

Ballinacurra Weston Residents Alliance



RESIDENTS FIRST

*towards real
community participation
in regeneration areas*



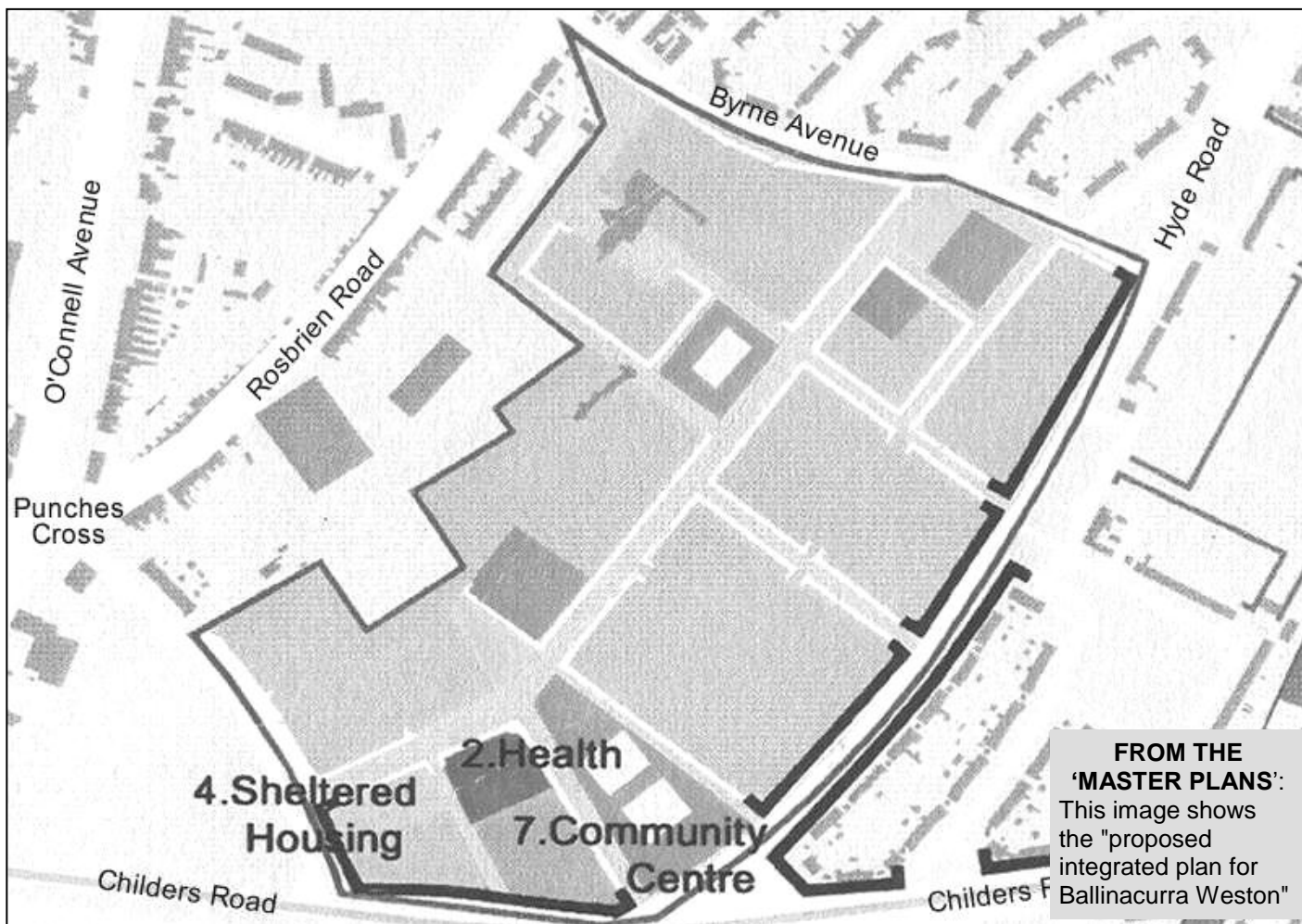
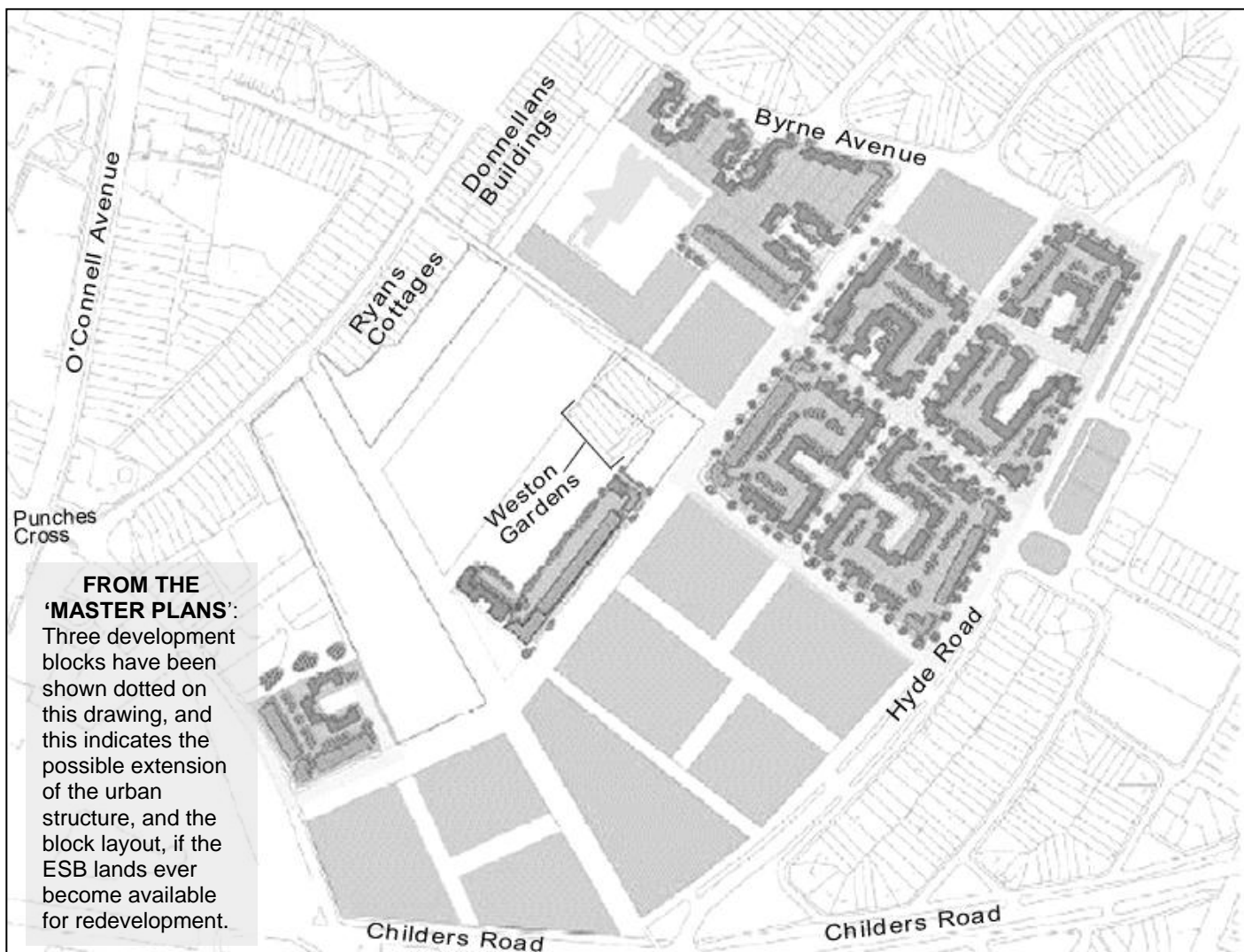
Weston Gardens, Rosbrien, 3 September 2010, from Left to Right, Lee Collins, Clarina Avenue; Dessie Collins, Hyde Road; Ruairí MacCárthaigh, Weston Gardens; Jaden Colins, Clarina Avenue; Ógie MacCárthaigh, Weston Gardens; Dillon Collins, Southill; Bianca Collins, Hyde Avenue with Darren Maher, Weston Gardens supervising.

