by 2010.

Maureen Lynott
Chairperson
Ballymun Regeneration Limited



SECTION 1

MASTERPLAN - DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1

What is the purpose of a Masterplan?

The most important function of a Masterplan is to provide a strategic policy framework against which agreed actions can be taken. In this case the plan included an indication of where housing, roads, parks and commercial activities would be provided. The plan also provided an estimate of the resources needed to implement the

Masterplan. The resources needed include money, land and time. Not all the objectives of the Masterplan can be provided by the public sector and so the Masterplan included strategies for increasing private sector investment.

2

When was the Ballymun Masterplan developed?

The Masterplan was developed between September 1997 and March 1998. Then it was submitted to the City Council and the Government, and agreed with the DOE in the latter part of 1998.



Ballymun roundabout (c. 1997)

How was the Masterplan developed?

The first step was the setting up of a regeneration company that included representation from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. The next step was the assembly of a Master planning team comprising urban regeneration experts as well as economic, engineering, architectural and community development experts. Once the team was assembled a wide-ranging and extensive round of consultation was undertaken. The types of consultations undertaken were as follows:

As a result of the Masterplan process we obtained a clear and comprehensive understanding of the problems, needs, concerns, aspirations and issues within the community and were able to identify and develop the solutions, proposals, possibilities and interventions which are needed and which will make a difference.

Types of Consultation Used

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ■ Walkabouts | ■ Interviews & Workshops |
| ■ Public Meetings | ■ Design consultation groups |
| ■ Planning days | ■ Board representation |
| ■ Clinics | ■ Focus & Working Groups |
| ■ Surveys & Questionnaires | ■ Visits to other projects |
| ■ Site Meetings | ■ One-to-one Sessions |

Is the Masterplan still important?

A good Masterplan will always be important; during the implementation stages it is a vital tool and it continues to provide a constant frame of reference against which Ballymun can be regenerated. The Masterplan holds the key to the success of the area because it was developed to

respond to the problems and needs of the area. It has stood the test of time very well so far and remains as relevant today as it was in 1998 when it was adopted by the Government and City Council and accepted by the community in Ballymun as the way forward.



Have there been many changes made to the Masterplan?

In terms of physical regeneration, the Masterplan has proved remarkably robust and has needed very little adaptation. The Masterplan did not provide detailed layouts for new housing. This is the job of the architects who design the final schemes. Sometimes the detailed designs require minor adjustments to the Masterplan to accommodate better solutions. Usually this happens during detailed discussions with local residents.

The 1998 Masterplan showed how the land that was left over when the original flat blocks were built would be redeveloped into a series of regional, district and local parks as well as landscaped open spaces. The Masterplan has not changed much but one improvement has been to develop some extra open spaces including a new park in Poppintree (in addition to Poppintree Park itself), as shown in the 2005 and 1998 plans. There have also been some minor changes to the road layouts.



1998 Masterplan

Sometimes, changes in circumstances can result in improvements e.g. the new leisure centre is located on a site which was identified as a surface car park, now the car park is underground and apartments and retail units have been developed on the site as well as the new gym, pool, sauna and steam-room. The Masterplan did not anticipate that the shopping centre would become such an ambitious development, so a much more

modest shopping centre was shown in the Masterplan. The original plan for the M50 lands is being refined now in the light of the success of the Main Street, the fall in demand for office space as well as the interest which has grown up around those lands which form one of the most important parcels of land in North Dublin.



2005 Masterplan

How can these changes be tracked?

The Masterplan maps are a good way to track the physical improvements to the Masterplan. Less obvious are the changes in economic, social and environmental regeneration objectives.

The most important development has been the way the regeneration project has started to improve the economy of the area. People are getting jobs in the new businesses, which have opened on the Main Street as well as on construction sites. The Masterplan set an objective for local labour in construction to be between

10 – 20%. This figure has been exceeded and although the figures fluctuate they are rarely below 20%.

In reality the most striking feature of the Masterplan is how little it has changed and how minor these changes have been. It is very reassuring and exciting to see the Masterplan starting to take physical shape. This is especially obvious in the aerial photos which were taken in March 2005.



Ballymun (c.1997)

Are there other strategy documents as well as the Masterplan?

