



8.1.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

8.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a crucial element in the development of the Masterplan for Ballymun. This section outlines the background to the needs for economic development and identifies the objectives, and the assets and constraints which will affect their achievement.

Institutional and financial structures are described, and a strategy for implementation is proposed. The strategy comprises institutional and financial recommendations, specifically on a structure of tax and other incentives, key economic development proposals and the non-physical issues which affect implementation in the form of outline "action programmes".

Specific reference is made to previous studies and strategy reports, with the aim of building on the considerable amount of work undertaken in this area within the last five years.

8.2.0 BACKGROUND

8.2.1 National and Regional Context

Recent reports indicate a buoyant Irish economy with GDP growth continuing at about 8% per annum. This growth is most noticeable in sectors such as electronics, software, pharmaceuticals, financial and other services where Government action has sought to encourage investment through a range of policy and financial initiatives.

The results are clear to see throughout Ireland and particularly in Dublin. A boom in residential development, traffic congestion in the city due to the increased number of cars, and clear evidence of increased consumer and leisure spending testify to a new found economic confidence.

A great deal of the development which has taken place in Dublin has been located south of the River Liffey and in new residential areas to the west of the city. New centres have developed on the margins to serve this growth and road communications have improved significantly to enhance their accessibility.

Ireland has also played a full and active role in the European Union and gained significant benefit from EU programmes as an Objective 1 Region.

8.2.2 North Dublin and Ballymun

By contrast with much of the national situation, north Dublin and specifically Ballymun present a different picture. North Dublin contains the highest concentration of urban deprivation in the country, and although by no means homogeneous, economic indices show that conditions are considerably poorer in the northern part of the city than the south.

The population of north Dublin has fallen by 16% in the last ten years, and whereas the number of jobs in the whole city has increased by 20,000, in north Dublin it has fallen by 1,000. For the same area, 53% of the population left school at 15 years of age, compared with 33% in the country as a whole.

8.2.2.1 Ballymun context

For Ballymun, the picture is starker still. In an area of nearly 20,000 population, nearly 44.6% are unemployed - some authorities suggest over 60%. 33% of the population is under 14 years of age and 37% of households are headed by a lone parent (national average 11%).

Only 7% of Ballymun's schoolchildren achieve their Leaving Certificate compared with 21% of the nation as a whole. There is virtually no provision of either childcare or youth facilities.

Physical conditions are poor in terms of the housing stock, community infrastructure and the surrounding open spaces, which are, however, extensive. The town centre offers a limited range of facilities and is unappealing to passing trade.

8.3.0 ECONOMIC REGENERATION OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Ballymun Regeneration Project is "to secure the sustainable social and economic regeneration of the area" (BRP Terms of Reference). This section of the Masterplan identifies development and employment opportunities including long term and sustainable employment for the local community.

At present Ballymun is not a self supporting community and there is very limited economic infrastructure. Within the plan area there is only industrial and commercial employment in the small St Margaret's Industrial Estate, Poppintree Industrial Estate, the town centre, and public sector jobs related to the schools, library and estate management.

Significant public sector resources are being made available for the redevelopment and improvement of the housing stock. This investment should be

accompanied by commitment to economic development which will increase wealth in the area, and provide jobs for local people.

Extra wealth will provide funds for the necessary maintenance of homes and businesses and develop self esteem for local people who are able to gain and keep legitimate jobs which pay more than social welfare. At present, pay rates and motivation are low for many Ballymun residents, despite the best efforts of a wide range of local bodies. Local people feel unable or unwilling to take advantage of those job opportunities which may exist, due to low levels of education, skills and motivation.

Physical improvement of conditions without attention to economic factors will ensure that the present situation re-establishes itself in due course, with an added sense of frustration and suspicion from the local community. The challenge for Ballymun regeneration is to change its social and economic structure to reflect more closely a well balanced community which is an integral part of north Dublin; providing jobs for local people and a full range of urban services and facilities.

Without economic regeneration of this type, physical proposals planned for the built environment are not sustainable. Resources will not be available for maintenance, local people will still be over dependent on social welfare, and a huge opportunity for improvement will be wasted.

Economic development opportunities may be identified at several levels, for example, major "flagship" projects requiring significant external investment, the strengthening and reinforcement of existing employment and the encouragement and promotion of local micro-business and community enterprise.

8.4.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Consultations were carried out with a range of groups, institutions and individuals involved in economic development, based on questions relating to present involvement in Ballymun, as follows:

- i) Previous or present involvement in Ballymun
- ii) Perceptions of Ballymun as a location for investment
- iii) Likelihood of involvement in the future
- iv) Activities or type of development favoured
- v) Specific issues affecting investment decisions

8.4.1 Poor Image

Private business representatives particularly noted that business generally has a very poor perception of Ballymun as a location for investment and development. This relates to the motivation and attitudes of the potential work-force. (Local people are seen as reluctant to seek legitimate work. Potential employers may be prejudiced against Ballymun people who apply for jobs.)