Ready, set ...plant. There is great enthusiasm for the Community garden and the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance is working to start similar gardens on green sites in the area. We are working with Limerick Youth Service to establish youth clubs and it is our hope that our young people will be the driving force behind rebuilding community spirit and taking ownership of our area.



“We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbours. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.”

— Grace Lee Boggs
(Author and Community Activist)



Foreword by Chairperson

It's been a busy year for the Executive Committee of the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance. When we first formed in May 2010 it was predicted by some that we wouldn't last six weeks, "there's no unity in Weston, people can't stick together", we were told.

It wasn't easy at the start and we met with some hostility from the powers that be. But we persevered and the BWRA has gone from strength to strength as it became obvious to most that our motives are pure. All we want is to be able to live in a clean, safe and secure environment while we await regeneration and we are willing to actively participate in civic actions to achieve that goal.

Over the past year we have forged alliances with other organisations and worked with other agencies for the betterment of our community. We have a healthy and respectful relationship with the Gardaí and Limerick City Council, who respond promptly to representations that we make on behalf of our members. We have found great goodwill and support from Limerick Youth Services in setting up affiliated youth clubs for our young people; the training and expertise they shared with us is invaluable.

Our committee has visited regeneration areas in Dublin and meets regularly with other residents groups there; with the guidance of *Tenants First* and the *Community Action Network* we are working to develop a human rights approach to regeneration.

We attempted to engage with the Southside Regeneration Agency in September 2010, looking for their support for our environmental projects. It didn't go well, to say the least. Of course, it wasn't our first time meeting with the Agency as most of our committee had spent three fruitless years as representatives on an informal resident's forum while our area continued to degenerate into a ghetto with scenes reminiscent of the third-world. Anti-social behaviour and illegal dumping encouraged people to leave. Residents were bought out for a pittance and turned back into tenants, their homes boarded up by the Council, leaving them to be vandalised and eventually burnt-out. Things had gotten worse, not better.

Our involvement with the forum meant that we were being officially consulted while being ignored at the same time, there was a lot of talk about social regeneration but little evidence of it on the ground; one by one we left in despair and disgust. I personally felt that I had wasted three years of my life.

We regrouped and joined forces with other residents to form the BWRA; this would be more

than just a talking shop, we would actively campaign for our rights to be upheld. We leafleted the area, informing residents of our existence, inviting them to join and we are now representative of 95% of households. We conducted the first ever survey to find out what residents really thought about regeneration. People are clearly not happy and want change.

We were accused of being political, which is something that we don't deny. All the issues that impact negatively on our community are ones that are constantly being debated in the political arena. The decision to establish the Limerick Regeneration Agencies was a political one and if we are to change the way it does business then we have lobby our politicians. After all, politics is 'the art of the possible'.

