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**Tackling anti-social behaviour:  
international problems,  
indigenous solutions**

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## Foreword

The aim of the Centre for Housing Research is to facilitate the improved management of social and affordable housing through research, training and policy advice. To this end, an objective of the Centre is to develop links with academic institutions to advance the social housing research infrastructure. To encourage this, the Centre has established a postgraduate research grants scheme. The scheme is open to postgraduate students willing to conduct a piece of research in keeping with the Centre's general aims, with academic supervision and support. The Centre for Housing Research is very grateful to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for providing the funding for this scheme.

The scheme was launched in 2006 and Jacinta Cunneen was the first recipient, with supervision from Dr Bríd Quinn at the University of Limerick. The Centre for Housing Research would like to thank Jacinta and Bríd for their hard work on the chosen topic of 'tackling anti-social behaviour'. Comments provided by Liam O'Donovan, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, and Gerard Walker, National Economic and Social Forum, on an earlier draft of the paper were also very much appreciated. Noëlle Cotter in the Centre for Housing Research helped prepare the paper for publication.

This paper is an international literature review of what other selected countries are doing to tackle anti-social behaviour. It is hoped that it will be of interest and assistance to housing practitioners, and that it will help to further inform their approach to tackling this issue. It also complements the Centre's good practice guidelines 'Preventing and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour' (December 2003).

**David Silke**  
Director





## Executive Summary

Over the past decade anti-social behaviour (ASB) has become a growing problem in social housing estates in Ireland and the issue of community safety is now firmly on the local authority agenda. Recent housing policy has placed an increasing emphasis on the role of local authorities in improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of people living in these estates. This recent broadening of the housing function is underpinned by legislation in the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997* that enables local authorities to tackle ASB. The recent government policy document, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007), provides guidelines to local authorities for best practice in preventing ASB. It supports the notion of a multi-agency approach to developing sustainable communities where people want to live and enjoy a high quality of life.

While community safety has long been prioritised internationally, it is a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland. Local authorities, under their Housing Action Plans, include strategies for tackling anti-social behaviour and while they all act in accordance with the 1997 *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act*, each authority applies strategies relevant to the local context.

There is a dearth of research into tackling ASB in the Irish context. There are many statutory, community and voluntary agencies working together and separately to tackle the problem and there is evidence to suggest that improvements have been made. However, recent policy infers that the full potential of these efforts has not been reached. The aim of this paper is to identify the issues that arise when tackling ASB in social housing estates, to examine strategies used internationally and to extrapolate lessons for the Irish context.

The research for this paper was conducted by means of a literature review and case study analysis. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part deals with ASB in the Irish context. It discusses definitions of ASB and the management of ASB in social housing estates. The second part introduces international case studies from the UK, Scotland, Finland, the Netherlands, France and Australia. The actions taken against ASB in these case studies are explored against the main themes supported in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) which include sustainability, design and tenure, diversity, multi-culturalism and the 'life-cycle' and multi-disciplinary approaches. Lessons may be learned from these case studies that are relevant to the Irish context.

## Key Findings

### (a) Issues in tackling ASB: the Irish context

1. Definitions of ASB, while underpinned by legislation, are broad and apply mainly to high-level crime rather than anti-social behaviour.
2. This study highlights the fact that there is a dearth of research regarding the role of local authorities in tackling ASB in social housing estates. Data available in local authorities are not readily available in the public domain, making it difficult to contextualise any study.
3. The current structures and strategies employed to tackle ASB vary from one local authority to the next.
4. There is a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling ASB but no overarching community safety strategy in the majority of local authorities.
5. Performance indicators for tackling ASB are not generally established.
6. Current strategies employed, while having some impact, have not reached their full potential.

### (b) Issues in tackling ASB: main lessons from the international experience

There were two main lessons to be learned from the UK case study. (i) In the UK community safety partnerships are now established in all council areas. They are obliged by law to draw up action plans involving multi-disciplinary teams. Annual reports and regular audits are mandatory and this information is available to the public. (ii) There has been an extension of powers to social landlords and communities for tackling ASB in social housing estates including the use of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) and community sanctions.

In the Scottish case-study, a holistic, 'life-cycle' approach was taken to tackling ASB in 'problem' families. There were a number of lessons to be learned from this approach:

- (i) It is effective in dealing with ASB.
- (ii) It is labour intensive.
- (iii) Engaging a voluntary organisation as a lead-agent dealing with the family lightens the workload for local authorities.
- (iv) Provision must be made to allocate office space and houses to locate the project locally.
- (v) It is costly but cost-effective relative to other interventions.
- (vi) Relevant staff training is essential.
- (vii) Staff tenure is vital to the success of the project.

The Finnish case study presents the following lessons for the design and tenure of social housing estates:

- (i) The design of buildings and green space is important in designing-out anti-social behaviour.
- (ii) Eviction procedures are both costly and ineffective.
- (iii) Housing managers located in the housing estates have extended powers to report cases of anti-social behaviour to the housing company's lawyer to take a case to court.

- (iv) A monitoring system is important to track families once they take ownership of a house.
- (v) Housing advisors, located in the estates, have instilled a sense of responsibility in tenants.
- (vi) The drop in rental income because of housing too many needy and problem families and people with mental health problems is a cause of concern for the housing authority.
- (vii) This lack of funding has prevented the development of adequate transitional and long-term supported units.
- (viii) Allowing tenants to remain on in houses regardless of rising income is posing a challenge because of higher levels of immigration.
- (ix) Integration of immigrants in housing estates has been difficult because of immigrant clustering.
- (x) Refurbishment of buildings rather than demolition has been successful.
- (xi) Despite the government-backed development of the estates, it is still difficult to attract local businesses into the areas and people are still afraid to move into them because of the social problems that prevail.

The Dutch and French case studies were presented together to highlight the lessons that may be learned from implementing criminalisation and socialisation policies to help young people involved in anti-social behaviour and to lessen the feelings of insecurity experienced by older people living in the estates. The lessons that can be learned from these cases are as follows:

- (i) One of the biggest problems in the estates was the feeling of insecurity and people's perception of crime.
- (ii) Older people living in the estates were very fearful of young immigrant people.
- (iii) Poorly educated immigrant families represented the group most at risk of committing crime and being involved in ASB.
- (iv) There was a lot of suspicion directed at immigrants.
- (v) The proximity of local neighbourhood justice projects to the problem of anti-social behaviour was effective in getting speedy resolutions to problems and prevented over-use of the court system.

Finally the lessons in the Australian case study verify the findings in the previous case studies:

- (i) Sensitive allocation policies, probationary tenancies, good communication, positive press, liaison with tenants, multi-agency collaboration and mediation services all serve to counteract anti-social behaviour in social housing estates.
- (ii) Eviction poses a problem in most jurisdictions and begs the question of its effectiveness in tackling anti-social behaviour.
- (iii) Australian authorities are still not convinced that ASBOs are an effective tool for tackling anti-social behaviour.

## Recommendations

The research revealed a number of actions that could be taken to address issues associated with the implementation by local authorities of *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* and tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing estates in Ireland. These include the following:

### **Issue 1 Providing information to inform the debate on ASB and social housing in Ireland**

#### **Recommendations**

- 1.1 Implement compulsory reporting of ASB activities by local authorities to a central base (for example the Centre for Housing Research).
- 1.2 Provide resources to develop a database to reflect the Irish situation. Co-ordinated approaches would be useful such as inter-local authority projects or twinning with projects in other countries.
- 1.3 Conduct research of local authorities based on the main themes outlined in Norris (2003) *Preventing and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour: Good Practice in Housing Management, Guidelines for Local Authorities*, namely the management and monitoring of ASB, preventing ASB, combating ASB, customer care and personnel management and development.

### **Issue 2 Providing standardised record-taking in order to facilitate analysis of ASB data**

#### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Develop a standard user-friendly template to facilitate computerised records. Housing officers dealing with ASB should be consulted regarding the contents.
- 2.2 Establish a pilot project to test the template.

### **Issue 3 Providing performance indicators to measure the success of ASB strategies**

#### **Recommendations**

- 3.1 Run training workshops facilitated by practitioners involved in community safety programmes and with experience of using performance indicators to monitor ASB strategies.
- 3.2 Identify best practice and examine the use of performance indicators to measure outcomes of ASB strategies in other countries (e.g. the UK and Tilburg in the Netherlands).<sup>1</sup>

### **Issue 4 Building sustainable communities and providing a good quality of life for all tenants in social housing by expanding on the community safety partnership strategy for tackling ASB**

#### **Recommendations**

- 4.1 Fund pilot projects using the community safety partnership strategy.
- 4.2 Collate research, particularly from the UK experience.
- 4.3 Provide a forum for debate for local authorities (particularly how such safety partnerships could be rolled out).
- 4.4 Consider establishing community justice centres to alleviate the delay in court procedures and backlog.
- 4.5 Ensure that all policies are 'community-safety' proofed.

- 4.6 Ensure that all new buildings are ‘community-safety’ proofed.
- 4.7 Examine the role of voluntary and affordable-housing agents in tackling ASB.
- 4.8 Examine the effectiveness of eviction orders for tackling ASB.
- 4.9 Review the selection process for tenants based on income to encourage broader social integration.
- 4.10 Communicate findings with all local authorities.

## **Issue 5 Taking a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling ASB**

### **Recommendations**

- 5.1 Pilot a project such as the Dundee Families Project over three years and evaluate the process on an on-going basis. Themes should include:
  - 5.1.1 Management system (lead agencies and roles)
  - 5.1.2 Record keeping
  - 5.1.3 Cost of the service to local authorities
  - 5.1.4 Deployment of staff and replacement within local authority
  - 5.1.5 Re-locating staff to the local estate
  - 5.1.6 Tenure of staff (working week?)
  - 5.1.7 Provision of office accommodation
  - 5.1.8 Provision of houses (transitional, long-term, supported) for ‘problem’ families, people with disabilities and the homeless
  - 5.1.9 Training for staff in project management
  - 5.1.10 Impact on families and ASB
  - 5.1.11 Follow-up for families

## **Issue 6 Recognising diversity and multi-culturalism**

### **Recommendations**

- 6.1 Provide forecasts of immigration levels, origins, education backgrounds and job prospects in each local authority area.
- 6.2 Plan for an even distribution throughout local authority areas.
- 6.3 Have a strict registration process in place to avoid the problem of house swapping and multi-family usage and self-segregation.
- 6.4 Provide information locally on individual cultures.
- 6.5 Have strong communication channels between all tenants and local authority staff to alleviate feelings of insecurity and avoid mistrust.
- 6.6 Publish ‘good news’ and success stories.

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<sup>1</sup> See DoELG (2004) *Delivering Value for People, Service Indicators in Local Authorities* for Summary of Good Practice, p.22.

SECTION ONE

**Background to the Paper**

## 1.1 Rationale for the research

This issue paper has been commissioned by the Centre for Housing Research to examine strategies for tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in local authority housing estates in Ireland. Because of growing concern about anti-social behaviour in local authority housing estates, local authorities are now prioritising ASB strategies within the wider community-safety agenda. Valuable lessons can be learned from the international experience of tackling ASB. Their applicability in the Irish context will be examined in this paper.

## 1.2 Introduction

There is a growing problem with anti-social behaviour across Europe, according to the results of a 2006 pan-European survey carried out by the Institute of Crime Science at University College London; in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. Results from this research show that in France there is a serious problem with juvenile delinquency, as evidenced in the suburban riots of 2005. There is a lesser problem in Germany where youth violence is associated with neo-Nazi skinheads, immigrant gangs and football hooliganism while street violence, induced by alcohol or drugs, is rare. Youth misbehaviour has increased in Spain. This has led to changes in the existing Criminal Responsibility of Minors Law in order to deal with specific offences and sentences for violence.

International approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour are varied (Institute of Crime Science, 2006). In France there is no standard definition of anti-social behaviour and no action can be taken by the police or local authority unless it constitutes a crime. The situation is similar in Germany but local government, which has responsibility for the police force, takes a lead in addressing anti-social behaviour type offences. In the Netherlands, the government has implemented specific measures for penalising anti-social behaviour under administrative rather than criminal law.

Similarly, in Ireland neither crime nor anti-social behaviour are new phenomena. However, there is a perception (as reflected, for example, in the media) that they are becoming more prevalent. Newspaper headings such as 'Levels of Violent Crime and Drug Offences increased in 2006' (Downes, *Irish Times* 23 Jan 2007:3) fuel the debate. Figures released in January 2007 by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) lend substance to this statement. They reveal for example that headline or main offences for 2006 were up 1.4 per cent compared with 2005, the number of assaults causing harm also increased by 6.9 per cent and robbery from the person was up almost 10 per cent (Downes:2007).

The current affairs programme Prime Time on RTÉ 1, 6 February 2007, drew attention to recent research conducted in 2005 by the University of Tilburg in Amsterdam, which showed that Ireland rated highest in the EU for crime (van Dijk et al, 2007)<sup>2</sup>. Michael Mulcahy (Fianna Fáil TD) argued on the programme that the rise in detection rates might account for the increase in the figures. However, in response, local community activists interviewed counter-argued that the figures could be even higher as many cases of anti-social behaviour go unreported because of fear of retaliation and intimidation. But whether perceived or actual, crime and anti-social behaviour have become an issue for local authorities in Ireland.

Recent measures introduced by the Irish government to curb anti-social behaviour such as the *Children Act 2001*, *Criminal Justice Act 2006* and *Anti-Social Behaviour Orders* (January and March 2007), lend credence to the perception that there is a problem with crime and anti-social behaviour in Ireland. Multi-disciplinary preventative approaches to the problem, such as community policing and community safety programmes, are now underpinned by legislative changes. These allow for the reformulation and extension of the tasks and legal responsibilities of local authorities and statutory area-based partnerships to deal with anti-social behaviour.

This issue paper examines the implications for local authorities of tackling anti-social behaviour in Ireland in relation to current criminal justice and housing legislation. The study will be provided against the backdrop of the government policy statement *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) which supports an integrated approach to providing programmes in communities and making them places where people are happy to live.

### 1.3 Anti-social behaviour: theoretical perspectives

Since the 1990s a plethora of legislation has been put in place in response to the growing concern regarding ASB. Some authors argue that this legislation serves to reinforce the original purpose of social housing, namely to change the behaviour of the poor and shape their conduct towards more middle-class norms, as well as fulfilling the state's responsibility of providing houses for them (Ravetz, 2001). According to Card (2006:48-9) and Norris and Murray (2004), social housing has become a 'spatial segregation' of the marginalised and the 'tenure of last resort' as more and more the stock of social housing has become residualised. Social housing is identified with the socially excluded, deviants, the unemployed and those involved in crime and ASB. Consequently, these authors suggest that this cycle of deviant behaviour has made the socially excluded the target for 'disciplinary and controlling housing management'.

Brown (2004) in Atkinson (2006:101) agrees, stating that social housing has become 'a site for crime control because it has become a residual tenure for marginalised groups' who in turn can be 'managed'. He argues:

*Social housing has in other words, become both a site (estates and schemes) and process (socio-legal contracts of tenure) through which an urban poor are first concentrated, then managed and subsequently disciplined in line with the normative expectations of wider society given voice by a hostile, hysterical and sensationalist media (Brown, 2004:101).*

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2 This was a survey conducted for the EU ICS (International Crime Survey in the EU) by a European consortium among inhabitants of the EU about their experiences with crime and law enforcement. The survey was carried out in the 15 older member states of the Union plus Poland, Hungary and Estonia. The types of crimes included cover the bulk of 'common crimes' such as theft, burglary, robbery and assault (See Van Dijk et al (2007)).



Assessment of tenants has always been a feature of social housing management practice whereby tenants are labelled as ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’, a process used to ration access to houses by housing officers and elected councillors. This reinforces the stigmatisation they already experience (Haworth and Manzi, 1999; Card, 2006).

Indeed the debate on ASB has blurred the lines between criminal and non-criminal law (Burney, 2005). Brown (2004:207) argues that the social construct of ASB has put social housing landlords to the forefront of social control and emphasises the necessity to have clear demarcation lines between the responsibility of the police (as the ultimate authority in relation to law and order) and social housing landlords.<sup>3</sup> These developments have implications for the management of social housing and any multi-agency approach.

#### 1.4 Definitions of anti-social behaviour (ASB)

There are difficulties in formulating a universal understanding and explanation of anti-social behaviour because of different historical, cultural, legal and political traditions (Nelken, 2002; Burney, 2005). This complexity has contrived against formulating a common model for tackling anti-social behaviour. Hughes (2007:50) observes that comparative analysis of transnational trends in tackling anti-social behaviour could be problematic not least because of the vocabulary used to translate problems of ‘crime reduction’, ‘community safety’, ‘social harm’ and ‘public security’ in different European societies and regions. Anti-social behaviour, Carr and Cowen (2006:57) suggest, is a multivariate concept. It incorporates ‘diverse low and high-level deviant behaviours with a set of unconnected ideas about risk, crime and management underpinning it’. In a way, they argue, ASB has been left undefined and obscure and this obscurity is a ‘potent tool of governance’ (Cowen and McDermont, 2006). Obscurity allows a wide range of behaviours to be defined as ASB and can widen the net of social control.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that models in the UK, for instance, have been influenced by other Anglo-Saxon countries such as America, Australia and New Zealand (Jones and Newburn, 2002). Member states of the European Union are guided by documents published by the European Commission such as *The prevention of crime in the European Union – Reflections on common guidelines and proposals for Community financial support*. This policy statement provides a definition of crime to include anti-social behaviour. The Commission communication defines crime as ‘punishable conduct by individuals and by spontaneous associations of persons’ and covers separate types of crime such as those outlined in national criminal laws, for example homicide, rape and certain illegal trafficking; less serious offences such as theft, handling stolen goods, acts of violence, fraud, embezzlement; violence and ASB (Section 2.2.1).