The Masterplan is a very detailed and comprehensive document that sets out the overall plan for the area and how it will be achieved. Along the way, particular aspects of the Masterplan have been developed further. These supporting plans and strategy documents build on the work of the Masterplan.

- (a) The 1999 Main Street Strategy documents identified the 33 development opportunities along the new Main Street. Most of these plots have now been developed or are being developed.
- (b) Currently a strategy is being developed for the M50 lands that will identify similar opportunities for this land.
- (c) Five Area Action Plans were also developed showing the strategy for relocating community organisations from flats and basements. They also showed where parks, playgrounds, outdoor pitches, indoor sport areas, retail centres, community rooms, childcare and youth centres will be located. The Action Plans are currently being updated to monitor progress and to ensure that community groups activities can have a viable and sustainable future.
- (d) Not all the strategies are about physical regeneration. The Sports, Leisure and Recreation Strategy developed in December 1999 looked at the rates of participation and the barriers to participation. It also looked at the actions needed to improve take up and increase involvement in sports, leisure and recreation. Active Living Ballymun, which is a project run by older adults, was developed as a result of this research, which identified a very low involvement of older people in active recreation.
- (e) BRL also work with other agencies to help develop and implement strategies such as the Ballymun Childcare Task Force, Ballymun Homelessness Forum, Ballymun Community Law Centre and Mediation Service.
- (f) Environmental projects like GAP are funded to provide support, training and awareness raising in relation to environmental sustainability.
- (g) In relation to increasing employment, BRL works alongside FÁS and the Job Centre.
- (h) Research studies undertaken include research into Homelessness and Anti-social Behaviour via Citizen Jury process.
- (i) A Play Strategy was developed and currently BRL employ a Play Development worker to help implement this strategy.
- (j) An Arts and Cultural Strategy was developed as part of the work of the Breaking Ground project team. This strategy is being augmented by the work of the new Axis art team who have been in place in axis since April 2004.
- (k) One of the most important strategies that BRL is implementing relates to the Community Sustainability Strategy.
- (l) The Transition Programme developed by BRL and NCI is being delivered by CAFTA to all tenants who are moving into new homes.

Whose job is it to monitor and track progress in implementing the Masterplan?

The most significant and important process for ensuring that the regeneration project is implemented in accordance with the Masterplan is the BRL board who have been given the responsibility for the project by the City Council and the Government. The directors of the company, who represent the Health Board, Gardaí, local councillors, Ballymun Neighbourhood Council, Women in Local Development, Ballymun Area Partnership, DCU, the private sector and Dublin City Council receive detailed reports on every aspect of the project at their regular board meetings. The chairperson of the board is Maureen Lynott who replaced Danny O'Hare in 2004. But there are in place mechanisms for monitoring and tracking progress.

Under the terms of the Urban Renewal Scheme, which designated the Ballymun Regeneration area as an Integrated Area Plan (IAP), a Monitoring

Report is published each year. The most recent report covers the period July 2003 to June 2004. This report is submitted to the Government each year and copies are available free of charge to groups and individuals on request. It is also available on the BRL Web-site along with all the other plans, strategies, and the Masterplan.

- (a) In addition to the Monitoring Report, the Final Accounts and Annual Report for the Company are prepared each year and they cover the period January to December. The directors present their audited accounts and annual report to members of the company at the annual general meeting of the company.
- (b) On a day-to-day basis progress is monitored and reported upon to local councillors at the North West Area meetings and similar reports are provided to Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.



Whose job is it to audit the company?

- (a) The company is subject to audit on a number of fronts:
- (b) The company's accounts and annual report is audited by KPMG in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2003.
- (c) The Local Government Auditors are the external auditors for Dublin City Council, and their audit extends to BRL as agents of Dublin City Council.
- (d) EU Auditors are involved in auditing those aspects of the project that the EU fund.
- (e) Because BRL are acting as an agent of DCC in the regeneration of Ballymun, the project also comes under the scrutiny of Dublin City Council's Internal Audit Section.
- (f) All publicly funded projects may also be scrutinised by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG).
- (g) Aspects of the project that are related to tax and tax compliance are subject to scrutiny by the Revenue Commissioners.



What is the role of Ballymun Regeneration Ltd?