The present structures for community engagement are clearly inadequate and cannot deliver. The few members that remain on the forum are not representative of our community and do not even bother to consult with residents. In fact, very few residents are even aware of the forum's existence, it is irrelevant and ineffective and should be dissolved immediately. What we want is a level playing field where we as residents can participate as equals in the decisions that directly affect our lives. What we need is real community participation and genuine power sharing.

We are proposing the holding of community elections to elect residents onto a local regeneration board with decision-making powers on which all the stakeholders would be fairly represented. Such structures are not unprecedented and have proven successful in other areas, such as Fatima Mansions in Dublin and Cranmore in Sligo. These communities have demonstrated that true partnership is not only possible, but also necessary to a successful outcome, especially where social regeneration is concerned.

The current economic climate has meant that physical regeneration has been long-fingered. We believe that there needs to be a change of focus and that social regeneration should become the main objective.

With the recent change of government we are hopeful that we will now be listened to and that all this talk of change is more than mere rhetoric.

We want a regeneration that is centred on community needs and we need a regeneration that puts residents first.

Matt Collins
Chairperson

Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance

14th June 2011

Background to Limerick Regeneration

In October 2006, former Dublin City Manager, John Fitzgerald, was appointed by our then Government to lead an initiative to address issues of social exclusion and crime and disorder in Moyross and our other troubled estates.

His appointment was prompted by a horrendous attack on two children in Moyross in September 2006 that shocked the nation. Six-year-old Millie and her four-year-old brother Gavin Murray are lucky to be alive after they became human fireballs when their mother's car was doused with petrol and set alight while they were inside. The attack took place because their mother had refused to give someone a lift to the courthouse 10 minutes earlier. Three teenagers were later charged and convicted.

On 3rd April 2007, John Fitzgerald issued his report to our then government's *Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion*, which stated: "Fundamentally, and as a matter of **high priority**, early intervention is required to deal with the problem of serious criminal activity. This problem needs to be dealt with as a matter of **urgency** so that a stable environment is created where other initiatives can take effect. Failure to do so is likely to lead to the frustration of other efforts to address social and economic problems."

The *Fitzgerald Report* proposed the demolition of over 3,000 homes in four estates and made a total of 9 recommendations. Indeed, the first recommendation of the *Fitzgerald Report* was to:

"Put in place intensive policing arrangements: As a result of my consultations it has become clear that, although policing on its own cannot solve the problems in the long term, intensive policing intervention is required in the short to medium term **to allow the other interventions an opportunity to work**. This cannot happen against the continuing backdrop of crime and intimidation...**there needs to be a highly visible Garda presence at all times in these estates in order to restore confidence and stability in the communities**. A policing structure, headed by a Superintendent, should be established that is exclusively dedicated to the policing of these areas. **This will involve a minimum of 100 additional Gardaí**, with appropriate management structures, **whose sole function will be the policing of these areas**."

This never happened. While it is true to say that 100 additional Gardaí were assigned to the Limerick Division (which covers Limerick City & County and parts of Co. Clare) in the year-and-a-half that followed the publication of the *Fitzgerald Report*, these Gardaí were not exclusively dedicated to the policing of regeneration areas. They weren't part of a "policing structure, headed by a superintendent" because a superintendent was never appointed. In short, there was no real attempt to implement this first and vital recommendation.

The second recommendation of the Fitzgerald Report was to **"Establish Structures for regeneration"** involving the establishment of two regeneration agencies, one for the Northside (St. Mary's Park and Moyross and one for the Southside (Southill and Ballinacurra Weston). The Limerick Northside and Southside Regeneration Agencies were established by Ministerial Orders S.I. 275/276/2007 on the 15th June 2007. Former Dublin City Assistant Manager, Brendan Kenny, was appointed Chief Executive Officer for both Agencies, which were staffed and ready for business by September 2007. John Fitzgerald was appointed Chairperson for both Boards of Directors, which is made up of representatives from Government Departments, the Gardaí, Health Service Executive and business sectors in both areas. Ordinary residents are not represented. The Ministerial Order will lapse on 14th June 2012, as the *Fitzgerald Report* envisaged that regeneration would only take five years to complete.