There are concerns about security, and businesses see this as a recurring cost issue and potentially intimidating to non-local work force. The strength of the "black economy" is regarded as a drain on the potential for legitimate trade.

8.4.2 Low Skills and Capabilities

The WRC Social and Economic Consultants' report of December 1992, notes the low skill base within Ballymun. This relates both to educational attainment, as demonstrated by school pupils' lack of Leaving Certificates, and poor work skills.

Low educational attainment promotes apathy and is a major constraint for potential employers. The educational levels of 25 to 44 year olds are particularly low in Ballymun when compared with Dublin and national averages.

There is evidence, both in the WRC study and recent unpublished research, that the situation is not improving. The long term unemployed have the lowest educational qualifications and less people are availing themselves of the training opportunities provided by FAS and other agencies.

8.4.3 Poor Environmental Quality

Related to poor image are the environmental and physical conditions in Ballymun which are exacerbated by substandard buildings and maintenance, and problems of litter and rubbish.

The physical form of the present housing is different from much of the rest of Dublin. This tends to reinforce perceptions of Ballymun as a run-down and isolated place.

8.4.4 Dependency Culture

There are high levels of social deprivation and dependence on social welfare for subsistence. There is an exceptionally high proportion of single mothers with children, who have particular difficulties in seeking work, due to the need for childcare and other support services.

A culture of drug abuse is being challenged by a wide range of community and other bodies. The historical structure of social welfare benefits has led to increasing dependence in some cases

8.4.5 Institutional Failure

Ballymun Housing Task Force and Ballymun Partnership Action Area Plan reports, and other sources, identify a discernible sense of suspicion and frustration within the local community regarding the actions of public institutions in Ballymun. This is supported by local business interests which identify the approach of the Dublin Corporation Housing Department as leading to the concentration of social and other problems.

Significant progress is being made on tackling these concerns The IAP submission and Masterplan preparation are crucial to changing the culture of public institutional involvement in Ballymun.

8.4.6 Infrastructure Issues

Until recently, low water pressure and the absence of surplus drainage capacity have acted as significant hindrances to development throughout north Dublin. Government Announcements in October 1997 have paved the way for implementation of the North Dublin Drainage System and construction of a waste water treatment facility on Dublin Bay.

Whereas recent road projects such as the M50 Northern Cross Route, completed in 1997, have improved accessibility, there is a continuing need for improved public transport. The Dublin Transportation Initiatives (DTI) recommendation for the LUAS light rail network, with a line to Ballymun from Dublin city centre, will further increase the area's attractiveness for business.

8.5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSETS

8.5.1 Location

The location of Ballymun adjacent to Dublin Airport is a key asset for future development. Passenger and freight traffic is increasing rapidly. Associated business and commercial activity can locate between the airport and Ballymun, and between Ballymun and the rest of north Dublin, providing jobs and specific large and small scale development opportunities.

Road connections are good with links from both the M1 main north south route and M50 motorway ring around Dublin. Direct access will necessarily be limited but Ballymun occupies a potential focal point for north Dublin.

The proximity of Dublin City University (DCU) has an increasingly beneficial effect on economic development opportunities in Ballymun. It is already an internationally recognised centre of excellence for computer software engineering with a progressive attitude to involvement in the wider community. As a founder member of NorDubCo, with the local Area Partnerships and the local authorities, DCU demonstrates its willingness to promote and encourage local development. There is also the possibility of residential development for university students.

Ballymun is surrounded by well established areas of business and commerce, most notably Finglas, Santry and north Glasnevin. There is significant employment in these centres and a broad range of industrial activity offering opportunities for local residents.

8.5.2 Land Availability

Residential densities are generally low in Ballymun, offering potential for further site coverage near existing housing.

Existing industrial estates near Ballymun, such as the Poppintree Industrial Estate, are not full, and there are advance commercial and industrial units provided by IDA-Ireland and open sites for development.

Strategic lands, located between Ballymun and the M50, have been identified in the Masterplan for the development of a Business Park and will be available for development at an early date.

8.5.3 Institutional Support

Numerous institutions and bodies are concerned with promoting economic development and are listed in the 1995 Forbairt publication: Guide to Sources of Assistance for Start-up Business This provides further information and details of the activities and services and facilities offered.

8.5.4 Community Support

In addition to the public and private institutional arrangements supporting enterprise and economic development in Ballymun, there is a highly developed infrastructure of community groups. These groups range from long standing consultative bodies to specific task oriented or informal groups which enable information to be circulated and the community's responses to become known.