Ballymun Regeneration Limited is an agent of Dublin City Council, which was set up to develop and implement a regeneration Masterplan for Ballymun. The Masterplan was developed in consultation with the local community (individuals, community and voluntary groups and agencies) and is an ambitious plan to create the circumstances necessary to ensure that Ballymun becomes economically, culturally, physically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The project team consists of architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, town planners, graphic designers, community development workers, finance and administrative personnel as well as housing and community consultation and liaison

officers. The team also employs health and safety officers, and play and sports development staff. Ballymun Regeneration Ltd has a board of directors representing the voluntary, community, statutory, education and private sectors along with local city councillors. It has a managing director who is also responsible for the delivery of City Council services in the North West Area (Ballymun, Finglas, Glasnevin, Santry and Whitehall). BRL itself is not involved in the day-to-day management of the area this remains the responsibility of Dublin City Council's Ballymun Area Office.

What is the role of Dublin City Council's area office?

Dublin City Council is first and foremost the local authority with responsibility for Ballymun.

It is also responsible for the maintenance of roads, drains, sewers, water systems as well as parks and open spaces, it also manages motor tax, waste collection, public lighting and sports facilities and playing pitches.

The Housing Department of Dublin City Council is the main social landlord in the area and as such is responsible for the housing maintenance and rent collection in relation to its housing stock. It is

responsible for allocating new housing to housing list applicants although BRL are of course involved in the de-tenanting of blocks to be demolished. Dublin City Council has responsibility for community services through its Community Section that includes sports development and support for resident and tenant associations.

Although BRL are making radical changes to the area all the publicly funded assets that BRL is creating will become the property of Dublin City Council.



SECTION 2

HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION

“We’re getting closer to achieving a vibrant, self-sufficient town with all the facilities people need from a strong local economy with local jobs to good indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation facilities.”

Ciaran Murray, Managing Director, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.

“I never thought the day would come when I would move out of the flats. I had done my life sentence there.”

Betty Byrne who moved into her new home in Ballymun

HOW MANY NEW HOMES HAVE BEEN BUILT SO FAR

1

How is the construction of new local authority housing progressing?

As of the end of December 2004, 650 public housing units were complete; 575 were under construction; 469 at tender stage and a further 789 were at the design and planning stages, making a total of 2,483 in total.





What about the construction of other types of housing?

The Masterplan emphasised the need to increase the number and variety of new housing in the area, including providing different types of ownership and rental options. We have involved the private, rented and voluntary housing sectors as well as building new homes for purchase at affordable prices and providing sites to local and national housing co-operatives.

The table below shows the types and numbers of new housing being built, and also gives an idea of when the new housing will come on stream.

Table 1 Summary of New Housing at December 2004

Progress	Public/local authority	Private housing	Voluntary Housing & Housing Co-Op	Totals
Completed % of total completed	650 (54%)	475 (39%)	89 (7%)	1,214
On Site % of total on site	575 (51%)	462 (41%)	86 (8%)	1,123
Tender & Pre-Construction % of total at tender	469 (21%)	1,616 (71%)	176 (8%)	2,261
Design/Planning % of total at planning	789 (59%)	270 (20%)	269 (20%)	1,328
% of total	2,483 (42%)	2,823 (48%)	620 (10%)	5,926

How long does it take to complete a housing scheme from design to handover?

Building a housing scheme takes about 2½ to 3 years in total:

- :: 6 months for design
- :: 3 months for planning permission if there are no appeals
- :: 3 months to seek building tenders.
- :: Construction starts as soon as a contract and price are agreed with the successful building contractor. Depending on how difficult the site is it can take between 12 – 18 months to build each scheme. If it is a very tight site it can take longer or if the builder runs into unusual conditions on the site.

What are the advantages of Ballymun's new higher density housing?

The new Ballymun will have 20 homes per acre, this will increase to 40 dwellings per acre on the Main Street. It is important to understand that high density does not mean high-rise or too little open space: it is possible to achieve high quality of open spaces by reducing wasteful grass margins and removing unused left-over areas. In fact high density housing is necessary for an area to get

good public transport services and facilities such as parks, shops, cinemas, crèches, schools and other important community facilities. In the past Ballymun was low density but high rise, this meant that not enough people lived here to ensure that shops and other facilities were able to stay in business.



How are the new homes designed?