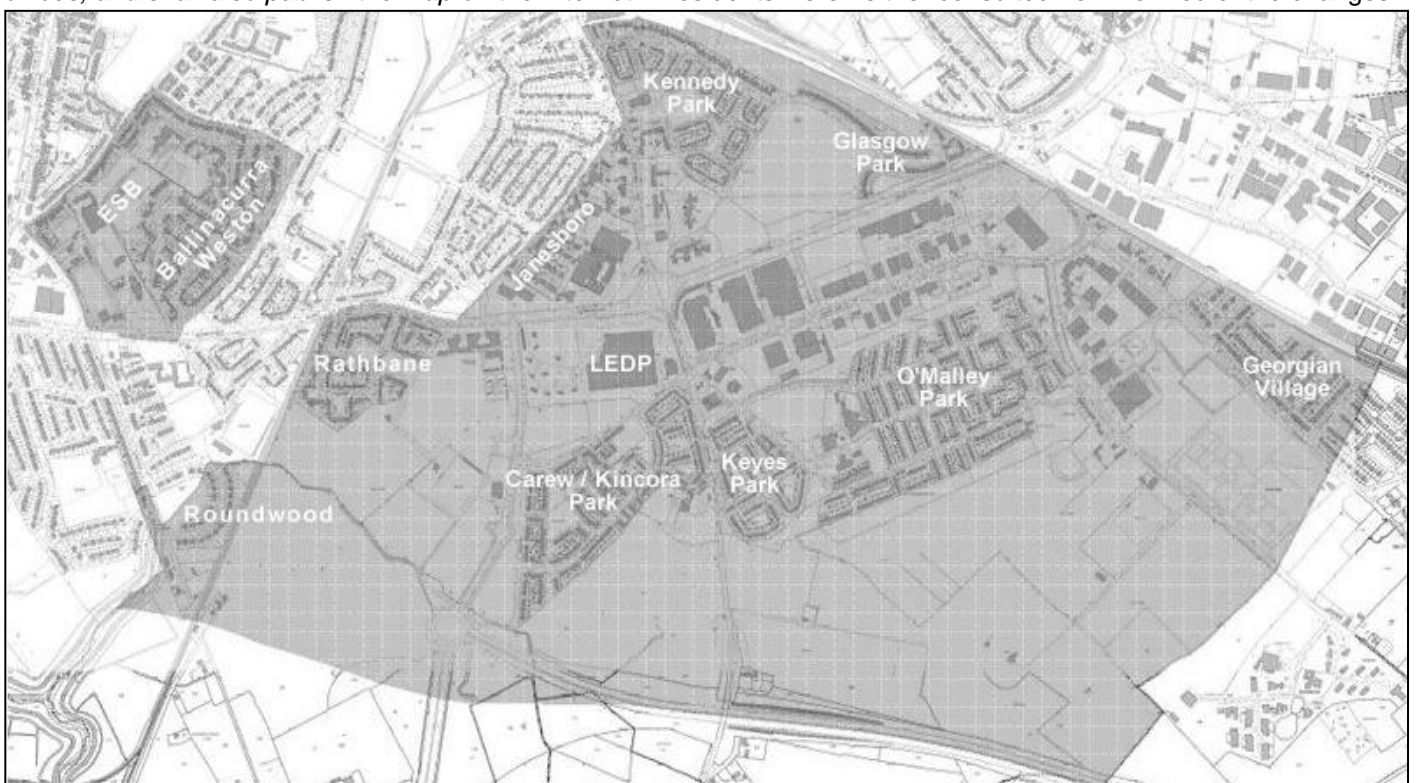
The third recommendation was to **"Establish dedicated teams under the auspices of the Development Agencies to address Social and Family problems in the designated areas, including issues of educational disadvantage"** There is no real evidence on the ground to suggest that this ever happened. Likewise for recommendation 8, **"Address the drugs problem"**.

Instead, the Agencies focused most of its efforts on producing numerous documents in the lead up to the 'Master Plans' for regeneration, while financing the depopulation and demolition of the estates through the auspices of Limerick City Council. Clearing the land for developers and displacing people.

If we take the view that 'regeneration is what regeneration does', then the only part of the *Fitzgerald Report* that seems to be getting any attention is to **"...unlock the value of lands, all of which are within short distance of the city centre..."**, an approach which is heavily dependent on a booming property market for success but at the same time does little to tackle the serious and ongoing social problems endured by the communities under the Agencies remit. This needs to change and the only way to do that is through real community participation in the decision making process.



DEPOSITED MAPS: On Wednesday, 14th May 2008, an Act amending the Limerick Regeneration (Establishment) Orders was passed un-opposed in Dáil Éireann. This amendment re-defined the Northside and Southside Regeneration Areas and included an additional Article, which defined the Agency's remit with *deposited map's* and clearly indicates the boundary of the land that is under the Agencies remit. The section of the map above shows the area referred to as "*Ballinacurra Weston (parts of)*" while the map below shows the full extent of the Agency's remit on the Southside. This map is not available on the Agency's website, even though the amendment states "*the Agency shall make copies of the deposited map available for inspection by members of the public at all reasonable times at its offices, and shall also publish the map on the Internet.*" Residents were neither consulted nor informed of the changes.



Community Participation

“...real consultation, real participation and a real role in decision making is vital for local communities and vital in achieving a successful outcome...local community groups, community development projects, area partnership companies and other local development and voluntary organisations can play a key leadership and representational role on complex regeneration projects...”

– Brendan Kenny, 2007

The above quote from the current CEO of the Limerick Regeneration Agencies is taken from the document *Regeneration - Learnings & Insights*, published by the Canal Communities Partnership (CCP) in November 2007. The CCP is representative of six regeneration Areas in Dublin; Rialto, Dolphin House, Fatima Mansions, Inchicore, St. Michaels Estate and Bluebell.

As Assistant Dublin City Manager, Mr. Kenny worked closely with these communities to agree independent formal structures to oversee regeneration. Indeed one of the learning's from the Dublin experience of regeneration goes as follows:

To participate with confidence, communities will want an independent partnership, legally-constituted, well-represented structure to underpin agreements and oversee the development. But experience has shown that the consortium also benefits by having the opportunity to access independent endorsement of their development plan, secure formal agreements and access a mechanism to clear blockages, resolve conflict and maintain progress. A very successful and dynamic model already exists in some regenerations such as Fatima Mansions and St. Michael's Estate: an independently-chaired, power-sharing Regeneration Board and staffed Executive overseeing an agreed, detailed published physical and social regeneration plan. Again, in this case, Dublin City Council has demonstrated pioneering leadership in helping to establish these accountable and representative structures. The Council has been quoted in a number of professional fora promoting the advantages of this model.