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<sup>3</sup> In the UK, housing associations are independent, not-for-profit organisations that are registered with the English Housing Corporation, the Welsh Assembly Government Housing Directorate and Communities Scotland. Registered associations are known as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The housing associations in England are regulated by the Housing Corporation and audited by the National Audit Office which reports to Parliament.

While no two countries have the same definition of ASB, the most commonly cited actions include harassment, alarm or distress to individuals not of the same household that require intervention from the relevant authority (Flint, 2006:5). Examples of ASB in the UK were outlined by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (2000, para 1.4) and the *Home Office White Paper on ASB* (2003b, para 1.6) and the Home Office's one-day count of ASB on 10 September 2003. These examples have common themes such as noise, intimidation and harassment, graffiti and vandalism, litter/rubbish and nuisance from vehicles, including illegal parking and abandonment. The SEU also included uncontrolled pets and the use and selling of drugs while the *Home Office One Day Count* (2003a) revealed incidences of street drinking and begging.

In Ireland, anti-social behaviour is addressed in the *Housing Act 1997* and stipulates the use and sale of drugs (under the *Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977* and 1984) and any behaviour 'which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the *Housing Acts (1966 and 1997)*'. The notion of 'Estate Management', advocating the involvement of tenants in the management of the estates and tackling ASB, was introduced as early as 1985 when the Department of the Environment established the Remedial Works Scheme for the refurbishment of unpopular housing estates.

More detailed policies were outlined in the 1991 paper *A Plan for Social Housing, the First Report* and *Second Report* of the Housing Management Group in 1996 and 1998, the latter which focused on implementing best practice, establishing performance indicators in housing and a strategic approach to housing management. Through these policy statements, tenant participation complements the actions of local authorities in counteracting anti-social behaviour. The *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997* summarises the functions of estate management to include:

- a) the securing or promotion of the interests of any tenants, lessees, owners or occupiers, whether individually or generally, in the enjoyment of any house, building or land provided by a housing authority under the *Housing Acts 1966 to 1997*
- b) the avoidance, prevention or abatement of anti-social behaviour in any housing estate in which is situated a house provided by a housing authority under the *Housing Acts 1966 to 1997*.

These measures are supplemented by the *Criminal Justice Act 2006* that expands on the definition of anti-social behaviour to include:

Any behaviour by a person including damage to or defacement of property, that causes or, in all the circumstances, is likely to cause to one or more persons not of the same household as the person:

- (i) Harassment
- (ii) Significant or persistent alarm, distress, fear or intimidation, or
- (iii) Significant or persistent impairment of their use or enjoyment of their home.

However, these lesser ASB activities, including noise, can represent a breach of the tenancy agreement. If legal action is deemed necessary then proceedings can be initiated under *Section 62 of the Housing Act 1966*.

Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. in its strategic plan, *Safer Ballymun: A community safety strategy 2005-2007* (p.38), presented a comprehensive list of minor offences that heighten feelings of insecurity and impact negatively on the quality of life of tenants in housing estates. This list was compiled following consultation with the local community. It includes:

- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- Rowdy behaviour especially at night
- Under-age drinking
- Solvent abuse
- Playing football in unsuitable locations
- Offensive behaviour such as swearing, spitting or verbal abuse
- Riding motorbikes thoughtlessly or dangerously
- Setting out to intimidate residents or passers-by
- Congregating on landings or stairwells

In conclusion, defining ASB is the first issue that arises for local authorities when developing strategies to tackle the problem of ASB in social housing estates. There are several theories presented here that need consideration by local authorities. The reason for developing strategies in the first place must be clearly understood. It is important at the outset that there is a clear understanding of what constitutes ASB in the local context. It is not unusual to see crime and ASB coupled as one entity. From the point of view of developing ASB strategies, this is not practical. Crime, which involves serious offences, is the responsibility of the Gardaí and the justice system. However, more minor offences such as those outlined in the Ballymun safety strategy can be tackled through a multi-agency approach that involves local authorities, the Gardaí and community groups as they may not carry criminal sanctions or need to be progressed through the court system.

Once it has been established that a problem of ASB exists, the aims, objectives and intended planned outcomes of any strategy must be clear. For example, will the ASB strategies involve preventative or interventionist measures, or both? Preventative strategies include:

- Ensuring that any new housing development maximises the potential for natural surveillance
- Planning allocation of tenancies to allow for good estate management
- Providing pre-tenancy training and encouraging tenant participation in estate management

Interventionist strategies aim to prevent the problem of ASB arising in the first place by putting in place supports for individuals and families at risk of offending.

Research shows that social housing tenants are predominantly marginalised and socially excluded. Current government housing policy in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) supports intervention and suggests a 'life-cycle' approach for counteracting social exclusion and preventing ASB (this approach will be explained further in the next section). Taking account of this policy direction, therefore, it is important that local authorities have a clear understanding of the following issues in relation to ASB in order to put in place appropriate strategies locally:

- What is meant by ASB?
- What are the underlying causes of ASB?
- Who are the main offenders?
- What strategies are required to tackle ASB?
- Who has the authority to affect the strategies?
- Will a single or multi-disciplinary approach be taken?

There is a dearth of research into ASB in social housing estates in Ireland. Therefore in order to inform the debate in the Irish context these issues will be examined further in this paper through international case studies.

## 1.5 Layout of paper

This issue paper provides a baseline study of the issues associated with the implementation of ASB strategies in social housing estates by local authorities in Ireland. The remainder of the paper is divided into an Irish and international perspective of social housing and ASB.

In Section Two ASB will be contextualised in the Irish situation. Firstly, the historical background to social housing in Ireland and the growth of ASB is presented. Secondly, housing policy with relevance to ASB is outlined. Thirdly, current local authority ASB initiatives are presented.

In Section Three international case studies from the UK, Scotland, Finland, the Netherlands, France and Australia are introduced in order to examine how ASB is tackled in these countries and to identify strategies that might be relevant in the Irish context.

In Section Four any gaps between the Irish and international strategies will be identified and the policy implications for local authorities in Ireland of adopting successful international strategies will be discussed. These strategies will reflect the key themes in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* that will be discussed in the next section.



SECTION TWO

**Social housing and the management  
of anti-social behaviour in Ireland**

## 2.1 Introduction

In this section a brief history of social housing in Ireland is summarised in order to put the study in context, the reasons for the rise in anti-social behaviour is addressed and the way in which it is managed by local authorities is outlined.

## 2.2 Provision of social housing

Social housing in Ireland is predominantly provided by local authorities and occupied by lower-income groups, and some local authority estates are designated disadvantaged. A community where there is joblessness, poor health, low education levels and social exclusion is considered a disadvantaged community. Research shows that there is a correlation between disadvantage and anti-social behaviour (Carroll et al, 2007; Mulcahy et al, 2005; National Crime Council, 2003).

There is a growing problem of crime and anti-social behaviour in social housing estates in Ireland. Several reasons have been cited for this phenomenon including the original design of the estates (*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, 2007). However, Norris (2003) suggests that residualisation in social housing may be a contributing factor. Residualisation occurs when those who can afford to leave social housing estates and buy houses elsewhere do so, leaving those from the lower socio-economic groups, the unemployed and uneducated – in other words the ‘socially disadvantaged’ – living in these estates. The residualisation of social housing estates has evolved over the past three decades, as the following brief history of social housing demonstrates.

## 2.3 Anti-social behaviour and social housing

In Ireland, social housing has been provided by the Irish government through local authorities since the late nineteenth century. The 1929 *Housing Act* provided the legislative basis for a major housing expansion, particularly in urban areas. In 1963 a major overhaul of social housing was undertaken in Dublin as a result of accidents due to bad housing conditions (Daly, 2001). In 1964 a Government White Paper on housing indicated that poor housing conditions were widespread throughout the country. Over the following ten years the social housing programme was expanded and social housing output reached unprecedented levels. The large amount of social housing provided from the 1960s to the 1980s

was to be welcomed in that less well-off families were accommodated, 'rents were low, security of tenure was high and the maintenance service was free' (Daly, 2001:126).

Eventually, however, as people became more affluent they moved from social housing into owner-occupation, an option provided by the local authorities. Consequently, social housing was regarded as 'downmarket' as it became increasingly associated with the poor and marginalised both in fact and public perception (Daly, 2001:127). During the 1970s, due to an oil crisis, unemployment soared in Ireland. At the same time family patterns changed with the growth in lone parenthood. Social housing became, according to Daly (2001:127), 'the place to accommodate these vulnerable groups'.

While social housing provided good physical housing conditions, social conditions in some of the estates worsened. Authors suggest that the exodus of families with a good livelihood, the inflow of marginalised people (people on low incomes, unemployed and with low levels of education), and the rapid turnover of tenants all impacted in various ways on issues related to crime and disorder (Power 1997:283-4 in Mulcahy and Mahony, 2005:9; Fahey, 1999). Some local authority estates acquired a reputation for violence, vandalism and general social dislocation (Daly, 2001:127), helped in no small way by the inflow of heroin particularly in urban areas.

These issues were reported at length by the media which, according to Fahey (1999), contributed to the reputation of the local authority sector being tarnished despite the fact that many of the problems, e.g. unemployment and changing family structures, were outside their control. Critics of the way in which local authorities managed the social housing programmes argue that a lot of the problems could have been avoided if the local authorities had been willing to take account of them and made the necessary adjustments for the new demands presenting in the estates. A study carried out by McCafferty as early as 1999 on social housing in Limerick found that poor access to services, estate maintenance and the general condition of housing were issues for residents even at that time.

## **2.4 Housing policy and the management of anti-social behaviour**

It was evident from the problems arising that a different approach to managing social housing estates was required. This new approach required innovative housing policy and legislation. Consequently in the 1990s a new form of administration known as estate management was introduced. This new departure in the management of social housing included consultation with tenants. Development projects were launched involving local authority and community agencies as well as tenants, and these activities were considered vital for achieving sustainable development. The use of this proactive approach had implications for the consultation process between local authorities and tenants (Mulcahy and O'Mahony, 2005:16) and was an indication of future policy direction that involved a multi-disciplinary approach to the management of social housing estates.

Other social housing policy changes were introduced in *A Plan for Social Housing* (1991) whereby private non-profit housing agencies or social landlords (for example Respond)<sup>4</sup> could provide social housing. This departure has implications

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<sup>4</sup> Respond was established in 1982 as a Company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and in 1984 were approved by the DoE as a Housing Association.



for future ASB strategies in relation to where the authority for tackling ASB is vested. The *National Development Plan 2000-2006* outlined a major social housing programme and in 2001 the RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) Programme was introduced.

The RAPID Programme is a Government initiative which targets forty-six of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. It aims to ensure that priority attention is given to these areas by focusing state resources available under the *National Development Plan*. It also requires Government departments and state agencies to bring about better co-ordination and closer integration of the delivery of services to these estates. These new departures tied in closely with the revised *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* (NAPS) published in 2002 and were reiterated in the *National Development Plan 2007-2013* and *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*.

In 2007 the Government published the *Housing Policy Framework: Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*. This comprehensive policy document presents a vision for housing in Ireland in the twenty-first century. Consideration of the housing policy directions as presented in this document must be considered by local authorities when implementing any ASB strategies in the future. Hence, the international case studies of ASB strategies, presented later in this paper, will take these criteria into account when considering suitability in the Irish context. For that reason a more detailed explanation of the guiding principles as outlined in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* is presented below. In order to ensure that these principles are incorporated into social housing policy, local authorities will be required to:

- Incorporate a holistic approach to delivering homes and developing sustainable communities
- Review the design of, and tenure in, the estates, bearing in mind social segregation
- Reflect the diversity in housing need for today's multi-cultural society
- Adopt a 'life-cycle' approach
- Employ multi-agency management approaches

Previously, social housing policy endeavoured to 'design out' anti-social behaviour. Now there is a realisation that a more holistic approach is required to take account not only of the 'bricks and mortar' aspect of provision but also of social inclusion issues. This new direction incorporated into *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) ties in with the *National Development Plan 2007-2013 Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All*, which provides the resources for the required investment, and the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* (NAPSinclusion), which focuses particularly on social inclusion issues.

Support from the social partners in *Towards 2016* for this holistic approach to providing social housing further underpins the policy objectives. The focus in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, as the title suggests, is on 'sustainable' communities. Sustainable communities are defined as:

*... places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. (Bristol Accord 2005 in Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities, 2007: 21)*

All new proposals for social housing will need to be ‘sustainable-community proofed’. Building on recommendations from previous reports (NESC 2004 and NESC 2005), housing policy must take these criteria into consideration to include environmental, social, spatial and community-oriented planning.

#### **Reviewing the design and tenure of social housing estates**

Provision of high-quality, mixed tenure is proposed and state funding will be made available to provide for this delivery. To supplement this initiative, the renewal and maintenance of current stock will be prioritised. Stronger supports will be available to local authorities to deal with anti-social behaviour. These supports will be provided through increased statutory powers and funding for estate-specific projects. A ‘Sustainable Communities Fund’ will be established to provide funding for such projects.

*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* promotes an integrated approach across policy areas to tackle current social and economic problems. Building on Part V of the *Planning and Development Acts* 2000 and 2006, it advocates the provision of integrated communities by local authorities where individuals and families have a wider choice of housing, thus giving them a greater sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability. The sustainable neighbourhood allows for the integration of different income groups by providing an appropriate housing mix, in terms of tenure, adaptation of special needs and community supports. The development of Housing Action Plans in local authorities will be put on a statutory basis, highlighting the importance of good project management and support for housing practitioners implementing the sustainable communities programme.

*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* sets out guidelines for the establishment of regeneration projects for the renewal of social housing estates. They will be developed in association with the County/City Development Boards and covered by the Sustainable Communities Fund (which was €8 million in 2007). All regeneration projects will require a master plan of action and the key stakeholders will have access to relevant research conducted by the Centre for Housing Research. For larger projects, it is proposed that a dedicated regeneration agency will be established to drive the regeneration process. It will be a corporate body under Local Government legislation with a specific term of office. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) will fund this agency for the duration of the regeneration project. The re-constituted National Building Agency will provide technical support in the planning and design of projects and will be available to all project teams.

Reflecting the diversity in housing need for today’s multi-cultural society Planning for future housing must reflect diversity in housing need for today’s multi-cultural society in order to maintain sustainable communities. Housing must be well integrated and accessible, with supporting services such as schools, community facilities and amenities. Through the provision of good-quality, affordable housing the life chances of the more vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society will be improved. There is a growing migrant population in Ireland (Mac Éinrí, 2007), which has implications for housing policy.

#### **Adopting a ‘life-cycle’ approach**

*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* introduces the ‘life-cycle’ philosophy that addresses the importance of taking each individual’s immediate needs in a ‘life-cycle’ context. This ties in with *Towards 2016* which suggests a holistic approach to fulfilling people’s needs as they move through significant life-cycle phases such as childhood, working age, older people, and taking full account of people with disabilities. This ‘life-cycle’ approach requires the support of multi-disciplinary teams working together to provide socially inclusive action plans for people in the social housing sector.

In order to take 'life-cycle' needs into consideration and to break cycles of disadvantage and dependency, connections must be made with social services such as health, education, and employment initiatives. Transport is also an important issue, as well as childcare facilities. This focused approach will work towards eliminating long-term problems that have existed in communities experiencing disadvantage and may require changes to current legislation in some areas.

#### **Employing multi-agency management approaches**

In building sustainable communities, multi-disciplinary approaches are required across policy areas in order to overcome present-day social and economic challenges. To deliver on these policies, an effective partnership is required between the local authority and service providers. These agencies will need to find ways of co-ordinating interventions in a personalised and effective way. However, commitment is also required from individuals to engage in the process if they wish to improve their situation and take advantage of their opportunities in life. This type of engagement is at the heart of social inclusion policies.

In conclusion, this section dealt with housing policy and legislation in relation to ASB. The plethora of reports and policy documents pertaining to housing policy over the past decade indicates the significance of the issue. In particular these reports indicate that social housing, as currently provided, is not contributing to sustainable communities where people can live in quality housing and enjoy a good quality of life. Consequently there is a paradigm shift away from the 'bricks-and-mortar' only provision of social housing to a more holistic approach that incorporates the 'life-cycle' philosophy. This is a socially inclusive approach taking the individual's and household's circumstances into consideration at important times of their lives such as childhood, working life and old age as well as making provision for people with disabilities. In this way people's life chances are improved and, provided they are willing and able to take the opportunities presented, they can break out of the socially excluded net.