Several examples of community enterprise facilitated by agencies including Ballymun Partnership and the Ballymun Job Centre Coop, provide jobs for local residents, such as the airport luggage handling co-operative, taxi firms and

computer bureaux. These initiatives and institutions attest to the potential of the local community, and should be developed further.

8.6.0 INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

8.6.1 Institutional Structure

There are a wide range of bodies, groups and institutions concerned with the promotion and assistance of economic development at every level in Ballymun. This report notes the institutional structure which exists at national, regional, local and community levels to promote economic activity in three categories:

- Large-scale externally financed public or private projects for industrial, commercial, residential or other development; inward investment
- Development or employment generation projects reinforcing and building links with existing economic activity in the area; business expansion and support
- Community enterprise initiatives.

8.6.1.1 National Policy Initiatives

- Dublin Transportation Initiative (DTI). The DTI adopted by the Government in 1994 comprises a detailed strategy of integrated land use and transportation for Dublin.

A central element of the DTI strategy of specific relevance to Ballymun is the promotion of a Light Rail (LRT) network, in association with the implementation of Quality Bus Corridors and the improvement of regional and suburban rail services. A Core Light Rail system is proposed in two phases;

Phase 1: Tallaght to City Centre to Dundrum

Phase 2: Ballymun to City Centre.

Work on the design of Phase 2, due to commence in 1998, is continuing and the DTI strategy reflects the central importance of LRT implementation to Ballymun's economic infrastructure.

- Sustainable Development; A Strategy for Ireland. The Department of the Environment published the Strategy in 1997 which established a policy framework for sustainable development. Land use planning is seen as significant in the development of a Sustainable Development Strategy, and urban regeneration is identified as a key policy objective.

8.6.1.2 Urban Renewal Schemes

On 23rd October 1985, the Government introduced the Urban Renewal Act. The objectives of the Act were to promote urban renewal, redevelopment and provide a suitable financial climate for private sector investment.

Ballymun Town Centre was designated for refurbishment in 1995 and tax incentives were available for the developer and retail business operators. Incentives for the retail tenants were not taken up by most of the shops in the centre for a variety of reasons.

Existing and new programmes of assistance will be extended to address many aspects of the Ballymun Regeneration Project. A structure of financial and other incentives will be put in place to attract investment which would not otherwise locate in Ballymun.

8.6.1.3 New Urban Renewal Scheme

Drawing on experience gained in earlier Urban Renewal Schemes (URS), the European Union assisted Operational Programme and URBAN initiatives, the Government has announced a new Urban Renewal Scheme to run from 1st August 1998 to 2001. As with previous Schemes, areas will be designated on the basis of need, and local authorities will be directly involved in the identification of areas and the operation of the programme.

An Integrated Area Plan (IAP) is required for each designated area, and in early 1997 Dublin Corporation established a company Ballymun Regeneration Ltd (BRL), to prepare and implement the Plan for submission to the Department of the Environment to gain designated area status for Ballymun. The IAP, makes proposals for specific incentives to encourage development, generate employment and improve social and economic conditions in Ballymun.

8.6.1.4 Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development 1994

The Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development, also known as the Local Development Programme, is promoted by the Department of the Taoiseach as an integrated initiative to tackle the requirements of urban deprivation and economic and social disadvantage in designated areas throughout Ireland.

The Operational Programme comprises three sub-programmes; one of which is directly relevant to Ballymun, and "...aims to empower communities in the most disadvantaged areas of the country to tackle in an integrated way the social and economic problems which they face".

Ballymun is one of 38 areas identified by the Minister for European Affairs and Local Development in which a Partnership Company has been set up to oversee the allocation of funds directed towards providing:

- employment opportunities and services for the unemployed;
- education and training initiatives;
- community development;
- environmental improvements; and
- estate management training for tenants.

The Ballymun Partnership Board comprises "social partners" such as businesses and trade unions, state agencies at local level and representatives from the local communities. A programme of projects and assistance is identified in the Ballymun Partnership Area Action Plan: A Strategy for Employment 1995-1999. This is being implemented through a wide variety of agencies, groups and institutions, co-ordinated by the Partnership company which is based in Ballymun town centre.

8.6.1.5 The URBAN Initiative

The URBAN Initiative introduced in 1994 is a separate initiative which moves beyond the core areas identified in the Sub-Programmes of the Operational Programme to consider urban centres or areas with populations of more than 100,000 people where deprivation is severe. As with Sub-Programme 2 an integrated approach is taken and Ballymun is part of the largest area identified in the country; North Dublin, which comprises Ballymun, Finglas and Darndale-Belcamp.