Why then was this model not replicated in Limerick's regeneration areas? Instead of establishing a well-represented structure to underpin agreements, the Agency set up the Northside and Southside regeneration committees. The residents' representatives for Ballinacurra Weston on the Southside Regeneration Committee were hand-picked by Mr. Kenny in October 2007, (one of them didn't even live in the area) and the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Forum wasn't formed until February 2008.

Prior to that, the only real negotiations that took place were with the residents of Weston Gardens, Rosbrien, which at the time had the only established residents' group in the area. Mr. Kenny and his Director for Regeneration, Brendan Hayden, held a series of scheduled meetings with the Weston Gardens Residents Association (WGRA) from June 2007 to March 2008.

The WGRA was invited to nominate a representative to the forum committee, but they refused to do so on the grounds that they had been excluded from the Southside Regeneration Committee and because the Agency had refused to acknowledge receipt of formal proposals for the regeneration of their small estate. Entitled *Renewal, Integration, Regeneration* the WGRA proposal had argued for the regeneration of Weston Gardens without demolition.

Only 65 residents attended the meeting to establish the residents' forum for Ballinacurra Weston, it was organised by the local Community Development Project and local Estate Management at the request of the Southside Regeneration Agency and was facilitated by BKM Local Development Consultancy. Those in attendance were hopeful for the future and showed a willingness to participate, as the following extracts from the minutes noted:

There was quite a bit of discontent amongst the group of persons being selected onto the Weston Regeneration Committee at this time. They would have preferred to see a democratic process engaged in.

The Facilitator acknowledged that those who have been representing the area most likely felt the same and it is most important that these residents are representing a wider view from the area and have a support mechanism from which to represent issues at future meetings.

Having a residents Forum in the area will assist in ensuring broad and varied representation of issues from Weston to the Regeneration Structures in the future.

The Benefits of a Forum

The Facilitator went on to discuss the general benefits of a Forum as follows:

- *Information Sharing*
- *Act as a support to the representatives on the Regeneration Structures*
- *Coordination of Community Involvement in Regeneration*
- *Lobbying*
- *Representation of Weston on other Forums, other new structures to emerge, throughout the process of Regeneration.*

Who is going to get involved?

There are just two criteria for involvement

1) Must be a resident

2) People who are generally interested in developing and improving their area and who are here to stay.

The areas in Weston that will be directly impacted upon by Physical Regeneration are:

Clarina Park *(There re 47 houses in this area; there were 7 people at the meeting)*

Beechgrove *There are 16 houses here and 11 people at the meeting)*

Clarina Ave *(there are 75 houses here, with 25 people at the meeting)*

Crecora Ave *(There are 44 houses here with 22 people present at the meeting)*

Weston Gardens *(9 houses here, 6 are occupied and there was nobody at the meeting)*

What would you like the Forum to do on your behalf?

- *There was general consensus that all residents would like to see the Forum look after their interests (the interests of the residents of Weston)*
- *Residents from the floor asked that in the absence of having representation from the Regeneration Agency at the meeting, that the following question be asked on the Regeneration Agency immediately*
- *Residents would like the Forum to find out as soon as possible, when the building of houses is going to start?*
- *When is demolition going to start?*
- *When is something going to be done on the issue of burnt out houses? (This issue has been for some time a serious health issue in the community - residents present expressed concern on derelict houses and rubbish pile up attracting vermin)*
- *Concern raised on illegal dumping and rubbish strewn around the estate.*
- *Residents wish to know, how far they are going to be from their original front door*
- *Residents want to see local facilities and amenities as opposed to having always to travel to these.*
- *Even though there are FAS schemes in the local Community Hall, residents would like to see more schemes whereby services to the elderly for instance are extended*
- *Residents do not want special treatment for people just because they are sitting on the Residents Forum. They request equal treatment for all.*
- *Every two months, residents want to hold a full meeting, where all residents in Weston are involved.*
- *Residents wish to know where they will be going when their house is being replaced.*
- *Residents would like to see employment opportunities created throughout the Regeneration Programme for local people.*
- *What will be the compensation package on houses? Will it be a house for a house? Given that both agencies of Limerick City Council & Limerick Regeneration are involved, residents would like an answer to these questions from either of these agencies through the Weston Residents Forum.*

(end of extracts)

The hand-picked residents on the regeneration committee remain in place, despite the fact that most no longer live in the area. No further public meetings were held. The forum committee held monthly meetings where residents aired their grievances, were listened to and largely ignored. Many of the questions raised by residents at the inaugural meeting went unanswered and the residents' representatives were told not to talk about what was discussed at meetings.

The decision to demolish resident's homes was made before the forum was established and the consultation involved limited choices. The forum committee was presented with drawings of four different types of housing layouts and asked to pick one. Overall there was little input from residents in developing the 'Master Plans'.