Ballymun Regeneration Ltd employs its own architects who design some of the new housing but it also employs outside firms of architects too. This means that we can get a lot of schemes started at the same time and also provides a good variety of design to suit every taste. Many local people and forum representatives have been involved in briefing architects, at this stage in the project we have a very thorough design brief which is given to architects designing housing schemes for Ballymun.

The briefing given to the architects includes:

- :: Number and size of rooms.
- :: Number of bathrooms / WC's
- :: Noise regulation requirements
- :: Insulation requirements
- :: External works strategy e.g. landscaping, car parks and gardens.

The brief has evolved over time and is constantly reviewed to take account of changes in regulations and feedback from people visiting and living in the new housing.



Why choose a variety of architectural designs?

A variety of housing types and higher density land use will create a lively and interesting living place. Like any Irish town, Ballymun will have a variety of housing designs ranging from the traditional to the more modern. Already this design strategy has won the approval of the people who have moved into their new homes and since people have been

given some choice in the selection of their new homes it is easier to suit different tastes from traditional to more modern if there is a variety to choose from. The thing most people comment on is the use of light especially in the more modern designs.

Apart from new housing how will Ballymun gain from regeneration?

New housing is important but it is also essential for any town to have shopping, commercial and industrial developments too. In the new Ballymun you can already see the new Main Street with its shops, offices, leisure centre and apartments. In 2005 work will begin on the redevelopment of the shopping centre. To complement the new Main Street, there is also a strategy for each neighbourhood area. Each Neighbourhood Strategy ensures

that there will be a mix of facilities and supports; childcare, parks and playgrounds, shops and community facilities including playing pitches and sports facilities. This means that each residential area will have easy access to shops and other important amenities, so that people will be able to walk to convenience shops and local parks.



DEMOLITION OF 36 EXISTING FLAT BLOCKS

“The Demolition Wake on 9th July 2004 marked the achievement of an important milestone for the regeneration of Ballymun. The start of demolition of Pearse Tower the next day was an important sign to the world that Ballymun has changed and that the new town is fast becoming a reality. The people who queued overnight for the chance to purchase the private apartments at Santry Cross was itself a signal that the world had begun to notice that Ballymun was becoming a desirable place to live, work and invest in. While there will be delays during construction we are confident that people will be patient while we create the best planned and most exciting town in Ireland; putting it all in place is going to take time but it will be worth waiting for.”

Ciaran Murray, Managing Director, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.

8

When will the flats and towers be demolished?

The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern came to Ballymun to start the demolition process of Pearse Tower on 10th July 2004. The night before a ‘Wake’ to mark the demise of the old Ballymun was held in front of MacDonagh Tower, hundreds of people came to pay their respects and share their memories of life in the flats. By the end of 2004 a lot of demolition had already been completed; Pearse, Coultry, Shangan and Sandyhill Phase 1 blocks are gone, as is MacDermott Tower, with the MacDonagh Tower

implosion scheduled for June 2005. The sites where the blocks stood are now being prepared for new developments, a Garda station where Pearse Tower stood and new housing on the other sites. Demolition schedules depend on completion and occupation of new housing and regular updates are provided in the monthly Ballymun Regeneration Newsletter.



How are the blocks being demolished?

A number of different methods are being used depending on how close the blocks are to new buildings and also depending on the height of the block. Pearse (15 storey block) was demolished in a few weeks using a long reach machine brought over specially from the UK by Control Demolition Group. CDG could not use this method for the 15 storey Ceannt block which was demolished more slowly using scaffolding and a small machine which was placed on top of the block and demolished each floor from the top down. Irish contractors Tinnelly used explosives for MacDermott tower (15 storey block) in March 2005. The two 8 storey blocks in Coultry were

demolished using the smaller long reach machine while Shangan and Sandyhill were demolished using conventional machines. Artex and asbestos panels had to be removed from some blocks and this meant that demolition took longer in these blocks than in other blocks which did not have artex. The entire demolition process is being supervised by civil engineering consultants, Muir Associates and in time all 36 blocks of flats in Ballymun will be demolished.



10

What are the health and safety issues regarding asbestos removal?