This 'life-cycle' approach requires multi-disciplinary teamwork and individual or household specific action plans. In some instances it might also require additional statutory powers for local authorities, and provision is made for an enactment of such powers in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*. It is envisaged that this multi-faceted approach to building sustainable communities will guide policies for tackling the problem of anti-social behaviour in social housing estates.

A comparison of Irish housing policy and legislation with international cases, presented later in this issue paper, reveals strong anecdotal evidence that there is adequate housing policy and legislation in place in Ireland to tackle ASB in social housing estates. However, these policies present challenges to local authorities who have suffered staff shortages in the recent past. They also question the capacity of local authorities to implement these new measures (Norris, 2005:2).

## 2.5 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in Ireland

It is acknowledged that there are many statutory and community agencies working in social housing estates to prevent ASB, including the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department Health and Children, the Department of Education and Science (DES) and programmes such as RAPID, Area-Based Partnerships, Community Development Projects and Youth Projects. Lead-agencies that are directly involved in tackling anti-social behaviour (rather than social inclusion)<sup>5</sup> are identified in this issue paper. These include the local authorities, the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Services, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Social Welfare Services. This section will briefly outline initiatives undertaken by these agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. A more detailed account is provided in Appendix 1.

### Local Authorities

Local authorities currently employ several measures to tackle ASB. Five-year Housing Action Plans assist in identifying priority needs and provide a coherent and co-ordinated response across all housing services. Incorporated into these plans are ASB strategies. All local authorities have staff with responsibility for dealing with ASB (for example Tenancy Enforcement Officers and Welfare Officers) who are located in the housing section. Training courses are provided for local authority staff for dealing with ASB and estate management. Records are kept of all complaints made and annual reports are compiled for the DoEHLG.

Estate management is a key strategy for tackling ASB. It is a multi-agency approach whereby tenants from the estates work with the local authority to identify the ASB problems and to reach solutions. Pre-tenancy courses are provided for tenants prior to signing tenancy agreements. The tenancy agreements list behaviours or actions considered ASB by the local authority. Where serious problems persist, Exclusion Orders give the local authority the power to recover possession of a rented property by eviction. They can be used on one or more members of a household engaged in ASB. Regeneration of estates takes place where a combination of problems including bad design, poor social mix and tenure and a high level of ASB require radical action. Pro-active strategies used by local authorities include Community Safety Partnerships which work to reduce the level of ASB and diminish the fear of crime in communities.

### The Garda Síochána

There are a number of ASB initiatives that come under the remit of the Gardaí. Community initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert have been operating for a number of years. Joint Policing Committees provide a forum for consultation with local authorities on ASB problems in social housing estates. Community policing involves members of the community in crime prevention. CCTVs are used in ASB 'black-spots' to prevent local crime and vandalism.

The Gardaí have a lead role in youth justice. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme is a very effective initiative in tackling ASB in young offenders. The offender is given the opportunity to make amends outside of the court system. ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) empower the Gardaí to apply to the courts for an order prohibiting ASB. Adult Cautioning came into effect in 2006 and applies to persons over 18 years of age but no study of its impact is yet available.

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<sup>5</sup> This point was raised by the National Crime Council in *Tackling the Underlying Causes of Crime, A Partnership Approach* (2002), in which it was argued that the crime prevention agenda would sit more comfortably with some partnership arrangements more than others.

### **The Probation and Welfare Services (PWS)**

The work of the PWS in the courts and community includes family conferencing and the assessment and supervision of offenders. It includes working with families to help the re-integration of prisoners into the community.

### **Adult Mediation Services**

There are two restorative justice schemes operating in Ireland as adult mediation services. Restorative justice allows the offender to admit guilt and make reparation for an injustice done either to the individual directly or to the community.

### **Health Service Executive (HSE) and Social Welfare Services**

The HSE administers a range of payments alongside the supports provided by the Social Welfare Service. Other services include Child Care and Family Support Services, Child Health, and Psychological Services. Together with the local authority, the HSE provides houses for the homeless.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

It is clear from this brief summary that statutory and community agencies have been given a clear role and a range of defined strategies to tackle ASB. These are having an impact but increased multi-agency collaboration would increase that impact. *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* recommends a multi-disciplinary team employing the 'life-cycle' approach to enable tenants living in social housing estates to enjoy a good quality of life. Applying this approach, lead agencies such as the local authorities, the Gardaí and Probation and Welfare Services, the HSE and Social Welfare Services provide for the needs of children, working people, the elderly and disabled persons.

Many agencies working in social housing estates are directly or indirectly involved in initiatives to prevent ASB in Ireland. These initiatives compare favourably with those in other countries as the case studies presented later in this paper will prove. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the quality of life in these communities has improved as a result of these interventions. However, recent housing policy statements indicate that these initiatives have not been exploited to their full potential. To improve this situation and identify the gaps in provision, lessons can be learned from the international experience.

SECTION THREE

**International perspectives  
on anti-social behaviour**

### 3.1 Introduction

In this section, international case studies designed to tackle anti-social behaviour in social housing will be examined against the main underlying themes in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, namely sustainability, design and tenure, diversity in housing need and the multi-culture society, incorporating the 'life-cycle' approach and employing multi-disciplinary teams. The case studies that follow will be examined against these themes in order to investigate what impact incorporating such strategies has on ASB and what, if any, lessons may be learned for the Irish context.

In order to contextualise the European case studies presented below, a short background to social housing in Europe is presented. This exercise is useful because it demonstrates similar trends in the growth of anti-social behaviour in social housing estates in Ireland with those in Europe.

### 3.2 Social housing estates: the European context

The origin of social housing in Europe may be traced as far back as the poor housing situation experienced by the working classes at the turn of the twentieth century (Dekker et al, 2005). But the growth in social housing came after the Second World War when a great number of people in Europe were homeless following the destruction of vast numbers of houses in the war. The situation was fuelled by the population growth in the early post-war years. Conditions were improved with the provision of welfare services by the state. In particular, large tower blocks were built in the UK, France, Sweden and the Netherlands throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Murie et al, 2003). In 2003 ten per cent of the population in Western European countries lived in social housing (Dekker et al, 2005).

Initially buildings in large housing estates in Europe seemed to conform to similar designs – medium to high-rise apartment blocks, sometimes interspersed with single-family dwellings (Dekker et al, 2005:2). These designs were well received because they allowed for open green spaces and for 'socially cohesive' communities (Dekker et al, 2005). Studies made on these communities, however, revealed that initially it was not those on low incomes who were housed in these estates but those who could afford to buy them (Konrád and Szelényi, 1969 in Dekker et al, 2005:3). As time went by, larger housing estates were built mainly on the periphery of cities and the market for this type of property dropped. Consequently, those with less choice as to where they could live, economically and socially, were allocated to these estates, resulting in some of these estates being problematic from the start (Dekker et al, 2005).

Changes in the economic, social and political culture in Europe since the late twentieth century have brought into question the development of the large housing estates. Many of them have continued to function well while others are more problematic. In some cases where the supply of housing has met demand, housing shortages have been eliminated and the housing estates are surplus to requirements. Many of these estates now experience a combination of the problems outlined in Dekker et al (2005:4-5)<sup>6</sup> such as:

- derelict buildings, with litter and rubbish in open spaces
- spatially concentrated unemployment and declining job opportunities
- a concentration of families on low incomes
- voids and families moving to more attractive estates
- a visible rise in anti-social behaviour (crime, disorder, vandalism, drugs, alcoholism and loitering)
- social conflict
- lack of social cohesion and community participation
- deterioration of housing and management services
- deterioration of local private and public services
- poor standards of education particularly amongst poor families and minority ethnic groups

(Dekker et al, 2005:4-5)

However, some authors cited in Dekker suggest that large housing estates have not outlived their usefulness and that they have an important part to play in promoting sustainable development including open green spaces, links to public transport and the development of green heating and energy systems (ibid:5). Despite this potential, however, they remain places for low-income families and low interest from private investors. This has led, in some cases, to demolition of estates because of needing permanent financial support from the public service. In other cases, since the late 1990s, urban renewal and restructuring has taken place with a view to making these estates more mixed with regard to housing tenure. Studies have shown that with collaborative effort, including 'central government, relevant ministries, regional government, local government, housing associations, private companies, residents' associations, and individual residents', it is possible to improve the sustainability of these estates (Dekker et al, 2005:6).

In conclusion, it may be seen from this brief historical account of the development of social housing in Europe, and its problems, that trends in Ireland are consistent with those in Europe.

### 3.3 Tackling anti-social behaviour: international case studies

In the following section brief international case studies will be presented. These case studies were selected on the basis that they are consistent with the underlying themes of *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* as outlined above. Authors agree that policy for tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing estates must take the cultural, political and economic situation in that country into consideration (Hughes, 2007:22). In other words it will not necessarily be the case that an

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<sup>6</sup> Power and Tunstall (1995); Wacquant (1996); Hall (1997); Power (1997); Evans (1998); Social Exclusion Unit (1998); Taylor (1998); Burrows and Rhodes (1999); Musterd et al (1999); Cars (2000); Costa Pinho (2000); Kearns et al (2000); Anderson (2001); Murie et al (2003).



anti-social behaviour strategy successful in one country will prove likewise in another. Bearing this in mind, and indicating in as much as possible the context of the initiatives, six international case studies have been selected for examination including the United Kingdom, Scotland, Finland, France, the Netherlands and Australia.

### 3.3.1 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in the UK<sup>7</sup>

Government in the UK is placing an increasing emphasis on the level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public housing estates and on strategies for tackling it. This shift was first evident in the 1996 *Housing Act*, which contained a number of measures that directly addressed the issue of ASB. This act strengthened local authorities' tools for tackling ASB by widening the grounds for possession, introducing new forms of tenancy such as the 'introductory tenancy', and providing independent injunction powers. The UK case study is a good example of the multi-disciplinary approach to tackling ASB.

The 1998 *Crime and Disorder Act* first introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) which at that time could be applied for by either the police or local authorities. The 2002 *Police Reform Act* strengthened ASBO provisions, through the introduction of an interim ASBO, and also permitted registered social landlords to apply for them.<sup>8</sup> In 2003 further legislation such as the *Anti-Social Behaviour Act* introduced a raft of measures designed to tackle a range of ASB (Hunter, 2006:138). Through the formation of the Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU), publication of the White Paper, *Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour* (2003) and the *Anti-Social Behaviour Act* (2003) measures for tackling ASB in the UK are now well-established.

With the introduction of new forms of public management in the UK it is more important than ever to ensure that any actions taken to tackle ASB are legal and are applied consistently by all agencies involved. In order to tackle ASB, local authorities employ both legal and non-legal measures that are used together or individually. ASB strategies are underpinned by legislation and are well-monitored and evaluated. They include tenancy agreements, injunctions, ASBOs, mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Community Safety Partnerships.

#### Tenancy agreements

Legislation is used to limit individual behaviour and provide sanctions if either party is engaged in excessive behaviour. According to Lister (2006:126), the purpose of legislation in tackling ASB is twofold: (i) to set boundaries within which the relationship between landlord and tenant should function, and (ii) to provide each party with a set of rights and responsibilities that operate within the relationship. The first major legislative changes in the UK to directly address ASB were made under the 1996 *Housing Act*. Under this Act, the concept of 'introductory tenancies' and 'starter tenancies' were legalised. While these measures were introduced to tackle ASB, records show that most evictions were for non-payment of rent rather than ASB. An unevenness in the take-up of these measures has been noted. There is less of a take-up in rural areas where they were deemed to be unnecessary (Hunter, 2006:142).

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7 Source: Several authors in Flint, J. (2006) (ed.), *Housing, Urban Governance and Anti-Social Behaviour, Perspectives, policy and practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

8 In the UK housing associations are independent not-for-profit organisations that are registered with the English Housing Corporation, the Welsh Assembly Government Housing Directorate and Communities Scotland. Registered associations are known as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The housing associations in England are regulated by the Housing Corporation and audited by the National Audit Office which reports to Parliament.

Lister (2006) conducted a small-scale study of the use of tenancy agreements in controlling tenant behaviour. Lister highlighted the problems that can arise when a tenant is not aware of the impact of tenant behaviour and the threat of sanctions embodied in tenancy agreements. In tackling ASB many local authorities have recently introduced a 'good neighbour agreement' including conditions regarding noise, nuisance, the behaviour of children, visitors and pets, conditions of gardens and communal areas.

This intervention highlights a shift towards social control rather than neighbourhood trust (Lister, 2006:125). The 'good-neighbour agreement' engages tenants in more formal social arrangements where previously neighbours trusted one another to respect their property. How the tenant received the agreement was important as Lister (2006) found there could be issues around literacy and language problems. Therefore tenancy agreements may be limited in the extent to which they can be employed to tackle ASB if there is no clear understanding of the terms of the agreement (Lister, 2006:132).

#### Injunctions

Policies since 1996 have discouraged repossession and encouraged other forms of action for use by local authorities. Injunctions are another tool used by local authorities and social landlords rather than eviction. In research conducted by Hunter and Nixon (2003) it was found that the injunction is used to tackle ASB but the take-up for breach of tenancy is greater with local authorities than with social landlords. It was not clear from the research, however, whether injunctions were being used to control behaviour or indeed used to control behaviour that previously would not have been subject to legal action. Hunter and Nixon (2003) found that many social landlords did not use the injunction tool at all. There is little evidence available, according to the Home Affairs Committee Report (2005) of the use made by social landlords of injunctions:

*The Government does not collect data relating to the use of housing injunctions or possession orders. There is thus no objective means of assessing the extent to which powers have been used, the level of variation around the country [or] whether there is a tendency for particular powers to be used in combination with other powers. (Home Affairs Committee, 2005, p.89)*

What is evident from the changing nature of the legislation is that the landlord's powers in the UK have been extended to allow for the easy eviction of tenants for the behaviour of the non-tenants, allowing them to take action against non-tenants by means of an injunction. Legislation since 1996 has put the onus on social landlords to take responsibility for the behaviour of non-tenants. In 2003 the *Anti-Social Behaviour Act* gave social landlords the power to issue an injunction against any person who acted in a way that obstructed his housing management function. To-date there is no evidence as to how well this instrument is functioning.

#### ASBOs

Social landlords have been allocated powers that are not directly associated with the management of public housing. These powers have been vested in landlords by means of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, which introduced the notion of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). ASBOs can be applied to anyone over 10 years of age. ASBOs, according to research conducted by Hunter and Nixon (2003), were often obtained by local authorities in respect of their own housing estates. Housing associations, however, prefer to work through the police and local authority rather than make direct application to the court for an ASBO. While ASBOs were initially intended for use in housing management generally, it appears evident that they are applied more often against the individual living in social housing environments (Hunter, 2006:149).

### Mediation

In the UK mediation has been recommended as an effective anti-social behaviour tool (Richards et al, 1998; Housing Corporation, 2004; ODPM, 2004b). In the study carried out by Pawson and McKenzie (2005), the majority of social landlords indicated that they had employed mediation methods to tackle ASB. This was achieved through referrals to other agencies, while 20 per cent said they provided in-house mediation. Not all cases were suitable for mediation. Social landlords did not refer incidences of physical violence, verbal abuse and racial harassment, citing these as being unsuitable for mediation. Participation of the tenant was essential for successful mediation. Mediation was not successful in cases where tenants expressed a preference to hand the problem on to the landlord (Pawson et al, 2005).

### Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are used as an effective means of deterring ASB particularly in relation to low-level offences such as vandalism and graffiti, playing loud music or nuisance. But the use of ABCs as a precursor to the ASBO is not evident in current practice (Pawson et al, 2005). Brown (2004) suggests that the term 'contract' should not be used in this case, but 'agreement', as the ABCs do not have legal status. The agreements are drawn up between the police and housing officers together with the young people and their families.

### Community safety partnerships

With the rise in ASB local authorities and social landlords have been drawn into crime prevention and community safety partnerships. Social landlords in the UK are involved in civic renewal and community governance, a point reiterated by the ODPM (2005a). What this means is that the police no longer hold the monopoly on community safety as the provision of tenant security is provided by an assortment of organisations both public and private, referred to by Flint (2006) as the mixed-economy of security provision.

In the UK this mixed-economy type of policing includes both private and public initiatives, which have been shaped by recent policy initiatives (Crawford, 2006:222).<sup>9</sup> In research conducted by the Home Office in 2003, higher police visibility was found most likely to convince people that crime was being dealt with effectively (Page et al, 2004). With the growing use of the mixed economy, policing social landlords are now assuming responsibility for tackling ASB because of the rise in ASB and the short-term government-funded initiatives (Crawford, 2006:225).