The North Dublin Action Plan has been prepared by a partnership of Dublin Corporation, the three Area Partnership companies in the areas involved, the Dublin City Enterprise Board, Dublin City University, and Forbairt. A special company, Regeneration Of Urban North Dublin Ltd (ROUND) has been set up by the partners to implement the Plan. It includes twenty five costed projects for Ballymun covering all the objectives noted in Sub-Programme 2 above with an expenditure of £5.43 million up to 1999.

8.7.0 PROPOSALS FOR INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Consultations and analysis of existing schemes provide insights into potential institutional changes which would benefit Ballymun. Past efforts by Dublin Corporation and several other organisations have not provided the improvement in social and economic conditions sought, and many reasons have been cited.

Perceptions amongst both local and business communities are of a district in crisis, caused at least partly by poor public sector management. These responses are being challenged vigorously by the IAP and Masterplan processes.

8.7.1 Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL)

The Ballymun Regeneration Project (BRP) offers a major opportunity to break the cycle of deprivation which has blighted Ballymun, both through physical improvement of the built environment, and the establishment of institutional structures which will take more account of the specific needs of the area.

Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL) is a company set up by Dublin Corporation to plan and implement the Regeneration Project. A primary task is the preparation of the Masterplan and Integrated Area Plan (IAP) and identification of the designations and incentives which will help to bring economic development to Ballymun and ensure that improvements are sustainable.

It is clear from analysis undertaken for this report that a traditional public institutional type structure for the implementing body of the IAP is unlikely to attract the confidence of either the business sector or the Ballymun community itself.

BRL is now established itself in the former ESB offices, Stormanstown House, on Ballymun Road on the southern edge of the town centre. BRL staff and consultants from Ireland and the UK have prepared the Masterplan and IAP and conducted a major public consultation exercise with local residents and community groups of all kinds. The results of this exercise are reported separately. Responses from the Economic Development Focus Group and others indicate the need for a responsive and flexible institution which can relate to both business and the legitimate interests of the community.

In institutional terms, BRL will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- BRL will be clearly an autonomous company;
- BRL will promote a strong "partnership" ethos, actively seeking the involvement of the private sector and identifying economic development opportunities at every level;

- BRL will reduce bureaucratic systems to the minimum possible level consistent with good management practice, to enable a rapid and flexible response to changing circumstances;

- BRL will be primarily responsible for the active promotion of Ballymun regeneration opportunities at all levels to the business sector;

- BRL will develop its relationship with agencies currently involved in implementing public sector initiated programmes, specifically Ballymun Partnership, Ballymun Job Centre, ROUND and Nor Dub Co. BRL should co-ordinate its own activities with existing programmes to complement and support them, while retaining its own specific aims and objectives following broad consultations with the local community and business;

- BRL will develop strong institutional linkages with local commerce and business, to support both the objectives of Ballymun regeneration and projects of mutual benefit to local business and the community;

- BRL will identify specific economic development opportunities for local community enterprise within the implementation of the IAP, with institutional capability to promote these opportunities energetically;

- BRL will actively promote economic development objectives alongside the physical redevelopment of the public sector housing and surrounding areas, and identify budgeting and institutional requirements to assist local employment, job creation, training and placement.

8.7.2 Business Involvement

The significance of early involvement of the local and wider commercial and business communities has already been noted above and should not be understated. This will serve several purposes:

- it will promote Ballymun's needs to the wider business community;
- it will inject a market oriented approach to the consideration of problems and potential solutions;
- it will help to change the perception of Ballymun as a problem area to one of opportunity and potential;
- it will offer specific opportunities to the local business community, and help to identify larger scale development potential; and
- it will assist the integration of Ballymun into the wider business community of north Dublin.

Accordingly, proposals will be made at a number of levels to assist the involvement of national, multi-national and local businesses in the Ballymun project.

As well as identifying specific large and small scale development initiatives ranging from business parks and major developments to local enterprise centres and micro-business opportunities, the IAP incorporates non-physical recommendations which will complement these proposals. Some of these are noted below.

8.7.2.1 Promotion of Ballymun

The promotion of Ballymun as a location for economic development is an intrinsic element of the Masterplan and IAP. Specific proposals are noted in Section 8.10 For example, changing the image, identifies what needs to be done to persuade investors and developers to consider Ballymun for new and expanded business in a whole range of local, national and internationally traded goods and services

BRL will advertise and promote the locational assets of Ballymun, both within and outside Ireland. Specific capabilities in, for example, the information technology training provided by the TRAMLINES initiative, will lead to staff availability in particular areas which can be used by new and existing businesses.

BRL will be proactive in identifying and disseminating information to potential developers and employers, co-ordinating with existing employment generation, training and other programmes to provide a marketing and developer support service.

8.7.2.2 Social Responsibility

Many major employers, including international firms, now incorporate activities which are specifically targeted at initially non commercially viable situations. Assistance is given either directly or through trusts set up by firms or groups of businesses to provide start-up finance, business advice and support, usually to community based micro-businesses which would not otherwise be commercially viable. Schemes such as the UK's "Business in the Community" co-ordinate the social responsibility activities of a number of large firms, and direct them to specific areas of need.