In October 2008, the 'Master Plans' were unceremoniously presented to the forum committee:

"We arrived in and there was this large book on the table, 'there's the master plans' we were told. We all just looked at it; no one even opened it. So I asked if the plans could tell us when and where our new homes would be built and they said 'no'. I walked out"

The forum committee was unaware of the duplexes and 5-storey apartment blocks proposed for Ballinacurra Weston in the 'Master Plans'

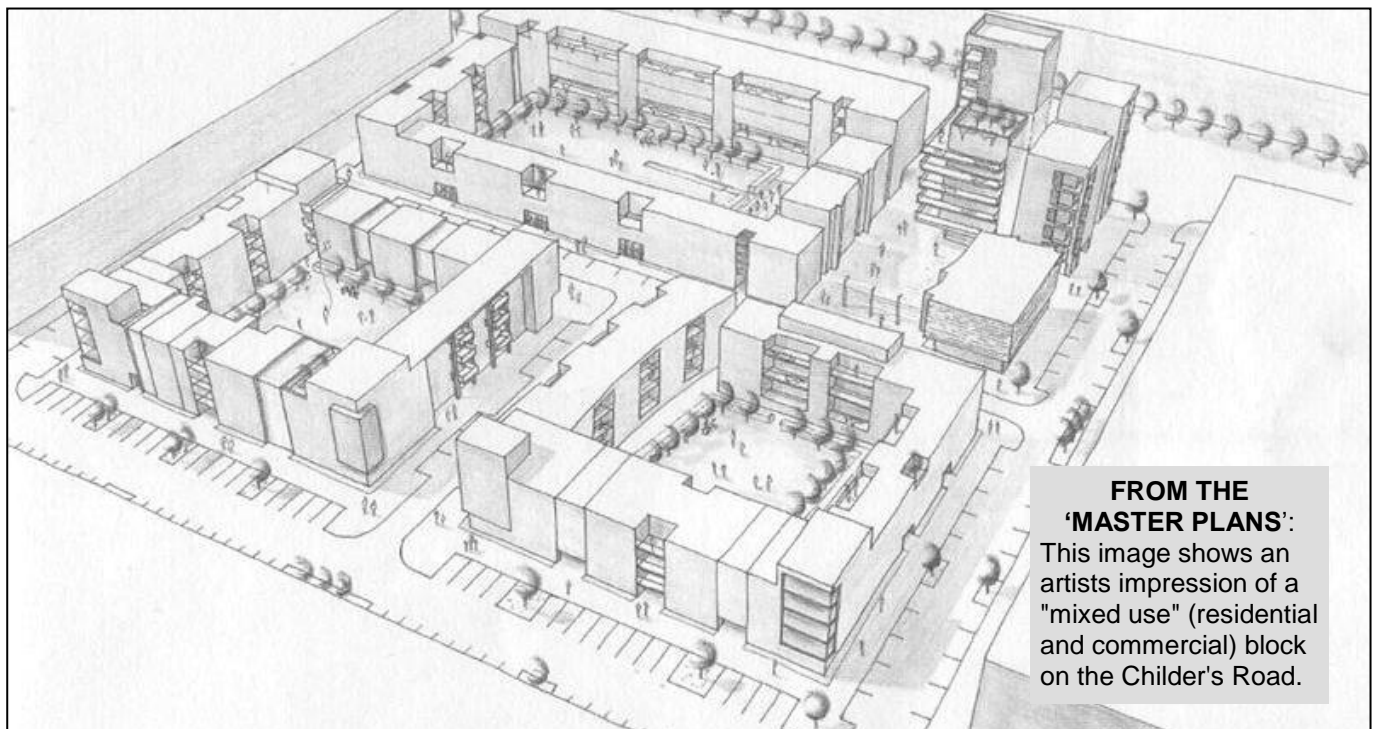
Although they are referred to as the "Master Plans", the document produced by the Regeneration Agencies is nothing of the sort and this is reflected in its actual title, *Limerick Regeneration: A Vision For Moyross, Southill & Ballinacurra Weston and St. Mary's Park*.

This document is in fact a draft proposal for regeneration and as such it is subject to change. Its implementation is completely dependent on a strong economy and a high demand for housing. In March 2010 it was admitted by the Regeneration Agency the their 'Master Plan' was not feasible and that a downscaled version would be submitted to government for approval, which was done in May 2010.

On 17th June 2010, the previous government pledged €337 million for the next four years of the Limerick Regeneration Project. However much of this money will be spent on roads and displacing people. It was announced that some sheltered housing units (48) would be built in Moyross and on the Southside in Edward St (20 units).

However, despite having promised in the 'Master Plans' that regeneration housing would "meet or exceed" the required standards, the plans submitted by the Agency were in fact sub-standard; all the apartments and houses were too small and were only passed by Limerick City Council on condition that they comply with the national standards required by the Department of Environment.

Plans have yet to be submitted for the proposed Edward St. site, which is outside the legal remit of the Regeneration Agency. The lack of real consultation and participation meant that residents became increasingly disillusioned and the residents' forums began to collapse, not just in Ballinacurra Weston but in the other areas as well.



Collapse of the Forum

Sometime after the publication of the 'Master Plans' residents' representatives from Lenihan Avenue and Byrne Avenue were co-opted on to the forum for Ballinacurra Weston. Their areas had been included in the regeneration proposals, so it was only right that they were represented.

After two years in existence, the forum committee was presented with a constitution, which stated that the current representatives would remain in place for five years.

The frustrations of committee members at the lack of answers and participation, coupled with the ongoing degeneration of Ballinacurra Weston, led to the resignation most of the original representatives. The few that remained said that they were hoping to get a transfer out of the area and didn't want to jeopardise their prospects. By 2010 the areas that originally formed the forum for Ballinacurra Weston were no longer represented.

Rather than re-examine its approach or create new structures, the Regeneration Agency's solution to this failed attempt at community engagement was to import a residents' representative to replace those who had left. A childless couple from outside the area was given a three-bed roomed house in the estate and the husband was co-opted onto the forum.

Those few residents that remain on the forum serve only one purpose: to prop up the illusion that the Agencies are engaging with the communities in a meaningful way. Of the six that remain on the Ballinacurra Weston forum, only three are actual residents, one was recently imported and none were directly elected by the community.