The following is an example of the *City of York Community Safety Plan* April 2005 to March 2008. This plan is presented here in order to demonstrate what the multi-disciplinary process involves in tackling ASB through community safety partnerships.<sup>10</sup> The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* requires all local authorities to work in partnership to develop a three-year local Community Safety Plan. Six key issues were identified through a consultation programme and developed by the Safer York Partnership. The aim of the Partnership is to reduce crime and the fear of crime across the City of York, to create a safer environment and to improve the quality of life for everyone, residents, businesses and visitors.

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9 These Acts include the 1994 *Police and Magistrates' Courts Act*; The 1998 *Crime and Disorder Act*; The *Neighbourhood Wardens Programme*; The 2001 *Private Security Industry Act*; The 2002 *Police Reform Act*; The 2003 *Anti-Social Behaviour Act*; The *Reassurance Policing Programme*; the *Building Communities, Beating Crime White Paper* (Home Office, 2004) and the 2005 *Serious Organised Crime and Police Act*.

10 See also *Working together to make Camden a safer place*, Safer Camden (2004), for a comprehensive example of a community safety strategy.

The Partnership links into *Without Walls*, the Local Strategic Partnership for the City of York in creating a Safer City, Healthy City, City of Culture, Thriving City, Inclusive City, Learning City and Sustainable City. A data audit identified house burglary, violent crime, anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime as the top crime and disorder issues within York. Community consultation, carried out through a series of questionnaire surveys and focus groups, revealed the same issues together with drugs and alcohol and speeding traffic as causing most concern to the community. Key objectives were agreed with detailed targets and timescales.

The objectives are set for three years duration, while the targets and timescales are reviewed annually. In order to implement the Plan the partner agencies use part of their mainstream resources (within the legal limits of their organisation) and according to their individual priorities. For each objective there is a lead agency and other supporting agencies, actions are agreed and performance indicators established. The aims of these actions are to reduce:

1. Misuse of controlled drugs
2. Burglary
3. Violent crime
4. Anti-social behaviour
5. Vehicle crime
6. Death and injury through road safety

For the purpose of this paper, The York Safety Partnership approach to reducing ASB is paraphrased below. It demonstrates the multi-agency nature of the approach and the importance of having very clear targets.

The crime audit showed that ASB was a cause of great concern to the community. The lead agency for the ASB objective is the City of York Council. Other agencies include the North Yorkshire Police, schools, licensed trade and alcohol retailers, Face to Face Mediation, youth work agencies, landlords, North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, all members of Safer York Partnership (SYP). The Partnership regularly reviews its organisation including periodic partnership self-assessments and producing and progressing improvements to guide the process. All members of the Partnership share responsibility for achieving the six objectives outlined above which are underpinned by a detailed action plan. The Partnership receives a report from each agency on its progress against each of the six objectives every quarter (as well as providing reports for every meeting of the Partnership Board), setting out the latest crime and disorder figures. At the end of the three years an evaluation is conducted on the Partnership performance.

In tackling ASB, the definition of ASB in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, 'all behaviour which causes alarm, harassment or distress', is used. Records of ASB incidences are dependent on the classification of incidents to particular disorder categories given by the call-taker in the two North Yorkshire Police call-handling centres. Disorder usually falls into one of the following categories:

- Disorder related to public areas
- Disorder related to potential individuals or households
- Harassment
- Deliberate damage to property

The ASB plan includes long-, medium- and short-term actions. The SYP use all available funding sources including Home Office Stronger and Safer Communities Fund and Action Area Funding to develop multi-agency problem-solving initiatives.

There are twenty-two ASB actions outlined in the Plan. These may be broadly clustered under the following themes:

- Supporting families
- Working with schools and other education agencies
- Working with police and local council
- Supporting victims of crime
- Working with key agencies to eliminate prejudice
- Working with key agencies to empower those at risk of offending
- Working with the council and police to address the problem of alcohol-related ASB
- Learning from examples of good practice promoted by the Home Office

Developing performance indicators is difficult for ASB. At present the SYP believe that, unlike other key crime types, not enough is known about ASB to set simple quantifiable targets. However, York is required by the Home Office to achieve a 22 per cent reduction in crime and to reduce criminal damage by 25 per cent by 2008. The SYP takes these figures into consideration as well as the *Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for York* targets which are divided into seven main themes:

#### **Behaviour**

- To reduce levels of dissatisfaction with the efforts of organisations such as the police and council to tackle ASB and disorder to 40 per cent by 2008
- To reduce the percentage of residents concerned about young people causing a nuisance to 40 per cent by 2008
- To maintain at 100 per cent the percentage of permanently excluded pupils provided with alternative tuition of 20 hours or more
- To reduce the number of neighbour nuisance cases managed by Housing Services at any one time

#### **Alcohol-Related**

- To reduce the level of under-age sales of alcohol identified through the test purchase programme to below 10 per cent in 2008
- To maintain at current levels, or reduce, the number of licensed premises within the identified 'Saturation Area' of the City Centre

#### **Begging**

- To reduce the number of telephone calls to NYP in relation to beggars by 30 per cent

#### **Noise**

- To investigate and close 75 per cent of noise complaints within 20 working days

#### **Vehicles**

- To remove 95 per cent of abandoned vehicles with 'little or no value' on the second working day following issue of a 1-day notice
- To remove 80 per cent of abandoned vehicles with 'no keeper identified' on the eighth day following the issue of a 7-day notice

#### **Damage**

- To reduce levels of concern about vandalism to 50 per cent by 2008
- To reduce the time taken by CYC to remove fly tips to 1.5 days by 2008
- To increase the percentage of people satisfied with local cleanliness to 70 per cent by 2008

### **Fire and Rescue**

- To reduce the number of calls to malicious false alarms per 1000 population
- To reduce the number of deliberate fires (excluding vehicles) per 1000 population
- To reduce the number of deliberate fires in vehicles per 1000 population

(Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for York April 2005–March 2008)

The multi-disciplinary approach to community safety presented in the City of York Community Safety Plan is a good example of how such initiatives can support sustainable development and improve the quality of life in communities.

### **Community support officers**

Community support officers represent a new departure in community policing. They are police officers whose time is ‘bought’ by communities. Local authorities and social landlords match-fund community support officers together with the local police in order to ensure high police visibility in certain estates. Sometimes local authorities divert funds away from Neighbourhood Warden Schemes for this purpose. In research conducted in Bradford and Leeds – where the support officers spent between 77 and 80 per cent of their time (compared to 17 per cent of regular police officer time) out of the station and on patrol – their high visibility bolstered public confidence (Crawford et al, 2004).

But this type of safety initiative has drawbacks. Crawford cites research he conducted in a town called New Earswick in the UK (ibid. 2006:231). This town bought the police time of a designated officer equivalent to twenty-four hours per week for a three-year period. This police time was to be additional to the standard police provision. However, several circumstances mitigated against the success of the scheme and it was terminated early. For example, the police officer was recalled from time to time to ‘fill-in’ for police emergencies. Residents had unrealistic expectations of the scheme, expecting it to resolve deep-rooted problems such as drug usage. As ‘consumers’ of a police ‘service’ they expected accountability and responsiveness to demonstrate ‘value for money’. But as the police officer was still responsible to the chief constable at all times this was not practical. The failure of the scheme in New Earswick left local people feeling more insecure and they subsequently installed CCTV cameras and employed private security.

### **Neighbourhood wardens**

Neighbourhood wardens help to build sustainable relationships in communities, especially those plagued by ASB (ODPM, 2004c). They also act as coordinators of local service provision. Neighbourhood wardens are particularly useful where there is a low level of trust between communities and the police. They are well placed to work with vulnerable groups. However, there is a danger that they can become too involved or sympathise with particular groups that could be seen as partisan by the community (Crawford, 2006:229). They may, however, foster bonding and bridge social capital.

### **Private security patrols**

The use of private security patrols has grown in recent times in the UK. Increasingly social landlords, local authorities and community groups are turning to the private sector for neighbourhood policing. For example, in York the introduction of such a scheme in one council ward led in three years to the remaining nineteen wards using their local improvement budget to employ mobile patrols (Crawford, 2006:230). These patrols were often in vehicles and had CCTV facilities on board. Security patrols are often used at night and weekends when neighbourhood wardens are not on duty.

### **Gated communities**

The use of gated communities is a recent trend in tackling or warding-off ASB. This type of preventative measure has been in use in many countries for years, including South Africa, South America, China and some Eastern European countries. The concept has grown in the UK since 1995 (Blandy, 2006). In gated communities, high walls and gates signify social control of a private space or of a private area within a public space, and serve to 'design-out' crime. However, it is not clear whether in some cases the gates and high walls emphasise prestige and exclusivity rather than fear of crime and ASB (Blandy, 2006:243). In a UK study of residents in gated-communities, carried out by the ODPM (2004a), fear of crime was an issue for them with the walls and gates affording them security. In this study, figures revealed that one-third of local authorities had gated communities in their area. Of those that had gated communities only eight had communities that contained more than 150 dwellings.

There is a lacuna in research conducted into gated communities in the UK but in research conducted in the US on gated communities, little difference was found in perceived safety and actual crime rates between gated and non-gated communities in high-income neighbourhoods and in public housing projects in Newport Beach, California (Wilson Doenges, 2000). Similarly, in South Africa no evidence was found that crime decreased because the area was gated (SAHRC, 2005:24).

According to Blandy (2006:247) there has been no research into the effectiveness of gated communities on ASB. Blandy suggests that while gates may prevent traffic incidents and trespassing by non-residents, social relations can suffer. Legal documents for gated communities replicate those of social landlords in that they outline expected behaviour. But as previously pointed out, many residents do not always take cognisance of the contents of contract agreements and therefore it is difficult to determine whether or not these serve as mechanisms for effectively controlling ASB in gated communities.

Manzi and Smith Bowers (2005), have suggested that gated communities could be considered with regard to government policy on regeneration and mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. But research carried out by Butler (2001) showed that more affluent owner-occupiers buy in cheaper neighbourhoods because of lower house prices and not from a desire to live in mixed-tenure areas. For them, any physical barriers serve to accentuate the 'them' and 'us' reality. In research carried out to date, there is no strong evidence to suggest that gated communities could foster social integration. Indeed the contrary was suggested by the ODPM and the Home Office (2004:30) when they recommended that gated communities should only be considered as a last resort.

### **Residents and community safety**

In the UK residents are also seen as part of the wider policing 'family' and are given an enhanced role in tackling ASB (Home Office, 2003b; 2004). They can outline their priorities to local service providers and expect accountability for actions taken (ODPM, 2005b). This shift has been extended to 'intervention and enforcement through Anti-Social Behaviour Orders' (Flint, 2006:28). To date, these powers have been reserved for local authorities and registered social landlords in conjunction with the police, but they may be extended for use by community councils or neighbourhood watch schemes (ODPM, 2005b).

Local communities have been further empowered in the UK through legislation to participate in the judicial system. They have the power to determine community sanctions for offenders by serving Community Reparation Orders (Home Office, 2004). These enhanced legislative powers serve to provide communities with the authority to tackle ASB, previously the sole responsibility of the local authority and the police. This leads to a 'blurring' of responsibilities between public agencies such as the police and social landlords and between public and community forms of governance (Brown, 2004).

In conclusion, developments in ASB strategies in Ireland are following the same trends as those in the UK, particularly in relation to legal measures such as tenancy agreements, injunctions and ASBOs. Mediation and ABCs are formally established in Ireland under the Garda Juvenile Scheme and the Probation and Welfare Service. Social landlords have a high involvement in Community Safety Partnerships in the UK. In Ireland the Gardaí, local authorities and the HSE are the lead agencies in tackling ASB. While an initiative such as Community Support Officers and ‘buying time’ is worth consideration, the perceived absence of Gardaí in communities in Ireland, because of the shortage of Gardaí, might suggest that this initiative is not a feasible one at present.

Neighbourhood security schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert have been in existence in Ireland for a long time but the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme is a more recent development. The Limerick City Coordinator Scheme is one such scheme underway since May 2007. It is being monitored and evaluated to assess the value of the project with a view to extending it to other local authorities in the future. Gated communities are mainly built by private developers in Ireland. This type of initiative to encourage mixed tenure in social housing estates has not been developed to any extent in Ireland.

Two significant issues arise, based on the UK study, that warrant consideration for the Irish context. The first is the fact that in the UK *The Crime and Disorder Act 1998* requires all local authorities to work in partnership to develop a three-year local Community Safety Plan. These plans include strategies to tackle ASB. A compulsory safety audit is conducted in each local authority, based on the plan. The York example presented above clearly indicates the importance of the multi-disciplinary approach and the amount of responsibility each participating agency bears in relation to meeting regularly, planning, reporting and taking action. It is clear that the success of the partnership depends on full cooperation.

The second issue that arises concerns the powers extended to social landlords and community groups in the UK. For example, if such powers were to be extended in Ireland to estate management groups, a review of how community safety is dealt with in local authorities would need to be undertaken.

### 3.3.2 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in Scotland<sup>11</sup>

#### Introduction

This case study was selected to demonstrate the ‘life-cycle’ approach to tackling ASB. The approach was suggested in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* as a way of achieving sustainable communities and improving the quality of life for all.

The Dundee Families Project was set up to care for ‘hard-to-house’ families. Dundee City Council had a large public sector housing stock of around 23,000 properties when the project was set up. The catalyst for the project was a family the social work department wanted to house but the housing unit refused. In search of housing, such families ended up in the private-rented sector, bed and breakfast or temporarily moved in with friends or relatives. The problems therefore were displaced, not resolved. Occasionally the families were housed by the Homeless Persons Service but negotiations between the housing unit and social work departments were time-consuming. Taking legal action such as eviction to deal with families engaged in anti-social behaviour therefore did not solve the problem.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Scott, S (2006) in Flint, J. (ed.) *Housing, Urban Governance and Anti-Social Behaviour, Perspectives, policy and practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press.



A resolution was found whereby a voluntary organisation (the National Children's Home (NCH) Action for Children Scotland) was asked to take a tenancy and support the family. Based on this initiative, the housing department proposed setting up a more permanent model of service delivery. An application for funding was made to the Scottish Office for Urban Programme Funding in 1993, the project was established in 1995 and was officially opened in 1996.

The programme assists families who are homeless or who are at risk of being homeless as a result of anti-social behaviour. The aim is to work with them to change their behaviour, re-establish tenancy arrangements and avoid eviction. The project provides a twenty-four hour service and runs throughout the whole year. Therefore it is intensely staffed. In May 2001 when this case study research was conducted, staff included a project manager, a deputy, seven social care workers, four relief social care workers, one administrative assistant and one domestic worker.

There are three approaches to the service:

- Intensive support in a core block that can house up to four families
- Less intensive support to a small number of dispersed flats run by the Project
- Outreach support for families living in their own homes but at risk of eviction due to ASB.

The Project offers a range of services including:

- After-school groups
- Young persons group
- Cookery group
- Parenting group
- Parenting skills group
- Craft group
- Anger management group
- Residents' support group
- Tenancy workshops

Decisions on entry to the Project are made by an admissions panel that assesses referrals and reviews cases. There is a Project Advisory Board to provide guidance and feedback from service users and local residents.

What follows is an overview of the findings of research conducted on the Project in 2001 when the Project had been in operation for five years.

### **The referral system**

A rigorous referral system was put in place to ensure that the families cared for suited the project criteria and were well motivated. An admissions panel consisting of representatives of the Project, the NCH and Dundee City Council social work and housing departments assessed referrals to the Project. For the most part factors that prompted referral were family relationships and control of children. Sixty-nine families (55 per cent) were accepted out of one hundred and twenty-six. Of the sixty-nine, eleven received intensive support in the core block, sixteen were supported in dispersed accommodation and forty-two received outreach services in their own home.

Studies carried out by Atkinson et al (2000) and Hunter et al (2000) found that perpetrators of anti-social behaviour can be vulnerable and the characteristics of the Dundee families bore this out. About two-thirds of the households were headed by a lone parent sometimes having contact with a male partner. In some

cases the partners had separated but they both had contact with the children. One-third of the cases consisted of two-parent households. The number of children ranged from one to thirteen which was high considering that the average number of children per household nationally was 3.4. The majority were poor and relied on state benefits.

### **Types of anti-social behaviour**

The types of anti-social behaviour they were involved in included disputes with neighbours, poor maintenance of property, noise, violence, damage to property, drug-dealing, arson and running a protection racket. Both adults and children in the families were involved in anti-social behaviour. Overall, 70 per cent of the adults had drug or alcohol problems and over half had criminal convictions for offences including assault, theft, shoplifting, housebreaking and car and drug-related offences (Scott, 2006:204). There was also evidence of child neglect and domestic abuse in 50 per cent of the cases.

### **Family history**

Most of the families had made several house moves ranging from moving twice to eleven times, and the average number of moves was five per family. This was reflected in the fact that the majority of the children had attended four different schools. Consequently, many of the children had learning difficulties. They also had behaviour problems which often led to absenteeism and problems of social exclusion. Many children had received special education.

A number of the families had serious health problems that included heart and kidney problems, cancer and epilepsy. Many of the children had ADD and ADHD, requiring supervision and medication. Fifty per cent of the mothers suffered from depression, had sleep disorders, agoraphobia and mental health problems (Scott, 2006:205).