There is significant potential for promoting this kind of activity, gaining the support of large firms for community enterprise in Ballymun. Work of a related nature in Dublin has been pioneered by the Liffey Trust, the Business Innovation Centre and

The Masterplan attempts to be a flexible framework. Consultation will be on-going throughout the regeneration process.

This section explores ideas for attracting sustainable economic development.





Inner City Enterprise. These trusts were established to provide local level support for new firms in both manufacturing and service trades.

BRL will seek to promote an "enterprise trust" for Ballymun as part of its institutional responsibilities to involve private business in decisions and activities related to Ballymun's future development. Significant benefits would flow from such involvement, which may take the form of sponsorship of community action, specific training, financial support for local facilities, school support and so on.

8.7.2.3 "Mentoring", advice and support

A number of programmes already exist, such as those initiated by Forbairt, Dublin City Enterprise Board, ICE and First Step which provide advice and financial support by grant or loan to people setting up in business. Similar local work is done by the Ballymun Partnership and Job Centre Co-op for example, and support is provided on the basis of a business plan prepared, often with advice, on which assistance is provided.

BRL will support and promote all existing programmes and initiatives in this area, and provide another means of contact for this type of assistance.

Additionally, with a strong private sector ethos in its operation, BRL will develop mutually beneficial linkages with larger local firms and locally based national and international business. These can support the on-going management of smaller firms which may often be in related fields, or providing a supporting product or service.

Mentoring is becoming increasingly recognised as a means of providing temporary voluntary advisers from existing businesses to help identify and overcome obstacles in the development stages of small local enterprise.

BRL with its development of links to local and locally based companies, will be in a good position to promote the advantages of mentoring, either through existing programmes set up by Forbairt, DCEB, ICE and others, or in its own right.

8.7.2.4 PLATO

A significant development of this concept pioneered in Belgium, and in Ireland in Tallaght in 1993, is known as PLATO. Larger companies, known as parent companies (although denoting no ownership of any kind) help smaller firms in their area by providing executives on a part-time basis to advise, train and pass on management expertise.

Typically, ten to twelve owner-managers of participating companies meet as a team and are given intense training by two executives from parent companies. The emphasis is on practical training, business counselling and support, and teams generally meet monthly for about two years. Significant positive company results are claimed for this programme and in Tallaght a Central Support Unit is managed by the local Chamber of Commerce.

The key to PLATO is local establishment, and support and Ballymun would be a suitable location for a PLATO type initiative. BRL will actively investigate the potential for PLATO in Ballymun with its emphasis on practical reliable support in every day situations.

8.7.2.5 Local Enterprise Networking (LEN)

Another means of potential business support for Ballymun's economic regeneration lies in Local Enterprise Networking (LEN). This brings together a number of the concepts and proposals made in this section and is being actively promoted by the Enterprise Trust which was formed by the Irish employer bodies (IBEC, CIF, ICOS and CCI) in 1992.

Local Enterprise Networks have been committed to by the Employers' bodies in a national agreement called Partnership 2000, and the overall objective is to facilitate business in communities. Fifteen LEN's are planned or already in existence, including a Dublin Inner City Network.

In summary, a core group of interested people from all sectors of the community get together to make a commitment to exchange information, contacts and experience. This commitment is also financial and a full-time Facilitator is employed to make connections and introductions between members according to their needs.

Each network is effectively locally owned by its participants and linked to all other Networks and The Enterprise Trust in Dublin. Contacts can be concerned with any issue of mutual interest and the chairman of the core group has the role of defining tasks to ensure a reasonable workload for the Facilitator.

Theoretically, north Dublin could be a suitable location for a LEN, but the initiative must come from the local business community. BRL will introduce the concept to local business groups and will participate in the core group if appropriate.

8.7.3 Community Involvement

Many proposals for business involvement noted in the preceding paragraphs

identify a major role for community groups and community based activities which involve local people directly in economic regeneration.

Ballymun has a rich and diverse web of local groups and organisations and this provides a firm foundation for real progress.

The consultation process being carried out by BRL has identified several issues which are regarded as significant by community representatives in the economic development field.