Ballymun Regeneration Ltd and the Health & Safety Authority agreed a process for removal of artex from those blocks where it was used. BRL continues to work closely with the Health & Safety Authority throughout the course of the project. Artex wall and ceiling coatings contain trace elements of asbestos and these will be removed from affected areas in Phase 1 blocks before demolition. Tests which were carried out show that

artex was not used in the flat blocks built between 1965 and 1967, which includes approximately half of the flats in Ballymun. These flat blocks are easier and quicker to demolish than the blocks which contain artex in ceiling and wall coatings. Asbestos insulation panels are routinely removed from all blocks prior to demolition. Blocks are also stripped of all recyclable materials and this soft strip process takes a few weeks to complete.

11

How will local residents know when the blocks near them will be demolished?

Because the removal of artex takes so long demolition tends to be ongoing for some time before there is any evidence of it to on-lookers. However the demolition contractors have been asked to notify adjoining residents when the actual physical demolition is about to begin. The process is quite dramatic and usually lasts for a few weeks

so there are always lots of photo opportunities for people wishing to capture the change in the streetscape. The contractors try to keep dust and noise to a minimum and this is monitored both by the consultant engineers and by BRL's own health and safety monitors.

Will all Dublin City Council tenants of Ballymun flats be re-housed in new homes?

Yes, all existing Dublin City Council tenants of Ballymun flats will be re-housed in new homes within Ballymun.

Over the course of the regeneration project over 6,000 new homes will be built in Ballymun and of these 2,800 will be built as replacement housing for people living in the 36 existing flat blocks which are being demolished.

New homes are being provided in phases, the phases are determined by which blocks need to be

demolished first. The rest of the new homes will be provided as private housing, co-operative and voluntary housing.

Some of these extra new homes will be for people from Ballymun but some will be bought by people from outside the area.



How many housing and demolition phases will there be altogether?

In all there will be five phases of demolition and new build. The Phase 1 design process began in 1999 and is now complete, some of Phase 2 is also complete. Some Phase 3 schemes need to wait for demolition to be finished before they can go on site and these schemes are now at the planning and tendering stages. Nearly all Phase 4 housing schemes will also need demolition to occur and the designs for these schemes started in August 2004. Phase 5 will be the final phase but since

these housing sites must wait for demolition of Phase 2 and Phase 3 flat blocks there is no point in beginning the design process yet. Once a phase is announced the architects are appointed and given a design and an accommodation brief. The accommodation brief is prepared following a survey of all those who are to be re-housed in that particular scheme and phase. BRL contacts people itself in person and by letter when their particular phase is announced.

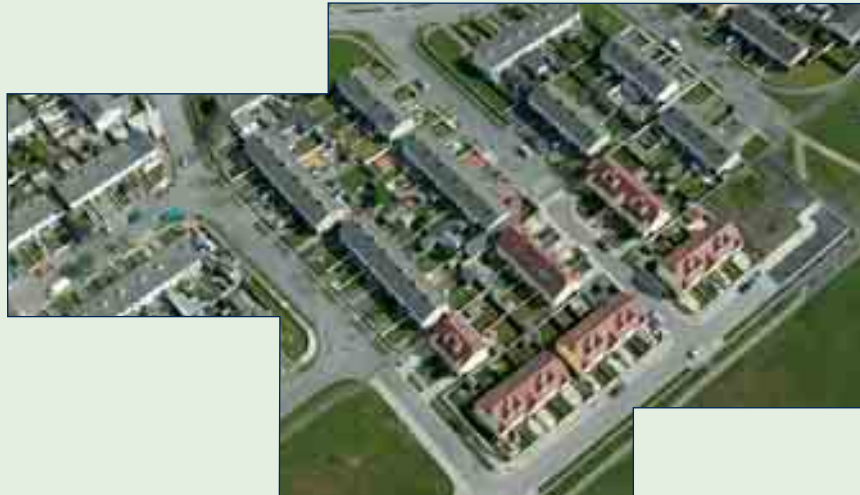


Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4

Is the new housing only for people from the flats?

Everyone in the flats will be rehoused but there will also be opportunities for other people to live in the new Ballymun. There will be a chance for people who live and work in Ballymun and also for people from outside of Ballymun to move into

new housing provided by the private and voluntary housing sectors including housing co-ops. Some of the private housing will be for owner occupiers and some will be available to rent.



“We did the Transition Programme before moving and it covered different things. The Gardai came one evening to talk about home protection and Neighbourhood Watch. We had an interior designer who gave us hints and tips and there was advice about managing bills and other practical things about moving from a flat to a house.”