### **Outcome for families involved in the project**

Sixty-seven per cent of the families had successful outcomes. By successful it is meant the main goals as prescribed for the family had been achieved. Eighteen per cent were unsuccessful and the rest had either moved away or their circumstances had changed.

Overall both the housing unit and the social work services considered the outcomes satisfactory and saw a key role for the project in the future. However, there was some divergence of views when the professionals were judging it from their particular perspective, namely housing or social care. For example, while the housing unit was satisfied that the families were maintaining their properties well post-project, the social work services maintained that, in some cases, the families still had not resolved parenting or family-related difficulties.

Both agencies, together with the NCH, had collaborated well strategically at a senior management level. There was, however, evidence of tension between staff in the housing unit and the social work services locally. This was due to the greater amount of work expected from the social work services staff. Relationships with other agencies locally were weak because they did not need to work together constantly as the project was only a small part of their caseload. There was some evidence of disquiet because of their differing roles, responsibilities and values.

The research team contacted ten of the families who had been supported by the project. These families were very positive about the outcome. They felt their situation had improved considerably, particularly in relation to housing, facilities for the children, personal development and improvement in family relationships.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the project

The strengths include the following:

- The independence of the project was guaranteed because it was run by a voluntary agency rather than the housing unit or the social work services.
- The multi-agency approach worked well in the main although some stakeholders commented on the gaps in services especially in the area of mental health.
- The different types of interventions used provided a holistic approach to family problems. They were able to ‘think outside the box’ (Scott, 2006:211).
- The commitment of the stakeholders was strong, as was the degree of trust and cooperation shown.
- The rigorous referral process by the assessment panel ensured that families with the most severe difficulties were targeted and supported.
- The rigidity of the selection process was very important in ensuring that families met the criteria for the project.
- The cost of the project compared favourably with the cost of evicting families, taking children into care and prison sentences.

The weaknesses include the following:

- The long-term funding uncertainty caused a problem. It was bad for staff morale as they had no security of tenure.
- Misunderstanding of the referral criteria by staff in collaborative agencies meant that cases were referred for consideration by the assessment panel that were fundamentally unsuitable, thus wasting a lot of time and expertise.
- The support for families leaving the project was not always adequate when collaboration with other agencies at this point was crucial.

In conclusion, the strengths and weaknesses of the project, as outlined above, demonstrate the type of issues that arise when using a ‘life-cycle’, whole-family approach to tackling ASB in social housing estates. The advantages of this type of initiative make it worth considering in the Irish context for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Use of a voluntary agency as the lead stakeholder means less housing staff need to be deployed.
- Allocation of houses can be incorporated into the Housing Plan.
- On-site supervision of the families ensures the up-keep of property.
- Project cost compares favourably with the legal costs of eviction, the court system or taking children into care.

The issues that arise for local authorities include:

- Resources for the project
- Re-deployment of staff
- Locating staff on the estate
- Staff training in a number of areas such as social work, community development and the law
- Tenure of staff

The Dundee model has been extended to other parts of the UK and Scotland because of its success. It has proved an effective way of tackling ASB in social housing estates. Lessons can be learned for the Irish context.

### 3.3.3 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in Helsinki, Finland<sup>12</sup>

#### Introduction

This case study was selected to highlight the issues that arose in Helsinki with regard to the housing of immigrants. It is included because the immigrant population has increased in Ireland since the 1990s and immigration and integration policies have been constructed accordingly (Mac Éinrí, 2007). This case study addresses the issue of management, design and tenure in estates and also examines issues regarding diversity and multi-culturalism.

In 2001 a survey was conducted of tenants living on public housing estates in Helsinki in order to better understand the rise in social disorder such as crime, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour in the estates. The research involved an analysis of the survey. The data collected were supplemented by interviews held in 2003 with Helsinki housing experts and officials. They provide recommendations for preventing further decline of the estates.

#### Background to study

When the research was conducted public housing in Finland comprised 11 per cent of the total housing stock. In recent years public housing officials in Finland have noted an increase in social problems in some council housing estates including illegal drugs, alcoholism, crime and anti-social behaviour. Physically the estates are in good condition but there is a fear that if the social problems develop further decline might lead to 'ghetto-like' problems such as those in the US and some European cities (Varady and Schulman, 2007:313).

Finland has 5.2 million residents, 1.2 million of whom live in the Helsinki metropolitan area (HMA) that comprises the city and its eleven surrounding municipalities. Helsinki and its three nearest surrounding municipalities, Espoo and Kauniainen (to the west), and Vantaa (to the northeast), referred to as the Capital Cities Municipalities (CCM), have a population of just under one million people. Prior to 1990, there was little economic disparity in Helsinki but since the 1990s social and spatial changes have occurred leading to increasing levels of income inequality and income segregation between east and west Helsinki. This is due partly to the high-tech firms located in the western suburb of Espoo where there is a highly educated workforce that can afford to purchase new and expensive family homes (Varady and Schulman, 2007:316).

In 2004 Helsinki council housing contained 83,943 tenants (approximately one-fifth of Helsinki's population) in 41,289 apartments (Helsinki Real Estate Department, 2005). Most of the public housing built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s consist of 6-8 storey buildings while those built in the 1990s are only 2-3 storeys. They were originally built on the city's extreme boundaries and were considered to be extremely distant from the city centre. Today, there is a metro system that connects them to Helsinki in less than half an hour.

Helsinki's council housing is managed by twenty-three independent not-for-profit housing companies. One hundred per cent of the shares of these companies are owned by the city and most of the finance for housing comes from the State of Finland. Housing allocations are made by the City of Helsinki and are means-tested, but once accepted there is security of tenure. This means that there is no set limit on income and a person can remain regardless of variation in income.

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<sup>12</sup> Data for this case study are drawn from a paper written by David P. Varady and Harry Schulman, School of Planning, University of Cincinnati, OH, USA, 'Social Disorders in the Early Stages of Public Housing Decline: A Helsinki Case Study', *Housing Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 313-332, May 2007.

### Findings from the research

Housing practitioners cite various reasons for the social decline in public housing estates in Helsinki, including:

- Families with multiple problems
- Weak management structures
- Housing advisors and social problems
- Tenant efforts to address social disorders
- Social mixing to prevent housing estate decline
- Immigration
- Comprehensive physical revitalisation

Each of these issues is discussed below.

#### Families with multiple problems

Anti-social behaviour has become a serious problem on Helsinki public housing estates. As the proportion of 'problem' families increased so too have the physical problems because of the high-rise housing blocks. In the case study excessive noise, vandalism, drug-dealing and public-drinking were cited as examples of anti-social behaviour. A minority of families caused problems, the majority of whom were alcoholics or drug dealers or were mentally ill. Because of the communal design of the buildings, tenants shared common entrances, hallways and elevators and consequently the majority of tenants were affected by the 'problem' families. According to one housing advisor, 'problem' families on her estate consisted of 5 per cent of the tenants, yet they accounted for 95 per cent of the problems.

#### Weak management structures

Eviction procedures in Helsinki are time-consuming and legally complicated. Some officials felt that these procedures were inconsistent with Finland's welfare state commitments. Section 19 of the Constitution of Finland declares that everybody has a right to decent housing and provides strong legal rights to public housing tenants. Evictions for non-payment of rent are straightforward and administered by the city's Law Department. Available data accessed in the case study showed that in 2004 evictions for non-payment of rent were higher than evictions for anti-social behaviour (263 evictions for non-payment of rent and 33 evictions for anti-social behaviour).

These figures did not take into account complaints that were not processed because of fear of retaliation. However, a 1995 law has made eviction easier. The building manager can contact the police and ask if there is any public information on the 'problem' family (for example reports of calls to the police to visit the apartment). The housing manager then forwards the information to the housing company's lawyer who is responsible for taking the case to the court. However, this method involves interviews with neighbours so there is still uncertainty about its effectiveness (Antikainen, 2004).

Monitoring of 'problem' families can be difficult. Sometimes when an individual is evicted, members of the family remain on in the apartment and the evictee moves back in. According to Varady and Schulman (2006: 318), 'Finnish housing officials make no attempt to monitor who actually lives in an apartment once a family moves in'. It is difficult therefore for housing officials to track problem families from one estate to another. (In contrast, US public housing authority officials require families to recertify annually and have the power to evict those who are not listed on the lease.)

Three other issues were raised in the research and were referred to as 'bureaucratic problems'. The first related to the different approaches of individual housing managers to dealing with complaints. Some were 'hands-on' while others

were less responsive. The second issue concerned the way in which social workers dealt with cases. Some social workers waited for contact regarding prospective cases rather than being proactive. Helsinki housing and social work agencies are often in conflict. Each blames the other for not working harder. An official in the city's Social Department was quoted as saying:

*It is important to encourage discussion and to tell the housing companies what the Social Work Department can and cannot do. The Social Department has to learn about economic realities. It is unrealistic to expect other tenants to pay to solve the problems created by problem tenants.*

*(Broman, 2003 in Varady and Schulman, 2006:319)*

The point was made that repairs and maintenance costs must be paid out of rental incomes and that if the number of needy families with multiple problems increases there is a drop in rental income, causing management problems for the housing agencies.

The third issue involved inadequate funding. Although Finland's welfare state aims to provide basic social services and decent housing for all, limited resources mean that a growing number of people in need are entering the public housing domain. For example, in Finland, as a result of the closure of mental health institutions, a large number of mentally-ill people have moved in to public housing and are the responsibility of the housing workers. Lack of funding has also prevented the development of adequate transitional and long-term supported living units. There are a small number available for the homeless or mentally-ill but none for families responsible for anti-social behaviour.

#### **Housing advisors and social problems**

In Helsinki, 'housing advisors' are central to the handling of social issues. Housing advisors work together with social workers to prevent evictions due to non-payment of rent and/or anti-social behaviour. Housing advisors were employed because social workers were not reaching the most needy people in the public housing estates. In 2003 the position of the housing advisor on one of the estates (Myllypuro) was jointly funded by the European Union, the city and the housing company. The housing advisor worked in apartments that had severe social problems. One advisor in the research said that she tried to instil a sense of personal accountability and discipline among the tenants in order to prevent evictions. In 2005 the City of Helsinki established permanent posts of housing advisors, but because of inadequate funding, the number, according to the housing and social workers interviewed in the research, is not nearly enough.

#### **Tenant efforts to address social disorders**

There are 'house committees' on each of the council estates to maintain the unit and 'keep the peace' (Varady and Schulman, 2006:320). However, the effectiveness of these committees varies. An analysis conducted by Kortteinen, 2003, on a Kontula (East Helsinki) case study, suggests that the voluntary efforts of tenants might be sufficient. A community of mothers and grandmothers came together to protect their children from 'threatening strangers, alcoholics and mental health discharges' (Varady and Schulman, 2006:320). The women treated the alcoholics with respect and sometimes helped them. As a result they improved the overall quality of life on their estate without excluding 'problem' families.

#### **Social mixing to prevent housing estate decline**

Three reasons were presented in the research for organising mixed social tenures in public housing in Finland: the first being that mixed-income areas might change the values and behaviour of lower-income families by providing middle-class role models and social networks; the second that lower-income families might have access to better schools and other amenities; and the third that mixed-income policies might counteract the stigma associated with public housing estates.

Helsinki introduced social-mix policy during the 1990s. During this time any developments that were built not only included public housing but other types of housing as well such as private rented housing and ownership housing. Tenure types were indistinguishable from one another because of their design. An experiment was carried out on a public housing development in the centre of Helsinki (Ruoholahti) in which there was a social-mix tenure 'within-building'. While the experiment was deemed successful, the model has not been replicated.

The stipulation that tenants are allowed to stay on in public housing regardless of rising income promotes social-mix tenure by allowing middle-income families to live alongside those on lower incomes. Several years ago income limits for public housing were raised which meant that 75 per cent of the Finnish population were eligible for public housing. Critics of this policy argue that allowing middle-income families remain on in public housing means a smaller supply of public housing for those on lower incomes and that inadequate housing funds should be used for those in most need, especially the hard-to-house families.

Higher levels of income segregation are now posing a challenge for Finland, particularly with the growing levels of immigration.

### **Immigration**

Immigration in Finland, as elsewhere in Europe, presents both racial and cultural problems. In Helsinki, the number of immigrants is rising steadily. They come mainly from Russia, Estonia and Somalia. Finns are more open to skilled immigrants which means that they are less sympathetic towards the Somalis who generally lack advanced skills. Somalis have also tended to cluster together to share language, religion and cultural practices and this inhibits integration into Finnish society. Some of the council housing apartments now house almost one-third immigrants and high levels of unemployment prevent them from moving to other accommodation.

While many of the tenants in the research complained about the poor housekeeping practices of the Somalis, they also suggested that it was the Finnish alcoholics that posed most problems. However, they referred to several cultural practices of the Somali community that they considered problematic. For example, often there might be ten or more living in each apartment which meant that there were signs of wear and tear as the apartments were too small to house such large families. Because of high levels of unemployment, they were unable to maintain the apartments. Unemployment was also cited as a possible reason why Somalis were engaged in ASB as they had nothing better to do with their time. Some Somali immigrants came from rural areas where they had a nomadic lifestyle and therefore were not familiar with electrical appliances (Joronen, 2003).

Religious practices of Somali immigrants presented another set of problems that might be considered anti-social by others. For example, Somali Muslims celebrate Ramadan and stay up all night, thereby preventing their Finnish neighbours from sleeping (Antikainen, 2003). Some tenants complained of the smell of spicy Somali foods. Religious differences can also lead to situations of mistrust. The research gave the example of a male Somali not wanting to deal with a female housing manager. Finnish tenants appreciate quietness. Therefore when someone makes noise in the common corridor or on the balcony of the units the Finns interpret this behaviour as disturbing the peace.

In one of the estates (Myllypuro) the housing advisor encouraged immigrant women to learn Finnish so that they could show an appreciation for their new culture. Helsinki officials distribute a *Beginners Guide to Living in Finland*, published in Somali and many other languages as well as Finnish which specifies immigrants' responsibilities as neighbours. But housing officials felt that this had not helped to integrate immigrant groups successfully. Helsinki council housing offers educational and cultural programmes to help integrate immigrants.

There are mixed views on immigrant clustering. While self-segregation eased the process of integration, housing officers in Helsinki were concerned with the growing number of immigrants on particular estates. They felt that if these clusters continued to grow it would add to the stigmatisation of areas of East Helsinki and the isolation of immigrants. Housing officials are aware of 'apartment-swapping' that takes place between Somali and Finnish families so that Somali families can live closer together. There is no policy in place to prevent this happening at the moment and the research suggests that there is little support for pro-integrative policies such as quotas and positive marketing.

### **Comprehensive physical revitalisation**

Helsinki's current housing revitalisation involves housing refurbishment rather than demolition and redevelopment. The Neighbourhood Project established in Helsinki aims to renovate the housing stock, build new housing, improve the environment and improve social services (Helsinki Neighbourhood Project). The research found that there were several positive results from the Project, including improvements in the physical as well as social environment. Many of the apartments were renovated and repairs carried out. Community centres were opened up and social events organised. A criticism of the Project is that it failed to provide enough detached houses sought by the upwardly mobile middle-income families. No businesses were prepared to set up in the two Project areas and it was observed that the city of Helsinki was not planning on moving a school or hospital into the east of the city.

Overall revitalisation policies in Helsinki have not changed the image of the public housing estates. The research found that people were still unwilling to move because of the fear of social problems on these estates. To improve the unemployment situation in the eastern part of the city, Helsinki has moved its main cargo shipping facilities to Vuosaari in East Helsinki and 'up-market' housing is being built to attract people on higher incomes and improve the image of that side of the city. As part of the building process, the Housing Production Department held a competition for the design of two of these new developments.

In conclusion, in Helsinki, public housing comprises a high proportion of the total housing stock. It is managed by individual autonomous housing authorities and is located on the periphery of the city. Public housing estates exist mainly on the eastern side of the city and in the past decade there is evidence of social decline in many of them. A high concentration of poverty, families with multiple problems, poor management, immigration and poor design are the main causal factors. The research found that the housing managers spent a lot of their time dealing with families with multiple problems because of the growth in social disorder on the estates. At the time of the tenant survey (2001) a minority of the residents were pessimistic about the direction of change in neighbourhood conditions and planned to move. Others felt that their quality of life was impaired by the conduct of some families. In order to stem the tide of social decline on the estates the following recommendations were made:

- Implement stronger eviction laws and provide more opportunities for tenants to give evidence without fear of retaliation
- Provide more stringent monitoring systems (possibly re-certification) to track occupants in the apartments
- Increase the number of housing advisors and expand their role to allow them deal with tenants' personal issues
- Develop positive marketing and tenant selection strategies to attract tenants other than immigrants
- Increase the number of transitional and long-term supportive units for hard-to-house families (including those with anti-social behaviour records); this strategy has the added effect of preventing displacement of problems
- Increase the number of detached, semi-detached and terraced units at public housing revitalisation sites



There are similarities between the issues that arise in the Helsinki case study and those experienced in the Irish context. All of the issues raised above, including problems with some families, difficulties with management structures, involving tenants to control social disorder in estates, tenure mixture, immigration and regeneration, are experienced in Ireland and therefore the final recommendations made are worth consideration. It is significant from this and other case studies that the use of eviction to tackle ASB is not an effective tool. It is a costly and time-consuming legal procedure in every country most of which have a statutory obligation to ensure that families are housed. A debate on the current role of eviction in tackling ASB in social housing estates would be useful.