- Local employment in the redevelopment project: Significant opportunities are seen to exist for local employment during the redevelopment of the public housing and associated projects. Short term opportunities in catering, security, construction trades and general operations such as driving and administration will be identified and advertised locally through BRL and existing organisations.
- Manufacturing for the redevelopment project. Small new and existing businesses should be involved in the production of fittings, carpentry and manufactured items for construction and refurbishment. Industrial experience gained can then be offered more widely when the project is completed.
- Opportunities with Dublin Corporation. There is strong feeling in the local community that Dublin Corporation estate management and maintenance operations do not use local people sufficiently. Good linkages have not been developed and more commitment is needed to improve local employment practice by the Corporation. BRL should aim to foster better relations between the Corporation and the local community as the regeneration project progresses.
- Promotion of local employment for major inward investment. Significant efforts should be made to encourage local employment by large national and international firms who move in during regeneration. Appropriate financial incentives may be considered to assist employment.
- Education, training and community support. Significant investment and commitment is required to tackle low educational standards and attainment in Ballymun. Both local community and business representatives have stressed the crucial nature of these issues to the successful implementation of the regeneration process.

BRL is establishing three locally based working groups to review and co-ordinate existing provision and the potential for new initiatives. Existing programmes and institutions may be extended in, for example, schools liaison, combating early school leaving, quick response training, apprenticeships, child-care, health education and family support.

8.8 PROPOSALS FOR INCENTIVES

8.8.1 Tax and Financial Incentive Structure

Within the new Urban Renewal Scheme(URS) announced in June 1997, it is proposed that the range of incentives available would be similar to the previous scheme for a period of three years from 1st August 1998. The Guidelines for the new URS note, however, that ...

"the new scheme will provide for a more targeted approach to the use of incentives, both in terms of the mix of incentives and their scale."

The London Docklands experience, amongst others, would suggest that for financial incentives to be effective for Ballymun they will need to be more sensitively applied than was the case in previous URS, and more closely targeted to overcome the specific constraints already identified. The low rate of Corporation Tax is already an incentive to inward investment and a similar function is presently served by the URS incentives for capital allowances on the total tax bill.

8.8.1.2 General Proposals

It is clear, both in terms of Government thinking and the needs of potential designated areas, that financial incentives should be targeted by both sector and location. The mechanism for achieving this focus is the Integrated Area Plan (IAP) which identifies specific development areas and proposals for assistance, and links appropriate incentives to them.

For maximum benefit, these targeted incentives must be in place for as long as they are needed to provide sustainable development. At present, three years is insufficient to deliver a viable benefit to Ballymun envisaged for the new URS benefits. Therefore the incentives in Ballymun should extend for the full eight years of the project.

Much of the success of previous URS was achieved in the private residential development sector, with significant increases in housing stock in and around Dublin and other urban areas. The emphasis for the new URS will be on economic development priorities, providing investment opportunities for development surpluses within the Irish economy. This is particularly important as other sources of investment, particularly European funds, reduce over the next few years. Incentives will thus be directed to "users" and "occupiers" as well as developers of specific premises and locations. Much regeneration success can be illusory if units are left empty or idle because financial assistance ceases on completion of the

physical development, leaving a shell building with no occupants.

8.9 KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Proposals for economic development are identified in the Masterplan and IAP. Various options are identified in certain locations, and all proposals should remain flexible and subject to further consultation and elaboration.

The incentives to assist in the creation of a positive environment for inward investment has been submitted to Government.

Three major categories of key economic development proposals are noted, together with the potential for the development of the social economy, proposals for the Town Centre and small Neighbourhood Centres throughout Ballymun.

8.9.1 Inward Investment

The area known as Sillogue Park, immediately south of the M50, is identified as appropriate for major inward investment.

High technology based industry, of the type which has been successfully attracted to other locations in Ireland, is proposed. This may comprise assembly, manufacturing, research and development and other forms of production and distribution.

Specific investment may relate to the music industry, building on Dublin's reputation in this sector, and comprising activities such as multi-media development, digitisation, and music software development.

Major options for "flagship" developments, relating partly to the Airport and good communications, may include a private industry related college foundation, a private sector exhibition/conference centre and a hotel and a multi-purpose stadium and concert venue.

"Back office" functions for financial and internationally traded services may also be attracted to this location, including call centres, insurance, broking and related areas.

8.9.2 Business Expansion And Support

There are two locations in Ballymun where there is potential for the expansion and support of local existing business. The Poppintree and St Margaret's Industrial Estates offer vacant sites and units for a range of business opportunities.

8.9.2.1 Poppintree Industrial Estate

Traditional warehousing and distribution activities are present and there is some space for local or other firms to locate, especially in the northern part of the estate.

The largest available vacant site area is in the south-east of the estate which is served by local distributor roads, albeit of an acceptable standard for truck access.

An option for the south-eastern area is the location of sheds and workshops for the LUAS light rail network, which may have a terminal at Ballymun.

8.9.2.2 St Margaret's Industrial Estate

Centrally located in Ballymun is the small St Margaret's Estate which presently houses Musgrave Cash and Carry and a small number of local haulage and other contractors.

There are vacant units on the estate which could be suitable for a range of small local businesses of an industrial or similar nature.