Ann Wright who moved into a three-bedroom house on Santry Avenue.

15

Will new houses cost more to heat and run than the old flats?

In the old flats, heating was included with the rent charge. In the new homes, people are responsible for their own heating bills. Heating costs will be kept as low in the following ways:

:: New homes are provided with energy efficient condenser gas boilers, in some cases the EU provided additional energy efficient features such as solar panels, ground source heat pumps, extra insulation, and high specification glazing.

:: Good control of heating systems by occupiers, BRL provide heating specialists to show people how to use their new system when they first move in and videos provide expert tuition afterwards.

:: New housing has high levels of insulation of the building shell to help reduce heating costs.

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How will interior walls be decorated?

Walls will be painted and tenants will be able to choose from a range of colours selected for that particular housing type by the architect who designed the scheme. If people don't want to select colours themselves the architects will chose the colours for them.

Are people able to go on a site visit before they move?

Yes, tenants moving into new homes are encouraged to come on a site visit when a housing scheme is close to completion. These site visits are arranged as part of the Transition Programme. For insurance reasons people are asked not to try to visit the site at times other than this official site visit

and BRL site staff have been instructed not to allow people on site except during the official site visit. If people are unable to keep their appointment for the site visit alternative arrangements may be possible although they are not guaranteed.

Will people be able to get measurements for furniture, curtains and appliances before they move into their new homes?

While people will be able to go on site visits before they move into their new homes, we find that people are better to wait till after they move before selecting new furniture and curtains. This is especially important for big items that will be expensive or difficult to store while you are waiting for your new home to be finished and also hard to exchange if you find they don't fit after you move.

Experience tells us that people are better to wait to get curtains and blinds fitted by the shop or manufacturer as this often avoids expensive mistakes through wrong measurements during site visits. The same applies to new carpets and other floor coverings. Downstairs floors will have floor covering and upstairs floors are wooden so it is possible to wait till after moving in to get new floor coverings. Also many shops offer a free measuring service for blinds, curtains and carpets. Floor areas and window sizes can vary slightly from plans but it can be enough to cause problems when ordering curtains, carpets and blinds before you move.



What else does the Transition Programme have to offer to residents who are moving?

The Transition Programme is a National College of Ireland (NCI) Certificate Programme, facilitated by CAFTA (Community & Family Training Agency) who are a local training agency. The programme is designed for residents moving from flats to new housing. An important part of the transition programme is the chance to go on a site visit to view the new homes. Not every home will be available to view on the day but one of each type will be available so you can get a chance to see what your new home will be like even if you don't see your actual home. The programme will try to answer questions about regeneration and about your new home and garden. When you are allocated a new home, CAFTA will contact you to offer you a place on its transition programme. Most people attend the programme for their own scheme and so get to meet their new neighbours.

The programme gives people a chance to form a community and to hear from the architects who designed the housing and also to get advice and information from support agencies and service providers including Money Advice and Budgeting, Gardai, Dublin City Council, Horticultural and Environmental Projects as well as an interior designer and heating specialists.

For more information contact CAFTA in the Axis Centre at 01 883 2134.

Or you can call 01 449 8608 for information on all NCI programmes.



Will the new gardens have any plants or grass when I move in?

Most new homes will have both front and back gardens, although some apartments may only have one garden and others may have only terraces. The architects for each scheme design how the gardens are set out and BRL's landscape staff will arrange for gardens to have grass and some plants.

Many gardens will also be provided with trees or shrubs. People are also given a range of plants to choose from when they are selecting their tenant choice items (paint colour, fireplace surrounds and floor covering colours).

Will people be able to get any help with how to look after their new gardens?

Everyone will be given some guidelines and gardens will have basic plants and grass. A lot of people really look forward to their new gardens and have made lots of plans and create wonderful gardens with no help from us. However some people have very little experience of growing plants because there was so little outdoor space in the old flats.

People who are not sure where to start can contact GAP about joining one of their Garden Action Team programmes. People who want to take part in a garden action team (GAT) will get support from a landscape gardener and horticulturist about how to design and plant their gardens after they move in.

If the Garden Action Team does not suit you, the GAP community gardeners will come to talk to groups and will even be able to run a workshop if the group is large enough. Time does not allow for advice on an individual basis.



What are Garden Action Teams (GATs)?