### 3.3.4 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in the Netherlands and France<sup>13</sup>

#### Introduction

These two case studies concern the problem of insecurity that tenants in social housing estates experience. It raises the issue of people's perception of crime and in particular the factors that influence older people's feelings of insecurity caused by young people living in these estates. Feelings of insecurity impact on the quality of life of tenants in social housing estates. Both the Netherlands and France have issues with young immigrants causing feelings of insecurity. This issue is recognised as a growing problem internationally (Power, 1997). The link between immigrants and social disorder is openly debated in the Netherlands but in France officials are reluctant to discuss the problem for ideological and political reasons.

Environmental strategies, re-designing semi-public and public spaces such as staircases, hallways and porches are often used to reduce feelings of insecurity. But research has shown that most insecurity problems are social and not physical (van Kempen, 1994). In the Netherlands and France there are two types of strategies to sanction young people involved in ASB. Criminalisation strategies are used to punish crime and young offenders. Socialisation strategies tackle the causes of juvenile crime and provide opportunities for youth through education as well as developing social, inter-generational and inter-ethnic integration.

Immigrants and anti-social behaviour is considered a major issue in social housing estates in both the Netherlands and France. Critics point out that in both countries immigrant groups are treated with increased suspicion and are often seen as problematic (Gestaut, 2000; Prins and Slijper, 2002; Uitermark et al in Aalbers et al, 2005). Official crime statistics are not broken down into racial categories in France due mainly to the Republic's principle of equality. In the Netherlands where some statistics are available, non-Western ethnic minority groups were three times more likely to be suspected of an offence compared to the indigenous population (Dagevos and Gijsberts, 2007).

#### The Netherlands

The focus of the Netherlands case study is a large housing estate in Amsterdam called Nieuw West. In this estate both criminalisation and socialisation strategies are used in programmes to tackle ASB. Originally the tenants of Nieuw West were predominantly Dutch middle-class families but in more recent years there is a high percentage of first and second-generation immigrant families and in some neighbourhoods this figure is as high as 80 per cent. Both the Dutch families and

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13 Source: Aalbers, M., Bielewska, A., Chignier-Riboulon, F. and Guszczka, A. (2005) in van Kempen, Dekker, Hall, Tosics, Restructuring large housing estates in Europe Bristol: The Policy Press. The data for these case studies are taken from the RESTATE research project which was funded by the EU Fifth Framework. RESTATE is an acronym for 'Restructuring Large-Scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities'. The research was conducted in ten countries including France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK in 16 cities and in 29 estates between November 2002 and October 2005. The aim of the research was to find out how large housing estates, built in the three decades after the Second World War, have developed in physical, social and economic terms. In particular, policies and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life on these estates were considered.

the immigrants are concerned about the composition of the neighbourhood. The Dutch bemoan the loss of white people while the immigrants are concerned that their children will have difficulty becoming full members of Dutch society when most of the Dutch people living on the estate have left.

Many people make a direct link between immigrants and increasing criminality. However, poor town planning or the quality of the housing is not blamed for this decline. Older people in particular feel insecure. They believe that they have no control over the area as they feel it is dominated by the young and foreigners. The police records show that the crime rate in Nieuw West is highest among the 12–17 year olds (and younger in more recent times). The main ASB engaged in includes shoplifting and vandalism.

There is a Big Cities Policy (BCP) in the Netherlands since 1995. This policy originally had three main themes: physical, economic and social development. A fourth theme of safety was added recently. Safety has become an important issue and dominates national and local policy (Aalbars et al, 2004).

While criminalisation strategies in the Netherlands are the responsibility of the police and justice department, the police are also very involved with social workers in socialisation strategies such as Police Youth Target Teams. This case study examines one specific programme – Justitie in de Buurt (JIB) Justice in the Neighbourhood, established in 1997. Located in the community, the aim of JIB is to reduce levels of insecurity in communities where it is considered a big problem and to encourage a collaborative approach to counteracting it. Staff from the Public Prosecution Office and other justice organisations work together to deal with problems of juvenile crime.

The physical presence of these community officers makes them more accessible to other organisations and individual members of the community. Proximity to the problems in the community enables them to tackle problems earlier and swiftly. In so far as possible, complaints are dealt with outside the court system, to avoid lengthy procedures. An evaluation of the JIB in 1999 showed that dealing with problems promptly was very effective and all parties involved considered it a very worthwhile programme. However, there was criticism of the JIB for not being sufficiently ‘embedded’ in the participating organisations.

Two specific socialisation strategies were focused on in Nieuw West – New Perspectives and Neighbourhood Fathers. The Amsterdam City Council set up the New Perspectives programme in association with the police, the Public Prosecutor and the Child Protection Council. The aim of the project was to help difficult teenagers who had problems with family, school and the police. In particular the project helped them engage with young people’s networks and the social services available to them. Those who participated felt they had benefited by becoming more self-confident and better able to cope. The follow-up care provided was particularly important for the success of the project. The cooperation between organisations such as the police, schools and New Perspectives was the key success factor. Consequently, New Perspectives has been introduced in other parts of Amsterdam and other cities.

#### **Neighbourhood Fathers**

The Buurtvaders (Neighbourhood Fathers) programme was set up in areas where male Moroccan youths were causing nuisance and trouble in Nieuw West. This initiative was taken in 1999 by a group of Moroccan fathers who walked the neighbourhood on a scheduled basis, making daily rounds to ensure some of them were always present. They approached the youths on an informal but personal basis. They were gradually accepted by parents and young people. The Buurtvaders project made neighbourhoods safer but it also promoted social cohesion within and between groups and generations.

Many Dutch people were sceptical of the project initially but have come to recognise its effectiveness. A significant feature of the project was that it used the 'Northern Moroccan village culture' whereby authority over young people is shared with other adults (De Jong, 2000). While the *Buurtvaders* is not accepted by all young people who hang around the neighbourhood, nevertheless the project has been so successful that it has been repeated within Amsterdam and other Dutch cities.

### **France**

Les Minguettes is a large housing estate in France with a high percentage of young foreigners. It is located in the southern part of greater Lyons. Twenty thousand people live in the neighbourhood. At one time indigenous workers and French people, returning from the war in Algeria after independence, lived there. In the late 1970s and 1980s there was a marked increase in the number of first and second generation immigrants living on the estate. In some neighbourhoods young people with foreign roots accounted for 60-75 per cent of the total youth population. The increase in unemployment, poverty and spatial concentration was a factor in the increase in crime. Problems were so serious with young people in Les Minguettes that they led to rioting in the early 1980s. In Les Minguettes the reporting of crime was not high because of fear of retaliation and loss of faith in the justice system.

In France criminalisation and socialisation strategies are used together to tackle ASB and the focus is on education as a preventative strategy. On large housing estates it was found that 'social insecurity' was a cause of criminality and social disorder. It was generally acknowledged that projects such as 'work in the community' (TIG) were of more benefit to young offenders than prison sentences. This strategy reduces the risk of re-offending, improves their skills and facilitates social integration.

### **Maison de justice et du droit (MJD)**

Similar to Justice in the Neighbourhood in the Netherlands, this project is a partnership between the Ministry for Neighbourhoods in Decline, the Ministry of Justice and the municipalities. One of the aims of the project is to bring the judicial process closer to the neighbourhoods in decline. This provides more equality in the justice system and more transparency, which is important to restore faith in the system. There are two elements to the MJD: (i) it is a source of information about the law and (ii) the project acts to reduce feelings of insecurity. People are uneasy that some offenders do not come before the courts because there are too many cases and the prosecutors could only select some. There is a 18-24 months delay in sentencing and for that reason a prison sentence is not seen as a useful deterrent. Critics of the MJD argue that it is 'justice for the poor', a 'sub-justice system' for estates in decline without any long-term effects.

Under socialisation strategies the Ministry of Education has a specific policy to improve educational levels. Under this policy *zones d'éducation prioritaire* (ZEP) were set up in 1981. This programme works in secondary schools by setting up contracts between the family and the school on a case-by-case basis. Experts consider that this programme is effective (Dussaut and Isambert, 2003:120). Students who participated in this programme were more socially adjusted, with many remaining on longer in the areas of education and training.

### **Présence Tranquillité**

Due to the increase in crime and increased feelings of insecurity, a community warden project called (Quiet Presence) was set up in Rillieux and Vénissieux to facilitate social inclusion on the estates. It is a partnership between the local authority, social landlords and the police. The wardens walk around the estates day and night. If they encounter problems of disorder they use mediation or call the police services if required. According to the stakeholders, feelings of insecurity have declined. However, the warden's job is dependent on funding

and consequently is often short-term. Some argue that mediation might be appropriate for the long-term management of the neighbourhoods in decline with more temporary jobs not requiring any qualifications (Schosteck, 2002:102), while others argue that mediation is just another way of managing the poor. This implies again a point raised earlier in this paper, namely the function of ASB strategies in social housing estates.

In conclusion, socialisation strategies are often favoured over criminalisation strategies but these two case studies in the Netherlands and France demonstrate that linking both strategies can be more effective. Criminalisation strategies treat the symptoms and socialisation strategies the cause of crime. However, the authors of these case studies argue that on a practical level some forms of nuisance must be criminalised in order to ensure safety.

These case studies show that long-term rather than short-term strategies are more effective and that adequate funding is required to implement them. It is important that ASB strategies are comprehensive and integrative in order to solve the crime problem in neighbourhoods. They require good communication and the participation of local stakeholders operating within the neighbourhoods.

ASB projects should not be seen, particularly by young people, as extensive social control. This often results in feelings of anger that sometimes lead to conflict between them and the police. The main issue for policy makers and stakeholders is how to connect with young people in the first place. In the Netherlands and France there is an emphasis on educational policies for youth, thus improving their work-prospects. In the Netherlands socialisation policies are directed at specific groups at risk, while in France policies are more general. This research found that when developing policies, involvement of the recipients in the programmes, in this case the young people, is essential.

The Netherlands and French case studies raise a number of issues pertinent to the Irish context, in particular tenants' perceptions and fear of crime. It is often argued that people's perceptions of crime and actual crime are not compatible. Housing immigrants is problematic for local authorities, not least because of the shortage of houses in social housing estates. Consequently, local authorities have purchased houses in private housing estates to house them. Poor communication on behalf of the local authorities has resulted in irrational fears of insecurity in local tenants. A lot of this fear is caused by misunderstanding which raises again a point made earlier in the Helsinki case study, namely the importance of understanding diverse cultures.

Community wardens are one way of helping to alleviate the fear of crime and ASB in social housing estates. Wardens help to cultivate social capital by building up trust, communicating with tenants and mediating in times of conflict. This approach can be very effective, particularly in estates where many young people live. Having sufficient resources to provide warden schemes is essential for continuity, as building up trust and strong relationships takes time. In the long term this type of initiative can be very effective in tackling ASB.

### 3.3.5 Anti-social behaviour initiatives in Australia<sup>14</sup>

#### Introduction

Since the 1980s social housing in Australia is predominantly populated by people on low incomes and with high levels of social need (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2006). This has meant a concentration of poorer people in smaller geographical areas. Recent research has shown that people living on these estates suffer high levels of poverty, mental illness and stress (Burney, 2000). Maintaining sustainable communities has therefore become a challenge for housing managers. Foremost among these challenges is anti-social behaviour. Recent evidence has shown that

*... anti-social behaviour has become a significant concern of residents living on these estates and their expectation that the housing agency will respond to these concerns has grown accordingly. (Jacobs and Arthurson, 2003; 2004)*

In Australia, funding for social housing is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), an agreement made between the federal government, state and territory governments. The federal government pursues national objectives to support individuals and communities while state and territory governments are responsible for delivering social housing. Anti-social behaviour policy is not well-developed in Australia and it is not yet fully embodied in housing policy (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2006:260).

A number of issues have arisen inhibiting the development of anti-social behaviour policy in Australia. In the first place, no clear definition of anti-social behaviour has been developed. Secondly, there is a perception among some welfare professionals that the root causes of anti-social behaviour are structural inequality (such as unemployment) and poverty and that therefore it should be addressed by increasing resources and material benefits. Thirdly, tenants in social housing estates now expect individualised, targeted action from state housing agencies. This expectation is putting increased pressure on these agencies to use more interventionist practices in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. There is also a concern that too much publicity regarding anti-social behaviour might negatively impact on certain groups of young or indigenous people. It is generally recognised, however, that anti-social behaviour causes conflict and creates additional costs for housing agencies. It can also undermine policies aimed at social cohesion and community empowerment (Flint, 2002).

In 2003 the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) funded an empirical study in two states (South Australia and Tasmania). The aim of the research was to explore the notion of anti-social behaviour and how it impacted on housing practice. The research was conducted in two locations, namely Bridgewater in Hobart, Tasmania and Christie Downs in Adelaide, South Australia.

The study involved semi-structured interviews with housing-staff (24 in total) and other relevant stakeholders including law enforcement, social services and community workers (16 in total). The study explored perceptions of anti-social behaviour, examined the scope of developing community-based responses to ASB and assessed the implications of wider discourses around anti-social behaviour on housing management practice. This case study provides the housing practitioners' views on ASB strategies.

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<sup>14</sup> Source: Arthurson, K. and Jacobs, K. (2006) 'Housing and Anti-Social Behaviour in Australia' in Flint, J. (ed.) *Housing, Urban Governance and Anti-Social Behaviour, Perspectives, policy and practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

### **Profile of the research sites**

Bridgewater is just outside Hobart and it is an area of high social need. In recent years a community programme called BURP (Bridgewater Urban Renewal Programme) has been operating in this area and it involves a high level of tenant participation. There is 23.6 per cent unemployment in the area and 45 per cent of houses are rented from the state housing authority.

Christie Downs, located in the southern region of Adelaide, has a high concentration of public housing. The unemployment rate is 17.3 per cent and 28 per cent of houses are rented from the state housing authority. There is a large number of elderly tenants and a significant number of people with special needs associated with housing stress, including victims of domestic violence, mental health issues and ex-offenders.

### **Perceptions of anti-social behaviour**

With housing staff and stakeholders, the research found that subjectivity was an important factor when determining whether or not anti-social behaviour was perceived as a problem. What one person considered anti-social behaviour another might find tolerable. The researchers found that because of the 'contested nature of anti-social behaviour' (fuelled in no small way by the media discourses), it was difficult to articulate a clear definition. Two interpretations were put forward as causes of anti-social behaviour: (i) the pathological interpretation that emphasised the difficulties encountered by individuals under stress and with limited personal resources, and (ii) the structuralist interpretation that emphasised the contextual causal factors such as poverty, poor housing and unemployment. These two competing ideologies informed both housing staff and tenant perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour induced a sense of powerlessness in tenants, particularly in victims. Tenants faced the dilemma of reporting incidents and risking retributive acts of anti-social behaviour. The problem was further exacerbated if it was not carefully dealt with by the housing manager.

In Bridgewater, young people, especially between the ages of 13 and 16 years and male were the main culprits for anti-social behaviour and some tenants considered the lack of parenting skills a major factor. Other explanations include physical and environmental factors. By far the most common perception was the lack of opportunity for young people. In Christie Downs 30 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years were unemployed. If they were not in school, they were hanging around and were intimidating.

### **Housing intervention strategies**

The research showed that sensitive allocation policy, probationary tenancies, communication strategies, working directly with tenants, collaboration with law-enforcing agencies and mediation services were the main interventions used to address the problem of anti-social behaviour. Evictions were generally seen as draconian and not effective in dealing with the underlying causes of the problem.

It was felt that allocation worked well when there was no shortage of housing and a demand for housing could be demonstrated. Six-month probationary tenancies were seen as useful by housing managers to focus on the tenant and build a good relationship at the outset. The tenants, however, were more sceptical of this measure as they felt anybody could be 'good' for short periods of time. Housing staff felt that the management of anti-social behaviour could be enhanced by positive press such as good news stories and that the communities could actively promote their own localities.

In Bridgewater both housing staff and tenants considered that effective communication gave tenants an improved sense of community well-being. All the housing staff felt that an individual, more personal approach between tenants and housing staff worked best. This meant involvement with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, assessing the problem, referrals to other agencies and having an overall interest in community affairs. The housing staff pointed out that they were not social workers and that it took up a lot of time dealing with individuals but felt that in the long run it involves less work and more effective.

Housing managers and police stressed the importance of collaboration. In Bridgewater this occurred through the 'Officer Next-Door Programme', set up in 1998 to provide a visible presence of police on the estate. Police officers and their families were offered a house to rent for two dollars per week in return for producing a six-monthly report. This strategy enabled the housing staff to get information on police call-outs, which in turn enabled them to plan better. In general, housing staff felt that mediation with an outside facilitator was useful where both parties were willing to accept responsibility for their actions. However, mediation was less effective in situations where there were literacy problems or mental health issues and where serious disputes had escalated and there was a fear of recrimination.