8.9.3 Community Enterprise

Certain local small or start-up businesses may locate in the existing estates or individual units elsewhere in Ballymun. Local Enterprise Centres, comprising small, low rent, basically serviced units of 50 square metres or more, provide opportunities for local business people to start and nurture a small business.

Advice and various forms of assistance may be made available similar to successful ventures of this kind already existing in Dublin.

8.9.4 The Social Economy

Past experience, the nature of the social economy, profile of the population and the regeneration project itself point to a very definite potential, for business development and job creation in areas such as housing management and maintenance, social care and child care.

8.9.5 Town Centre

Ballymun Town Centre was renovated to some extent in 1995 but remains an unattractive retail trading location. It serves a local convenience function but is lacking significant retail sectors such as clothing, drapery and leisure uses for a

catchment population of Ballymun's size.

Recent major retail developments in Tallaght, Quarryvale, Blanchardstown and the Omni Centre, together with massive proposals further east on the M50 prevent the opportunity for a regional shopping centre at Ballymun.

There is potential for significant refurbishment and expansion of Ballymun as a district centre with a broad range of uses and activities which incorporate inward investment and local business expansion.

The existing retail area would be located in the southern part of the proposed Town Centre area. It is proposed to form a "main street" type development to its north, along both sides of Ballymun Road.

At the northern end there is potential for a high quality trophy store for a market leader, with a car-park shared with a Transport Interchange which would provide facilities for LUAS, bus services and possible interchange for the Airport.

New and refurbished shops, retail services such as banks and branch offices and small office suites would be incorporated, with the potential for residential apartments on the upper floors.

Music rehearsal rooms, studio space, restaurants and local leisure facilities, including a renovated swimming pool, are proposed. A local Civic Centre is already planned, which will incorporate a "One Stop Shop" for all local public sector services.

Further major proposals to be incorporated into the Town Centre location are a relocated public sector office, such as a government department or large semi-State organisation. Such a development would increase the viability of retail and other services and provide a focus of activity.

There is also the potential for student housing and "live-work" units, possibly connected to a "Foyer" type facility which provides accommodation, training and workshops for young unemployed people.

Residential development will also complement the Town Centre uses.

8.9.6 Neighbourhood Centres

The hierarchy of local services provision is completed by a series of small neighbourhood centres. These range from a single convenience shop to a group of units comprising shops, a unit for community, medical or similar use, a pub and child care facilities.

These locations will provide the opportunity for relocation of the informal container or trailer shops which are prevalent in Ballymun.

8.10 ACTION PROGRAMMES

8.10.1 Education And Training

For local people and businesses to benefit from Ballymun regeneration, there must be significant improvement in educational attainment and skills levels. Both business people and representatives of the local community recognise this need and the impact of low standards on motivation and employment potential.

Specific proposals for education and training provision clearly lie well beyond the scope of this report and BRL's remit. But there are ways in which the institutional structure for the regeneration project can influence such issues, and these are described briefly here. Further identification of potential interventions in Education and are indicated in the section on Training.

8.10.1.1 Existing institutional support

BRL is establishing a number of broadly based working groups to address issues arising from preparations and implementation of the Masterplan. These will comprise representation at a senior level from institutions and bodies already operating and with responsibilities in Ballymun.

Two of these groups will address specifically the overall fields of education, training, employment and community support; "Education for employment" and "Housing and estate management." Another will address the issue of promoting a new image for Ballymun.

Significant potential exists for those presently promoting and managing programmes in this area, in partnership with BRL and the regeneration project, to increase their involvement and effectiveness. Further initiatives may be identified for specific problem areas or inadequacies in the provision of support to the community and local business.

8.10.1.2 Schools liaison and linkage

Ballymun has extensive provision of schools, most of which are operating at significantly less than full capacity. Unlike many areas where deprivation is apparent, therefore, over-crowding is not a problem and there are potentially facilities and premises available for a range of additional activities.

Linkages between BRL and local schools will be developed to inform young people about the regeneration project, and involve them in the process of consultation. Active promotion of school curricular and other projects may lead to greater interest in the opportunities offered and prospects for employment, both short and long term.

A particular concern is the number of young people leaving school without a Leaving Certificate, or just earlier than they should. Specific identification of opportunities arising from regeneration may help to provide a purpose for education and training for teenagers.

8.10.1.3 Quick response training

The requirements of the regeneration project itself will provide further opportunities for local employment. Existing agencies will work with BRL to increase the impact and targeting of short term training.

New style apprenticeships will be encouraged and a proactive approach taken to engage young people in worthwhile activities. BRL will help to lobby and promote initiatives in this and related areas in support of existing agencies.

Job training, re-training and job placement are further facets of this issue. Sustainable progress will require a partnership of private enterprise, community based and public organisations. Much of this infrastructure already exists and the priority is to involve the private sector at the earliest possible stages of project formulation.