A Gardening Action Team is made up of a group of four neighbours who work with one of the GAP community gardeners one morning or afternoon a week over a period of six weeks. Each session is divided between learning garden basics and doing work in a different garden each session. The programme takes place in the homes of the participants and moves from one house to the next over the six weeks. So the help given with digging your neighbours garden is returned with help in

your own garden the following week. The practical part takes you through preparing and planting a plant bed, and GAP can even provide some extra plants to get the garden off to a good start. The action teams only take place during the gardening season and so are not available in the winter time.





RENTAL AND HOME OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

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Why is it important for people to have a choice about the tenure of their homes?

Currently in Ballymun, 80% of homes are rented from Dublin City Council and only about 20% are owner-occupied. In most other parts of Ireland 80% of homes are owner-occupied. One reason for the low home ownership rate in Ballymun was because the old flats could not be purchased under the local authority sales scheme. This is one reason why people did not stay in the area but left to buy homes elsewhere.

The Masterplan identified this constant moving of people out of the area as an important issue for social sustainability, since if people did not stay for long in the area it was hard for the area itself to settle down. But unlike Ballymun most areas of

Dublin have a variety of housing choices. In other areas, people can buy private housing, local authority housing or move into co-op housing or they can rent from private landlords, voluntary housing landlords or local authority.

The availability of different housing options in the new Ballymun will provide more choice for people and more competition among providers so that quality will improve.

The key to the social and economic regeneration of Ballymun and other areas is a mix of tenures appropriate to the needs and demands of people at different stages in their lives.

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What is a Voluntary Housing Association?

Voluntary Housing Associations are not-for-profit organisations who provide rented social housing at affordable rents to people who want an alternative to local authority social rented housing and who cannot afford to buy their own homes and who cannot afford to rent in the private rented sector. Voluntary housing is very common in the UK and the rest of Europe and is becoming much more popular in Ireland in recent years. Usually their tenants are encouraged to become involved in the management and running of the housing estates and usually the housing associations have a small number of houses in an estate and they usually have an office on site.

Voluntary Housing Associations provide good quality general and supported social rental housing at very similar rents to that charged by Dublin City Council. However unlike the City Council housing associations are not allowed to sell their housing to their tenants. There are a number of housing associations renting or intending to rent housing in Ballymun, including Cluid, HAIL, SONAS, Sophia, Arrupe and hopefully Respond will be providing housing in the area in the future.

What is the difference between Voluntary Housing and Co-operative Housing?

The main difference between voluntary housing and co-operative housing is that in co-op housing the members own the housing either individually or as a group. Most co-op housing is owner occupied and is built on serviced sites provided at very low cost by the local authority (typically each housing site costs €100 per unit). Voluntary housing is a social rented option where ownership is not allowed.

At the beginning of the project BRL gave the National Association of Building Co-Ops a site for 80 units in Poppintree. Although this scheme has had planning permission for some years it was not ready to go on site until this year. This national co-op plans to have both rental and ownership options but all the other co-ops in Ballymun are small local co-ops which are owner-occupied and

where members came together to employ an architect themselves and are responsible for their own building works etc. The local co-ops are able to keep their costs down because the site is provided at low cost and the roads and other services are paid for by the local authority or in this case by Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.

The transfer of a low-cost site to a co-op is conditional on the co-op being an approved housing body and in the case of Ballymun 50% of their members must be tenants of the Ballymun flats. Co-op mortgages can be financed under the local authority shared ownership scheme.



How do people become involved or hear more about housing tenure opportunities?

To identify their interest in different housing options, people are asked to register with BRL's Housing Tenure Opportunities Register. The options listed include:

- :: Voluntary Housing Association (applies to rental only)
- :: Co-operative Housing (includes mostly purchase but some rental may be provided by NABCo)
- :: Affordable and market-priced properties (purchase)

One purpose of this register is that it allows us to see how many people are interested in the different types of tenure. Once we know this we can try to increase the availability of opportunities in that area. We can help to establish co-ops by

reserving sites for them, or we can open negotiations with voluntary housing associations to provide supported and general needs housing for families and individuals. We can target extra housing which we build to people wishing to become owner occupiers or by selling land to developers to build new housing in the area for private sale. As a general rule we try to target people living or working in Ballymun first where the housing is subsidised e.g. housing co-ops or voluntary housing. However, people from outside Ballymun may be considered especially if they have a family or work connection in the area.