In Australia persistent offenders over the age of sixteen can be arrested by the police and dealt with through the courts, and depending on the crime, removed from the locality (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2006:273). They are often served with warning letters and notices but frequently these are not sufficient deterrents. One housing manager in Christie Downs suggested that they should adopt the Leeds (UK) model where warning letters are sent out under the joint policing and housing authority logos. However, it was recognised that it was more difficult to deal with minors for whom there were no criminal sanctions. Some measures suggested by housing managers included using Supervision Orders and sanctions on parents if their children were out of control. However, in contrast to the UK where ASBOs can be used, in Australia this type of intervention has yet to be developed.

In common with the UK, eviction is the main legal instrument employed once all other measures have failed. However, it is used sparingly. Housing managers in both Bridgewater and Christie Downs recognised that eviction was not a satisfactory long-term solution as it results in moving the perpetrator elsewhere and this just 'perpetrates the circle' (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2006:275). Evicted tenants regularly end up in the same community but in private tenure where little action can be taken to curtail the problem.

In conclusion, this Australian case study draws attention to a number of issues pertaining to the management of social housing estates. It reiterates points made in the previous case studies regarding strategies used by local authorities to tackle ASB. In particular, sensitive allocation policy, probationary tenancies, good communication, positive press, liaison with tenants, multi-agency collaboration and mediation services were promoted. Again, as with the other case studies presented, eviction was cited as being problematic in Australia. It was seen as being too drastic an initiative and in the long run not dealing with the underlying cause of the problem.

ASB strategies in Australia are still in the development stage. They are worth noting as they concur with those that exist in Ireland and lessons can be learned from the Australian case. Similar to the Irish situation, it is interesting to note the Australian reluctance to use the ASBO. Further studies in this regard would be useful.

SECTION FOUR

**Tackling anti-social behaviour:  
International problems,  
indigenous solutions**



#### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the issues associated with tackling ASB. It draws on the international experience to provide recommendations for implementing strategies in the Irish context.

#### **4.2 Defining, profiling and tackling ASB in the local context**

The first part of this paper highlighted the dearth of documentation in the public domain regarding local authority actions in tackling ASB in Ireland. This is in contrast to the international evidence-based research available. It is now compulsory to monitor and evaluate safety programmes in many countries including the UK.

In *Preventing and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour, Good Practice in Housing Management, Guidelines for Local Authorities*, Norris (2003) provided comprehensive guidelines for tackling ASB. Norris recommended that 'accurate and standardised record keeping is vital for assessing the seriousness of anti-social incidents and devising appropriate responses' (p.18). These guidelines include recommendations for managing and monitoring, preventing and combating ASB, customer care in relation to ASB and personal development for staff dealing with ASB.

Building on these guidelines, a database of current practices in each local authority would be very useful. An exploration of the themes covered in the 2003 guide would provide valuable information for the direction of future ASB policy within local authorities. Coordination of research activities on ASB conducted by local authorities or safety partnerships would be useful. Twinning with local authorities in other jurisdictions would also be constructive. In this way strategies to tackle ASB could be identified and collated.

It is accepted that there is no 'one size fits all' definition of ASB. While there are common threads running through legislation governing ASB strategies internationally, it is evident that the cultural, political and economic context impacts heavily on how it is defined. In Ireland local authorities have adopted the definition of ASB legislated for in the Housing (*Miscellaneous Provisions*) Act 1997, with some authorities incorporating specific local problems into their ASB plans. Having standardised categories of ASB would facilitate analysis of the problem in the Irish context.

The current structures and strategies employed to tackle ASB vary from one authority to the next in Ireland (as websites and annual reports demonstrate). Some local authorities have more developed strategies than others as each authority must decide on its specific approach, depending on the housing stock, the housing environment and both budgetary and human resources. There are also differences in approaches between urban and rural local authority areas.

Internationally, ASB in communities is tackled by community safety partnerships. These partnerships represent a multi-disciplinary approach and involve a number of key stakeholders such as the police, the local authority and the health services and are supported by other agencies as required. In the UK legislation requires that these partnerships draw up three-year strategic safety plans to deal with ASB. In the strategic plans specific actions are outlined to tackle ASB, a timescale is agreed and performance indicators are established (such as the York model presented earlier). This process is useful for a number of reasons. In particular it provides:

- A local definition of ASB
- A profile of local offenders
- A knowledge-base to inform strategies
- A multi-disciplinary approach
- A lead agency for each action
- A budget
- Regular reports for information
- A database for future planning

Recent policy statements such as *NAP Inclusion 2007-2016, Towards 2016* and *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* have restated the role of local authorities in Ireland in tackling ASB including both social and economic responsibilities. At present ASB is tackled in some local authorities through ASB units with dedicated ASB officers, while in others it is dealt with directly by housing staff such as Tenancy Enforcement Officers and Welfare Officers who carry out this function within the housing department.

ASB strategies are outlined in the Housing Plans in each local authority but these plans are not always part of a broader community safety strategy. Staff in local authorities work with other agencies through a multi-agency approach on a case-by-case basis (for example with the Gardaí, the HSE, the Probation Services and youth agencies) and through estate management structures. Some of these agencies have a more direct role in relation to ASB than others and it would be useful to identify what that role is. 'Safety-Proofing' policies and procedures in organisations involved in social housing estates and community development projects would better facilitate cooperation between agencies when tackling ASB.

A small number of Community Safety Partnerships similar to the UK model exist in Ireland. They are formed as limited companies and are independent of the local authority. Three examples include Fatima Community Regeneration Ltd., Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. and the Limerick City Community Safety Partnership Ltd. Research conducted by these partnerships is useful to the debate on how best to tackle ASB in the Irish context. For example, a pilot scheme, the Limerick City Coordinator Scheme, which is managed by Limerick City Safety Partnership and funded by the DoEHLG, is underway. This scheme will be evaluated and monitored over the next three years to produce evidence-based research for local authorities on setting up community-based safety schemes.

A useful aspect of this scheme is that the coordinators fill in a daily log-book of all incidences that arise and actions taken. Originally this log-book was modelled on a UK example. But since the Limerick scheme started in May, the log-book has been modified a number of times to reflect the local context. The final edition of the log-book will be a useful guide for categorising a national data-base of ASB for local authorities. Another benefit of the log-book is that it will inform the ASB debate by providing a computerised data-base of the following:

- Categorised ASB incidences
- Frequency of the incidences
- A profile of offenders
- Tenants perceptions of ASB

These qualitative and quantitative data will be analysed by means of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to provide a rich source of data that will inform the ASB debate for local authorities.

The Community Safety Partnership approach has proved successful internationally as it engages both the statutory agencies and members of the community in the management of the estates. To incorporate this approach, based on international experience, a number of issues would need to be addressed, not least being whether or not the partnership should be situated inside or outside the current local authority structure. Would it be more effective if there was a 'community development' section in the housing department under which functions such as estate management and community safety might reside?

Another issue is the use of performance indicators to measure the success of ASB strategies. While a policy to implement these indicators might be centrally-driven, local authorities should be encouraged to develop their own local indicators to reflect local priorities and local circumstances (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2004). Recommendations for future policy on these issues will be presented below.

### **4.3 Lessons from international case studies**

*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* outlined key themes that must be considered in future housing policy in Ireland, including sustainability, design and tenure, incorporating a 'life-cycle' approach, embracing diversity and multi-culturalism and taking a multi-agency approach to estate management. It is envisaged that these measures will lessen the problem of ASB in social housing estates and provide a high quality of life for all tenants. The international case studies presented in this paper used these approaches in their community safety strategies. The main issues raised in each of the case studies are summarised below.

#### **United Kingdom**

In the UK all local authorities are obliged to work in partnership to develop a three-year local community safety plan. These plans include strategies to tackle ASB and involve a multi-agency approach. A compulsory audit is conducted annually. These audits are useful and include information on all aspects of ASB in council areas. A second issue in the UK concerns the extension of powers to social landlords and communities for tackling ASB in social housing estates including the use of ASBOs and community sanctions.

### **Scotland**

The Dundee Project represented a holistic approach to supporting ‘problem’ families involved in ASB. This multi-agency approach is labour intensive and raises several issues including securing on-going resources for the project, re-deploying staff, locating staff on the estate, staff training in community development, social work and the law and tenure of staff because of uncertainty in funding for the project. It also requires local councils to allocate houses for the project.

### **Finland**

The aim of the discussed project in Helsinki was to tackle ASB through better design and mixture of tenure. The approach taken highlighted a number of issues. The communal design of the housing blocks was a factor in ASB. Eviction procedures were poor in Finland but a recent law has made it easier. Housing managers can now forward information to the housing company’s lawyer who has responsibility for taking the case to court. There is a poor monitoring system in place to track families as they are not obliged to re-register once they have taken up accommodation. In this case study there were poor relations between the housing staff and social workers; housing advisors were employed to instil a sense of responsibility in tenants and this role has been extended throughout Helsinki.

There is an issue regarding the drop in income from housing provided for needy and ‘problem’ families or for people with mental health problems. Lack of funding has prevented the development of adequate transitional and long-term supported units. Helsinki introduced social mix during the 1990s. Any developments that were built included a mix of housing type in order to encourage middle-class families to live on these estates. Allowing tenants to remain on in houses regardless of rising income promoted social-mix tenure by allowing middle-income families to live alongside those on lower incomes. While this measure was a success initially, higher levels of income segregation are now posing a challenge for Finland, with the higher levels of immigration.

There is a high immigrant population of Somalis in Helsinki with high levels of unemployment. Efforts made by the housing authorities to assist integration, such as language classes and information leaflets, were not very successful and now Helsinki council housing offers educational and cultural programmes. There is a problem of immigrant clustering and a fear that it will lead to stigmatisation of areas of East Helsinki. Housing officials are aware of ‘house-swapping’ but have no policy in place to prevent it. There is little support for pro-integrative policies such as quotas and positive marketing.

In Helsinki there is a policy of refurbishment rather than demolition. This approach has been deemed successful although there was criticism of the lack of detached houses available for the middle-class. The case study revealed that these areas still lacked commercial enterprise. Even the City of Helsinki had no plans to put public services such as schools or hospitals into the area. Despite regeneration of the estates, people were still afraid to move into them because of social problems.

### **The Netherlands and France**

In the Dutch and French case studies there were large immigrant populations which posed problems alongside the indigenous communities. In the Netherlands case study there was an issue around the composition of tenants on the estates. When immigrant families moved in, many Dutch families moved out. The outcome was estates where the majority of the tenants were immigrants. This prevented any type of social integration. One of the biggest problems was the feeling of insecurity and people’s perception of crime. Older people living on these estates were particularly fearful of young immigrant people. In both countries poorly educated immigrant families represented the group most at risk of committing crime and being involved in ASB. There was also a lot of suspicion surrounding immigrants.

In the Netherlands one of the community development projects introduced is the Big City Policy (BCP). It has three main themes, physical, economic and social development. Recently it was necessary to add a fourth theme of community safety as this has become a major issue locally and nationally. To reduce levels of insecurity in communities, Justice in the Neighbourhood was established where staff from the Public Prosecution Office and other justice organisations work together at local level. Proximity to the problem has been effective in getting speedy resolutions to problems and it has avoided the over-use of the court system.

#### **Australia**

The Australian case study draws together a number of issues pertaining to the management of social housing estates. It reiterates points made in the previous case studies regarding strategies used by local authorities to tackle ASB. In particular, sensitive allocation policy, probationary tenancies, good communication, positive press, liaison with tenants, multi-agency collaboration and mediation services were promoted. Eviction poses a problem in most jurisdictions and begs the question of its effectiveness for tackling ASB in social housing estates. It is a drastic action that still does not deal with the underlying causes of ASB.

In the US and the UK, the use of ASBOs is well developed. However, in Ireland and Australia this is not the case. While tenants in Australia seek stronger ASB initiatives including ASBOs, lesser sanctions such as sending out warning letters with the joint policing and housing authority logo (as used in Leeds, UK) was put forward in the case study as a suggestion for dealing with offenders over the age of 16 years. In Ireland ASBOs were introduced in 2007 but it is too soon yet to review the effect they have on ASB.

#### **4.4 Tackling anti-social behaviour: recommendations for future housing policy in the Irish context**

There is evidence to suggest that Irish housing policy and legislation provide a firm foundation for implementing ASB strategies. But current initiatives, while making a positive impact, have not reached their full potential. There are a number of issues that need consideration. The following recommendations are made to address these issues and to provide best practice in tackling ASB in the Irish context. Table 1 provides a summary of the findings.

##### **Issue 1 Providing information to inform the debate on ASB and social housing in Ireland**

##### **Recommendations**

- 1.1 Implement compulsory reporting of ASB activities by local authorities to a central base (for example the Centre for Housing Research).
- 1.2 Provide resources to develop a database to reflect the Irish situation. Co-ordinated approaches would be useful such as inter-local authority projects or twinning with projects in other countries.
- 1.3 Conduct research of local authorities based on the main themes outlined in Norris (2003) *Preventing and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour, Good Practice in Housing Management, Guidelines for Local Authorities*, namely the management and monitoring of ASB, preventing ASB, combating ASB, customer care and personnel management and development.

**Issue 2 Providing standardised record-taking in order to facilitate analysis of ASB data**

**Recommendations**

- 2.1 Develop a standard user-friendly template to facilitate computerised records. Housing officers dealing with ASB should be consulted regarding the contents.
- 2.2 Establish a pilot project to test the template.

**Issue 3 Providing performance indicators to measure the success of ASB strategies**

**Recommendations**

- 3.1 Run training workshops facilitated by practitioners involved in community safety programmes and with experience of using performance indicators to monitor ASB strategies.
- 3.2 Identify best practice and examine the use of performance indicators to measure outcomes of ASB strategies in other countries (e.g. the UK and Tilburg in the Netherlands).<sup>15</sup>

**Issue 4 Building sustainable communities and providing a good quality of life for all tenants in social housing by expanding on the community safety partnership strategy for tackling ASB**

**Recommendations**

- 4.1 Fund pilot projects using the community safety partnership strategy.
- 4.2 Collate research, particularly from the UK experience.
- 4.3 Provide a forum for debate for local authorities (particularly how such safety partnerships could be rolled out).
- 4.4 Consider establishing community justice centres to alleviate the delay in court procedures and backlog.
- 4.5 Ensure that all policies are ‘community-safety’ proofed.
- 4.6 Ensure that all new buildings are ‘community-safety’ proofed.
- 4.7 Examine the role of voluntary and affordable-housing agents in tackling ASB.
- 4.8 Examine the effectiveness of eviction orders for tackling ASB.
- 4.9 Review the selection process for tenants based on income to encourage broader social integration.
- 4.10 Communicate findings with all local authorities.

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<sup>15</sup> See DoEHLG (2004), *Delivering Value for People, Service Indicators in Local Authorities* for summary of Good Practice, p.22.

## **Issue 5     Taking a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling ASB**

### **Recommendations**

- 5.1 Pilot a project such as the Dundee Families Project over three years and evaluate the process on an on-going basis. Themes should include:
  - 5.1.1 Management system (lead agencies and roles)
  - 5.1.2 Record keeping
  - 5.1.3 Cost of the service to local authorities
  - 5.1.4 Deployment of staff and replacement within local authority
  - 5.1.5 Re-locating staff to the local estate
  - 5.1.6 Tenure of staff (working week?)
  - 5.1.7 Provision of office accommodation
  - 5.1.8 Provision of houses (transitional, long-term, supported) for ‘problem’ families, people with disabilities and the homeless
  - 5.1.9 Training for staff in project management
  - 5.1.10 Impact on families and ASB
  - 5.1.11 Follow-up for families

## **Issue 6     Recognising diversity and multi-culturalism**

### **Recommendations**

- 6.1 Provide forecasts of immigration levels, origins, education backgrounds and job prospects in each local authority area.
- 6.2 Plan for an even distribution throughout local authority areas.
- 6.3 Have a strict registration process in place to avoid the problem of house swapping and multi-family usage and self-segregation.
- 6.4 Provide information locally on individual cultures.
- 6.5 Have strong communication channels between all tenants and local authority staff to alleviate feelings of insecurity and avoid mistrust.
- 6.6 Publish ‘good news’ and success stories.