Real Community Participation

Out of the ashes of the forum arose the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance, comprised mostly of ex-forum committee members, the BWRA immediately set about getting a mandate from residents. This was done by distributing information leaflets, which explained the reason for our formation and included a membership form. Some completed forms were returned by hand, but most were collected during our first door-to-door consultation. Based on completed membership forms, the BWRA is now representative of 95% of households in the immediate regeneration area.

Our second door-to-door outing was to conduct a residents' survey of attitudes towards regeneration. The majority of the survey was conducted from June to September 2010 and completed over a number of days in February 2011. Although the questions were brief, it was not uncommon to spend an hour or more talking with residents. We learned a lot about resident's concerns, hopes and fears. People complained that they had received very little information from the Regeneration Agency about what was going on. Many were afraid to make formal complaints about their situation; however, this is something that is beginning to change.

By our count in June 2010 there were 236 occupied households in the designated regeneration area of Ballinacurra Weston (parts of). There were 179 respondents to the survey and 12 refusals. Every door was knocked on and those that were out when we called were re-visited. We asked each household to nominate one person to complete the survey. Thirteen questions in all were asked.

60% of those surveyed were in favour of the 'Master Plans' but when given the option of refurbishment over demolition nearly 74% chose refurbishment and those that favoured demolition made it clear that they wanted the same neighbours. 87% favoured the refurbishment of Our Lady's Grotto, yet in the 'Master Plans' it would be demolished.

This is a clear indication of the lack of consultation and community participation in developing the 'Master Plans' for the area. Not surprisingly, 90% felt that they hadn't been properly consulted about what they wanted in the 'Master Plans', 78% were unaware of the existence of the forum, the mechanism by which consultation was supposed to take place, and 81% were unaware of who represented them on the forum. A staggering 94% said that they did not trust the Southside Regeneration Agency.

Our survey highlights the serious and urgent need to overhaul the existing structures for community participation. The residents representatives that we met in Fatima Mansions told us that they had spent five years fighting with Brendan Kenny and Dublin City Council before the establishment of a local regeneration board that shared power with residents in making decisions on what happened in their area. If regeneration is to do *'exactly what is says on the tin'*, then similar structures need to be adopted in Limerick. There is no reason why such structures could not be piloted in Ballinacurra Weston and extended to other regeneration areas at a later date.

Survey of Resident's Attitudes to Regeneration

Q1. Are you in favour of the regeneration of Ballinacurra Weston as proposed in the 'Master Plans'?

a) Yes 60.8% b) No 19.2% c) Don't know 20%

Q2. Do you feel that you were properly consulted about what you wanted in the 'Master Plans'?

a) Yes 9.6% b) No 90.4%

Q3. Have you received enough information on the proposed regeneration of Ballinacurra Weston?

a) Yes 7.2% b) No 92.8%

Q4. Who do you feel should have been responsible for providing you with the information to enable you to make an informed choice? (multiple answer – can chose all four)

a) Limerick City Council b) Local City Councillors c) Regeneration Agency d) Others

a) 1.6% b) 1.6% c) 1.6% d) 1.6% a,b) 5.6% a,b,c) 20.8% a,b,c,d) 4% a,c) 35.2%

Q5. How do think conditions have changed in Ballinacurra Weston since the establishment of the Southside Regeneration Agency 3 years ago?

a) Worse 71.2% b) Better 10.4% c) No Change 18.4%

Q6. Do you feel safe and secure in Ballinacurra Weston?

a) Yes 33.6% b) No 66.4%

Q7. Do you trust the Southside Regeneration Agency?

a) Yes 5.6% b) No 94.4%

Q8. Were you aware of the residents' forum established by the regeneration Agency in 2008?

a) Yes 21.6% b) No 78.4%

Q9. Do you know which residents represent your area on the forum?

a) Yes 18.4% b) No 81.6%

Q10. Do you think residents' are treated fairly by the Council / Agency when been relocated?

a) Yes 4.8% b) No 95.2%

Q11. Are you happy to wait 10 – 15 years for regeneration?

a) Yes 5.6% b) No 94.4%

Q12. Would you prefer to have your home?

a) Demolished 26.4% b) Refurbished 73.6%

Q13. Would you like Our Lady's Grotto in Cercora / Clarina Avenue?

a) Demolished 0.5% b) Moved 12% c) Refurbished 87.5%

Conclusion

Our engagement with our community through our survey and door-to-door conversations has made it clear to us that the present structures for community participation are defunct.

The BWRA has attempted to engage with the Southside Regeneration Agency both directly and indirectly. Our direct approach met with a brick wall. First we were asked to change our name by dropping 'alliance' and replacing it with 'forum' and told that if we did we could replace the existing forum. We refused, as we felt that the existing structures were failing our community and returning to the forum would only be a waste of time. The BWRA had one 'formal' meeting with the Agency; our formal approach was ridiculed, with Mr. Kenny refusing to stick to the agenda and suggesting that we should fight it out in a field. This was independently minuted by the local CDP co-ordinator.

Indirectly, most of our officer board became the residents' representatives on an Agency-established committee to manage the proposed all-weather playing pitch for Ballinacurra Weston. The Agency had asked Our Lady's of Lourdes Umbrella Group to help form a management group to run the pitch when it is completed. The BWRA is represented on the Umbrella Group and the representatives three other groups are also members of the BWRA. It was members of the BWRA, not the forum that stepped forward for the committee, which also consists of members from a number of sporting organisations in the parish. The committee was consulted for several months by the Agency before submitting plans for the pitch to Limerick City Council. It was agreed by all that in order to make the pitch sustainable, changing rooms and toilet facilities would have to be provided for. The plans were submitted without notifying the committee and without the provision of facilities.