8.10.2 Changing The Image

There is general agreement that a crucial element in attracting inward investment to Ballymun is changing the image of the place. Ballymun is seen as a deprived and unappealing area and this perception must change if new commercial and residential development is to take place.

Initiation of the regeneration project will clearly have a marked effect on perceptions of Ballymun. In the short-term, signs of construction activity will indicate that change is taking place and there will be anticipation that conditions are improving.

Work on changing the image of Ballymun comprises four main groups of action which should challenge negative perceptions and make people aware of what is happening to improve the area:

- Local environmental improvements;
- Marketing strategy;
- Community promotion; and
- Development support.

8.10.2.1 Local environmental improvements

Immediate local environmental improvement activity on the main road approaches to Ballymun will influence the attitudes of potential business investors. At present, road sides are unattractive and run-down, with extensive litter, rusty fencing and deteriorating street furniture.

A short term project of rubbish clearance, re-painting, repair and replacement of damaged or missing street furniture will transform the appearance of road approaches and through routes, especially Ballymun Road itself. Work could be undertaken partly as community or schools projects using volunteers together with paid staff, and the results would be apparent immediately.

8.10.2.2 Marketing strategy

BRL will prepare a marketing strategy to promote the Ballymun project to the widest possible audience, but particularly to business organisations in the industrial and commercial sectors. The strategy will have three main focuses:-

- promote location
- promote incentives
- promote activity

Ballymun's excellent locational characteristics with regard to the airport, main road connections and the availability of space have been described previously and elsewhere. With south Dublin increasingly congested, north Dublin is becoming more attractive as physical constraints such as drainage capacity are tackled.

Promotional material will identify Ballymun's locational advantages in the national and international contexts. The increasing significance of Dublin Airport as a European destination, the recent and projected growth in airport traffic and the

national employment and financial characteristics which have fostered Ireland's economic growth can all be harnessed for promoting Ballymun's location to commerce and industry.

The marketing strategy will promote the range of tax and financial incentives which will be available to commerce, industry and the residential sectors

Such promotion will be particularly important in view of alternative locations in north Dublin which may also be assisted with financial incentives. Ballymun has the opportunity to present a co-ordinated package of financial and institutional benefits.

A crucial element of the marketing strategy will be regular information about the progress of the regeneration project. Progress in the redevelopment and environmental improvements will be reported frequently and distributed widely, with news of inward investors and business expansion.

Circulars, newsletters, regular press briefings and media material should emphasise the achievements of regeneration and the changes which are taking place in Ballymun.

8.10.2.3 Media Monitoring

Perceptions of a place can be influenced by how it is routinely described and characterised in the media. Certain radio presenter's or other public figure's comments, for example, produce a public awareness which is difficult to dislodge.

BRTL and local community groups can co-operate to challenge negative comment whenever it occurs. Community representatives have suggested responding to phone-ins, letter writing and complaints to broadcasters to redress the balance, particularly during redevelopment when change is clearly apparent.

8.10.2.4 Community promotion

BRL may consider involvement in a series of activities which develop a sense of positive community awareness. Experience elsewhere suggests that the organisation of shows, festivals, cultural events and 'fun days', together with 'merchandising' t-shirts, pens and similar items can assist the development of a positive attitude to the place for local people and business.

Clearly, BRL will not necessarily organise such events itself, but its support could be crucial in encouraging and promoting initiatives. In Ballymun, with its dense network of community organisations, it is likely that potential exists for activities of this type. Minimal resources will enable significant progress to be made.

8.10.2.5 Developer support

Changing the image will require a long term commitment to appropriate support for those companies which invest in Ballymun, whether through development or locating and expanding businesses in the area. Additional to the assistance noted above, is the need to keep developers and other firms informed of the opportunities available, and of any changes in financial and institutional circumstances with may affect their business.

Such responsibilities could appropriately be performed by an Economic Development Officer employed by BRL to act as prime liaison between the regeneration project and the business community. Functions would include regular briefings to firms, enquiry and advice service, and networking facilitation for new and existing enterprise.

All activities connected with changing the image need to promote constantly the vision of a regenerated Ballymun as a positive and dynamic element in the economic structure of north Dublin. With the identification of north Dublin as a whole as an area with excellent prospects for economic development, Ballymun must be perceived as an intrinsic element in its promotion.

8.10.3 Planning Mechanisms

8.10.3.1 Existing situation

The existing statutory framework for Ballymun has been outlined in Section 7 above. There are two jurisdictions involved in the area and two separate Planning Committees. Dublin Corporation implements the Dublin City Development Plan, and Fingal County Council implements those parts of the Dublin County Development Plan which affect the northern edges of Ballymun.