**Table 1** Tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing estates in Ireland

<b>KEY THEMES IN DHSC</b>	<b>ISSUES ARISING</b>	<b>ACTIONS REQUIRED</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>RELEVANT CASE STUDY</b>
Sustainability	<p>Policies should be focused on local issues</p> <p>Policies must be 'sustainability and community-safety' proofed</p> <p>Tenant participation in initiatives</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary approach</p> <p>Staff recruitment and training</p>	<p>Social Inclusion Initiatives</p> <p>Environmental Initiatives</p> <p>Community Initiatives</p> <p>Economic Initiatives</p>	<p>Provide long-term funding for initiatives</p> <p>Initiate community justice centres</p> <p>Consult members of the community</p> <p>Provide security of tenure for staff</p> <p>Provide information on policies and legislation for staff</p> <p>International research</p>	<p>UK</p> <p>Scotland</p> <p>Finland</p> <p>Netherlands</p> <p>France</p> <p>Australia</p>
Design and Tenure	<p>Adequacy of housing type</p> <p>Adequacy of tenure-type</p> <p>Retention of tenants</p> <p>Income-based assessment</p>	<p>Refurbishment of housing</p> <p>Revitalisation of environment</p> <p>Mixed-tenure</p> <p>Tenancy agreements</p> <p>Monitoring</p>	<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Re-design parts of the estates</p> <p>Re-furbish housing</p> <p>Provide buildings for community activities</p>	<p>Finland</p>
Multi-Culturalism	<p>Lack of understanding of different cultures</p> <p>Clustering</p> <p>No clear knowledge of needs</p> <p>Poor communication</p> <p>Language problem</p>	<p>Forecasts of immigrant numbers</p> <p>Study of different cultures</p> <p>Provision of suitable housing</p> <p>Transport</p>	<p>Provide information on cultural diversity</p> <p>Encourage integration</p> <p>Communicate with communities</p> <p>Publish 'good news'</p>	<p>Netherlands, France and Australia</p>
'Life-Cycle' Approach	<p>Location of services</p> <p>Staff recruitment</p> <p>Family motivation</p> <p>No work opportunities</p> <p>Costs</p> <p>Follow-up for families</p>	<p>Family-centred initiatives</p> <p>Pre-school education</p> <p>Childcare</p> <p>Training workshops</p> <p>Provide job opportunities</p> <p>Special needs facilities</p>	<p>Provide a building facility</p> <p>Train staff in family oriented programmes</p> <p>Avoid staff turnover</p> <p>Build innovation centres</p> <p>Provide incentives for business people</p> <p>Provide training centres locally</p>	<p>Scotland, Netherlands and France</p>
Multi-Agency Approach	<p>Project management</p> <p>Delegation of tasks</p> <p>Poor communication</p> <p>Administration</p> <p>Location of project</p>	<p>Case action plans</p> <p>Selection of lead agency</p> <p>Regular consultation</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>'Community-safety proof' initiatives</p> <p>Pilot a 'York' model</p> <p>Training and development of staff</p> <p>Project management</p> <p>Provide office space</p>	<p>U.K.</p>





## Appendix

## Local Authority strategies for tackling ASB in Ireland

In addition to complying with housing legislation, any actions taken by local authorities to tackle ASB must comply with a plethora of legislation including the *Criminal Justice Act 2006*, the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997*, the *Children Act 2001*, the *Youth Work Act 2001*, the *UN Convention on Human Rights* and *Council of Europe Resolutions* and any other legislation relevant to their actions. Consequently, it is essential that housing staff be familiar with all legal matters pertaining to the use of ASB initiatives.

Local authorities currently employ several measures to tackle ASB in social housing estates including the use of Housing Action Plans; establishing ASB units and appointing Tenancy Enforcement Officers, Welfare Officers, in some cases ASB officers; Estate Management, Tenancy Agreements, Exclusion Orders, Regeneration and Community Safety Partnerships.

### Housing Action Plans

Local authorities draw up five-year Housing Action Plans. The most recent plans cover the period 2004-2008. However, currently local authorities have no statutory obligation to do so. As provided for in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, statutory arrangements are being drawn up to make Housing Action Plans obligatory. These plans, approved by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), are designed to assist local authorities in identifying priority needs and to provide a coherent and co-ordinated response across all housing services, including delivery of housing by the voluntary and co-operative housing sector.

Incorporated into these plans are anti-social behaviour strategies which include guidelines on housing-stock management and maintaining the physical infrastructure on each estate, procedures for responding to complaints about anti-social behaviour, initiatives for engaging youth and developing social capital on these estates. These are key issues that impact on the level of anti-social behaviour in social housing estates.

### ASB Units

Most local authorities have ASB Units with responsibility for dealing with ASB claims and ASB officers or Tenancy Enforcement Officers have been appointed. They are based within the Housing Department. The objective of these units is to reduce or eliminate ASB in social housing estates. The functions of the ASB Units include investigating all complaints of ASB, dealing with the alleged perpetrators, taking preventative measures and pursuing legal remedies such as court orders or evictions if required. Records are kept of these complaints and any actions taken documented. In some local authorities this process is computerised while

in others it presents a paper trail. Each local authority submits these data to the DoEHLG and a statistical report is published annually. These data quantifies the number of:

- ASB complaints received
- ASB cases
- Verbal warnings
- Warning letters issued
- Notices to quit served
- Warrants for possession granted in court
- Excluding orders obtained

(Source: Waterford City Council, Policy on Anti-Social Behaviour, March 2007)

The ASB Units compile strategies for tackling ASB. There is no general template for guiding these strategies and therefore they are developed by each local authority relative to the local experience.

### **Estate Management**

Estate management is at the core of local authority housing management. The notion of estate management was first mooted in 1985 with the introduction of the *Remedial Works Scheme* established for the refurbishment of social housing estates. Under this Scheme, local authorities were required to submit a plan for tenant participation in housing management. Detailed policies on estate management were outlined in *A Plan for Social Housing* in 1991. The 1992 *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act* legislates for the provisions of *A Plan for Social Housing*. These initiatives were further developed in 1995 in *Social Housing: The Way Ahead*.

In 1996 a Housing Management group was established to examine the issue of local authority housing management. The *First Report* makes recommendations on standards of good practice in the areas of housing management systems such as tenancy matters, repairs and maintenance, lettings, rents and tenant involvement. It also examined the issues of training and education for local authority personnel. This report identified three elements of estate management: appointing individual housing officers with responsibility for designated estates, establishing local offices in housing estates and developing estate-based strategies for the management of the estates.

The Second Report was published in 1998. This report focused on the establishment of performance indicators to be incorporated into these strategies and the need to adopt a co-ordinated, inter-agency approach with strong community participation.<sup>16</sup> This approach would ensure that resources deployed in the areas of health, youth, education, employment, community development and policing would benefit the communities. The report called for the setting up of task forces representing the local authority, partnership company, Gardaí, FÁS, Health Board (now HSE), the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Combat Poverty Agency and the VECs. The most recent legislation governing estate management is the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997*. As outlined in Section One of this paper, the remit of estate management is quite broad. According to the 1997 Act good estate management is defined as:

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<sup>16</sup> Service indicators were introduced to the local authority system across 42 headings in 2004 designed to measure performance by local authorities across a range of services in a uniform way (Service Indicators in Local Authorities, 2006:5).

*The securing or promoting of the interests of any tenants, lessees, owners or occupiers, whether individually or generally, in the enjoyment of any house, building or land provided by a housing authority ... the avoidance, prevention or abatement of anti-social behaviour in any housing estate ... (Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997 Section 1(a) and (b))*

### **Tenancy agreements**

Local Authorities present tenants with the *Tenant's Handbook* prior to signing a tenant's agreement. The information in the handbook informs the tenant of ASB policy and any consequences that might ensue should the tenant or members of the household become involved in ASB. The tenancy agreement lists behaviour or actions considered ASB by the local authority. Any breach of these conditions will warrant legal action including eviction. An evicted tenant is deemed, for the purpose of re-housing, to have deliberately rendered himself/herself homeless within the meaning of Section 11(2)(b) of the *Housing Act, 1988* and will only be provided with another home if he/she satisfies the Council that no further breach will take place.

Pre-tenancy courses are provided to allow new tenants an opportunity to get to know one another and to build good community relationships. All complaints made by the public, information from the public, records/files, internal case conferences, information received from the Gardaí or HSE and identities are protected from disclosure under Section 26(1) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1997*.

### **Exclusion Orders**

Sections 3 and 4 of the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997* introduce the 'excluding order' procedure. It allows the local authority to take a more targeted approach to dealing with an individual or some members of a household engaging in ASB. Section 62 of the *Housing Act 1966* as amended gives the local authority the power to recover possession of a rented property by eviction. This measure can be used if one or more members of a household are engaged in ASB.

### **Regeneration**

Although used internationally for over a decade, the notion of regeneration is a relatively new approach to renewing and refurbishing social housing estates in Ireland. Regeneration means developing a socially balanced neighbourhood, combining social and private housing and providing purpose-built community facilities. Regeneration is particularly effective in communities experiencing a combination of problems including bad design, poor social mix and tenure and experiencing high levels of anti-social behaviour.

Good practice in estate regeneration projects should address the social and economic structure such as community development, education and training initiatives and tenant participation and/or estate management (Norris and Treadwell-Shine, 2006). Regeneration companies with project specific contracts have been established in Ireland to deal with these problems. There are three major regeneration projects underway at present. There are two in Dublin, one in Fatima Mansions which got underway in 2001 and the other in Ballymun which began in 2003. More recently in 2007 a regeneration scheme has got underway in Moyross and Southill in Limerick.<sup>17</sup>

Regeneration has both a physical and social dimension. In a policy statement published by the Fatima Mansions Regeneration Board (*Great Expectations*, 2005:4) several themes relating to social regeneration were outlined such as education, health and well-being, employment training and enterprise, arts and culture, sports and recreation and accommodating community activities.

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<sup>17</sup> See Addressing issues of Social Exclusion in Moyross and other disadvantaged areas of Limerick City. John Fitzgerald, April, 2007.

### Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships have been established by some local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour. These schemes involve the co-operation of lead agencies such as the local authority, the Gardaí and the Health Service Executive (HSE) and they are supported by other agencies as required. A new pilot initiative – the Limerick City Coordinator Scheme – was launched in Limerick in 2007 funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG). It is modelled on the UK experience and operates under the management of the Limerick City Community Safety Partnership which is a separate legal entity to Limerick City Council. There are three main agencies represented on the management board – Limerick City Council, the Gardaí and the HSE. The overall aim of the Scheme is to assist in tackling ASB within local authority estates by reducing crime and ASB and to build safer, stronger and more confident communities.

An innovative aspect of this Scheme is that it will be monitored and evaluated throughout the pilot period. Links have been established with the University of Limerick to broaden the research base and to facilitate access to the international debate on community safety. The lessons learned from this process will provide evidence-based research for any future community-safety schemes. In particular it will inform the debate on what constitutes ASB in the Irish context.

The Centre for Housing Research provides a training course in ASB for local authority staff. The course content includes ASB legislation, procedures for dealing with complaints and information on the court system.

### Garda Síochána strategies for tackling anti-social behaviour

There are a number of initiatives that come under the remit of the Gardaí in tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing estates. Two well-established community initiatives include Neighbourhood Watch established in 1984 in urban areas and the equivalent rural scheme Community Alert. These schemes were set up to enable improved communication between members of the community and the Gardaí. However, the main Garda initiatives tackling ASB in communities and social housing estates include the Joint Community Policing Initiative, Community Policing, Youth Justice, Adult Cautioning Scheme and ASBOs. These initiatives are also subject to the legislation as outlined above for local authorities, but additional legislation underpinning their work includes the *Sex Offenders Act 2001*, the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1984*, the *Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983* and the *Probation of Offenders Act 1907*.

### Joint Community Policing

The *Garda Síochána Act 2005* provides for the setting up of Joint Policing Committees whose function is 'to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area'. Twenty-two committees were established on a pilot basis in local authority areas of varying size and composition. Joint policing committees are obliged to keep levels of crime, disorder and levels of ASB under review (Section 36(2) of the *Garda Síochána Act 2005*).

### Community Policing

The underlying principle of community policing is to have good communication between members of the community and the Gardaí in the local Garda Station. Through this initiative the Gardaí make every effort to build up constructive relationships with members of the community and use a problem-solving approach to resolve any difficulties that arise. Community policing is seen as a tool for preventing local crime and vandalism and reducing the fear of crime among local residents, thus providing a better sense of security and quality of life.

## **CCTV**

The Community-based CCTV Scheme was established in 2005. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform provides capital funding for CCTV schemes in social housing estates occupied by older people and for housing projects operated by not-for-profit organisations. The CCTV systems act as a deterrent against crime and as an investigative tool for the Gardaí in the fight against crime.

## **Adult Cautioning**

An Adult Cautioning Scheme came into force in February 2006. It applies to persons aged 18 years of age and over. It is an alternative to the prosecution of certain persons when the prosecution of that offence is not in the public interest. Certain persons, particularly those without previous convictions, may be dealt with effectively and deterred from re-offending through cautioning rather than prosecution.

## **Youth Justice**

Part 13 of the *Criminal Justice Act 2006* deals with anti-social behaviour by children. Children are defined as being between the ages of 12 and 18 years. The Act provides the statutory basis for Gardaí to issue children with Behaviour Warnings, Behaviour Contracts, and in the event of non-compliance the Gardaí can issue a Behaviour Order.

The main intervention operated within the criminal justice system to prevent or deal with anti-social behaviour amongst youth is the Juvenile Liaison Scheme which is carried out jointly by the Gardaí and the Probation and Welfare Services. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme covers children to the age of 17 years and involves cautions and/or family group conferences. It is based on the restorative justice principle whereby, having admitted guilt, the offender makes reparation. In the case of juvenile offenders if they do not re-offend while under caution the case is dismissed. For more serious cases, the offender may need supervision by the juvenile liaison officer for a certain period of time. In certain circumstances several parties might be involved in the process such as offender, victim and family members. In this case a family-group conference is held.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)**

Additional measures in the *Criminal Justice Act 2006* include the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), which came into effect for adults on 1 January 2007 and for children from 1 March 2007. The ASBOs empower Gardaí to apply to the courts, by way of civil procedure, for an order prohibiting anti-social behaviour. If the offending person wilfully defies the order the question of criminal offence arises. In relation to children, the ASBOs are framed in the context of the overall philosophy and policy that underpins the *Children Act 2001* and contain significant additional features to the civil orders for persons over 18 years of age (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2007).

## **Probation and Welfare Service (PWS) strategies for tackling ASB**

The Probation and Welfare Service (PWS) works with offenders and others to reduce offending and ensure community safety. It cooperates closely with the Gardaí, the Irish Prisons Service and the Courts. The work of the PWS in the courts and community includes family conferencing and the assessment and supervision of offenders in prisons and places of detention. It includes preparing prisoners and their families for positive re-integration into the community. Instead of a prison sentence an offender may be given a Community Service Order (CSO). Through CSOs a Judge can sentence the offender, who must be over 16 years of age, to between 40 and 240 hours work in the community. The aim of the CSOs is to integrate the offender back into the community in a positive way.

The PWS funds and supports community organisations and projects that provide employment placement, accommodation, drug treatment, education and training and restorative justice initiatives for offenders. The PWS also provides programmes to reduce the risk of re-offending such as anger management, alcohol education, addiction awareness, parenting skills and social and life skills.

#### **Adult Mediation Services**

Two restorative justice schemes operate in Ireland that are funded by the PSW – one in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary and the other in Tallaght, Co. Dublin. The underlying principle of these restorative justice schemes is that the offender admits guilt and makes reparation for any injustice done either to the individual directly or to the community indirectly. The Nenagh Community Reparation Project is a community-managed restorative justice project which has been in existence since 1999. It is managed by volunteer representatives of all sectors of the community in conjunction with the Probation and Welfare Service. The Victim/Offender Mediation Service in Tallaght has been operating since May 2000 and employs mediators to work in the service. The benefit of restorative intervention is that on successful completion of the contract, an offender does not go through the court system and receives no conviction. This is a very important outcome from the point of view of employment and travel to other countries.

#### **HSE and Social Welfare Services strategies for tackling ASB**

As previously stated, social housing estates are predominantly inhabited by people who are on low incomes, unemployed and in bad-health, particularly poor mental health. The HSE and Social Welfare Services therefore have an important role to play in enabling people to escape the consequences of the poverty trap and enable them to participate fully in society, both socially and economically. The latter outcome has proved a positive strategy for preventing ASB. The HSE administers a range of payments alongside the supports provided by the social welfare services.

Within the HSE the Community Welfare Service, on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs assists individuals and families in poor financial circumstances by providing support, information and a referral service. Community Welfare Officers provide advice and assess eligibility for Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA). Other payments are available from the HSE to assist people with illness or disability. These are made in addition to the social welfare payments which are meant to improve people's quality of life.<sup>18</sup> In addition, a range of services are delivered in the local community care centres by the HSE. These services include Child Care and Family Support Services, Child Health, Psychological Services, all of which are instrumental in tackling the underlying causes of ASB.

Another role of the Health Service Executive (HSE) in preventing anti-social behaviour concerns the provision of housing for the homeless. This function is operated in conjunction with the local authority. In a situation where a tenant is evicted and a house re-possessed by the local authority on grounds of anti-social behaviour, the HSE assists tenants and tenant purchasers who fall behind in payments by removing the threat of eviction and subsequent homelessness when appropriate.

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<sup>18</sup> These payments include Blind Welfare Allowance, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Respite Care Grant and Mobility Allowance.



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