This so-called consultation where we are listened to, agreed with and ultimately ignored, further highlights the failure of existing structures and the need for change.

According to the Southside Regeneration Agency's accounts for 2008, €295,687 was spent on Social Inclusion Intervention Grants and €1,139,577 was spent on Social Inclusion Minor Capital Projects (Accounts for 2009 and 2010 have yet to be published). There is no evidence on the ground to suggest that this was money well spent. If residents were consulted properly and could participate in the decision-making there would certainly be more to show for it.

From our visits to Dublin we have seen first hand the benefits of real community participation. In Fatima Mansions, residents' representatives were elected by secret ballot onto a power-sharing local regeneration board that gave equal attention to both physical and social regeneration. Luckily for those residents, regeneration arrived at the right side of the property boom.

Dependency on the property market has meant that the areas targeted for regeneration in Limerick will not be finished as soon as was originally predicted. The *Fitzgerald Report* stated that it would take five-years (four years later and nothing built), the Regeneration Agency now says it will take fifteen years. A lot could be achieved in fifteen years where social regeneration is concerned.

For Limerick City and its environs the impact of regeneration has been largely negative; problems have been displaced instead of tackled and the areas targeted for regeneration are worse off now than they were before regeneration came to town. There needs to be a change of focus and a change in the way the Limerick Regeneration Agencies engages with the communities under its remit.

The BWRA will continue to work to rebuild community spirit through small projects such as community gardens and organising youth clubs. We urge our government to support us in our endeavours by giving residents the power to participate in a real and meaningful way.

Real community participation is the only way forward.

The Officer Board of the BWRA is made up as follows: Matt Collins (Chair), Noel Franklin (Vice-Chair) Martin Woodland (Secretary), Angela Collins (Treasurer) and Cathal McCarthy (PRO).

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Essential Reading for Regeneration Communities

Social Dynamite: A Study of Early School-Leavers

More insightful than the *Fitzgerald Report* and written 43 years ago by Fr. Liam Ryan, *Social Dynamite: A Study of Early School-Leavers*, argues for the urgent need for the social regeneration of a newly built Council estate "situated in the suburbs of one of our larger cities", which he calls *Parkland* to avoid adding to the "amused hostility" of "the better educated classes" towards the estate. The city in question is Limerick and the estate is Ballinacurra Weston.

Housing for Need not Greed

Housing for Need not Greed is a new publication from *Tenants First* that highlights the collapse of the PPP model for regeneration and demands a better equation for the building and regeneration of Communities. "The fear and quality of life is far worse than any time in the past. The conditions in the estates in Limerick and Dublin are now far worse than they were when regeneration was first mentioned"

The Real Guide to Regeneration for Communities

In 2006 *Tenant's First* produced *The Real Guide to Regeneration for Communities*. The aim of this document is to ensure that Communities are empowered to make a clear rational decision about the future of their own areas. That means to begin with making a decision about whether to say yes or no to the regeneration - degeneration agenda.

Regeneration: public good or private profit

Regeneration: public good or private profit, documents the trials and triumphs of the regeneration process at St Michael's Estate, Inchicore, Dublin, Ireland from the community perspective. Dr Bissett uncovers the mechanics of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as a model and names the deliberate exclusion of a Community.

Regeneration: Learnings & Insights

Produced by Dublin's *Canal Community Partnership*, *Regeneration: Learnings & Insights* is presented as "common-sense lessons on regeneration and development for local authorities and development consortiums". There is an address on page 4 by then Assistant Dublin City Manager, Brendan Kenny (now CEO of Limerick's Regeneration Agencies)

Things Can Be Different

In 2007, Dublin's *Fatima Groups United* commissioned the *Community Action Network (CAN)* to produce *Things Can Be Different*, which further examines best practice and learning's. There is plenty of advice for Communities when it comes to dealing with powerful bodies and state agencies and the types of bad behaviour to watch out for, such as "Suggesting communication through informal arrangements" (one on one's, friendly chats etc.)

Community Participation – Who Benefits?

This report from the UK explores whether policies to involve people in making decisions about their own communities are effective in building strong social networks. It address issues of interest to people at all levels of governance, from politicians and policy makers to those campaigning on local issues

The BWRA is affiliated to Limerick Regeneration Watch and all of the above publications, as well as BWRA newsletters and proposals, can be accessed at: www.limerickregeneration.org/publications.html





Attending the weekly BWRA committee meeting in CDP House, Clarina Court, were (L-R) Stephen Corbett, Matt Collins (Chair), Angela Collins (Treasurer), Cathal McCarthy (PRO), Biddy Collins, Anne Martin and Tony Butterfield. These meetings are open to all members.



(L-R) Stephen Corbett, Angela Collins, Kieran O'Donnell TD, Matt Collins and Cathal McCarthy. Kieran visited the area at the invitation of the BWRA and accompanied us on a walkabout of the area. He made representations on our behalf and within hours of his visit green sites that hadn't been tended to in two years were cut and houses that were boarded-up and causing serious problems for residents will now be knocked. Our thanks to Kieran for his assistance.



Some of the delegates attending a Tenants First / CAN meeting in Dublin on 8th June 2011. The BWRA are working with other representatives from areas in Dublin to develop a human rights approach to regeneration. The meetings are supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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