People who are interested in registering for housing opportunities, should contact Mary Woolhead from BRL at 01 675 5618, 2nd floor Civic Centre Ballymun.



Are there many co-operatives in Ballymun?

There are four kinds of co-operative housing in Ballymun:

:: Locally based co-operatives:

Such as Tigh Meitheal and New Horizons. (There is a range of criteria that groups need to address prior to being recognised as a community based co-operative). A number of other small local co-ops have also been formed and their requirement for land is being considered, however since there are no sites available immediately they will have to wait until a later phase to go on site.

:: NABCo:

The National Association of Building Co-operatives aims to provide affordable rental and ownership dwellings for modest to low income earners.

:: Habitat for Humanity Ireland (HfH):

This not-for-profit agency works with potential homeowners and volunteers to construct new housing using donations of money, materials and professional expertise which keeps housing costs to an absolute minimum. Once the houses are built, they are sold to local families at no profit and using interest-free mortgages provided by HfH. People who want to buy one of the new homes provided by HfH have to work on the site themselves helping to build their own new home. No previous experience is necessary as all work is supervised and tuition is provided. HfH are prepared to work on smaller sites that do not suit the other local housing co-ops requirements.

:: Environmental:

The special feature of the Emerald Project is that houses will be built with experimental and innovative environmental design features, the Emerald Project is a collaboration between a local housing co-op and a Cluid voluntary housing association. The Cluid housing will be for rent while the co-op housing will be owner-occupied.

It is important for co-ops to realise that they have to build to the same density, design and building standards as other housing and that they will not be able to be allocated sites which are needed to build replacement housing for people from the flats. Therefore all co-op and voluntary housing association units have to give priority to people from the flats, this will help ensure that there is enough land for replacement homes for tenants of flats that are being demolished.





How are people able to finance the purchase of a new home?

In general, people secure mortgage finance through the local authority shared ownership scheme or from a bank or building society. The examples below are intended to give an indication of which option would suit best:

Shared Ownership Scheme

Borrowings vary between €140,000 to €200,000 and are capped at €200,000. However the purchase price can be as high as €220,000, (with borrower contributing a deposit of €20,000).

Recently the banks have expressed interest in this type of loan and their conditions may be less stringent when they start to offer this type of mortgage.

Who is able to qualify for a local authority shared ownership loan:

Single Income Household To be eligible for shared ownership a person's income cannot exceed €35,800 gross annual income.

Two Income Household To be eligible for shared ownership a couple's income cannot exceed €92,000 gross annual income calculated by multiplying higher income by 2.5 and adding the lower income to this amount.

The amount of borrowing allowed depends on a person's (or a couple's) capacity to repay the loan and this is calculated on the net income minus all household expenses.

Applications can be obtained from: Dublin City Council, Ground Floor, Civic Centre, Main Street, Ballymun, Dublin 9 or from Loans and Grants Section, Civic Offices, Fishamble Street, Dublin 8



EXAMPLE ONLY

Lending Institution (Bank/Building Society)

To borrow from a bank or building society the loan criteria varies considerably. However, in general, a loan can be as much as 92% of the market value of the property. The loan approval is capped at 3.5 times gross annual income. For example:

Couple's Income	€57,750 per annum
Loan approval: $\text{Income} \times 3.5 = €57,750 \times 3.5 = €202,125$	
Cost of Property	€220,000
Eligible Loan Amount (based on income)	€202,125 (<i>cannot be more than 92%</i>)
Deposit Required (difference)	€17,875

An additional €17,875 cash deposit is required to buy a €220,000 property

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How much will new housing in Ballymun be likely to cost?

Ballymun Regeneration Ltd will be providing some housing in the new neighbourhood centres of Poppintree, Shangan and Coultry, these will be at relatively low prices compared to market prices in other areas. In addition in time there will be some BRL housing for sale in some schemes which are not needed for people from flats. Most housing which will be sold in the area will be sold by private developers. Currently housing in

Poppintree in the older estates is selling for between €190,000 and €220,000 so it is likely that the new housing will start at around €225,000 euros for three bedroom units at 2004 prices.

Housing will be advertised for sale by Lisney and anyone who has registered with BRL will be notified as well (*see Question 26 in this section for more information about how to register*).