



Dolphin Decides

Insights and findings from a unique community information sharing, communications, consultation and preference discovery process in relation to the regeneration of Dolphin House and Park, Dublin



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A time for
big ideas
and big action

Introducing this landmark report, Jim Lawlor, Chair of Dolphin House Community Development Association explains why he believes it is a first for Ireland and a document that signposts the need for a bright, new, 'big idea' for the estate and for Ireland.

Changing times indeed. A neglected public flat complex near Dublin's city centre holds its own 'official' tribunal. A tribunal of enquiry, not inquiry. One where lawyers weren't paid millions. Where there was no political spin. A tribunal whose process and findings can be celebrated. Why? Because it was a truly civic phenomenon.

This landmark publication is a record of that amazing event. But this is not just a book of evidence. It also contains the verdict – the considered and definitive views of the residents of Dolphin House and Park.

To my knowledge, this is the first time a publication like this has ever been produced in Ireland. It is an historic document. It now holds a vital place in our local history and it should hold an equally influential place in our national history.

The first pages fill you in on the struggle to get to this point. It was truly daunting. Dolphin residents led the Dolphin Decides process. And all that hard work has paid off and has produced this landmark report. It must not be ignored or diluted.

It is vital that the findings in this report are implemented as soon as possible. Indeed, it can't happen soon enough for the residents of Dolphin House and Dolphin Park whose basic rights are being denied on a daily basis.

What has transpired in recent months on the estate – and in the ever-declining national economy – makes this report even more relevant. It's a time for new and big ideas. It is step one of a crucial 3-step process. This first piece was the 'finding out' bit. The next two stages are the bright master-planning required and finally the efficient delivery of a new and effective regeneration model for Dolphin.

The Dolphin House Community Development Association will work to ensure that the process that has been so successful to date can continue and is willing to drive these two next stages. The quality and effectiveness of that process is based on the key principles of community participation, the resourcing of that participation and the provision of skills to ensure the community is an equal and leading partner. This is why it succeeded and why it will deliver into the future.

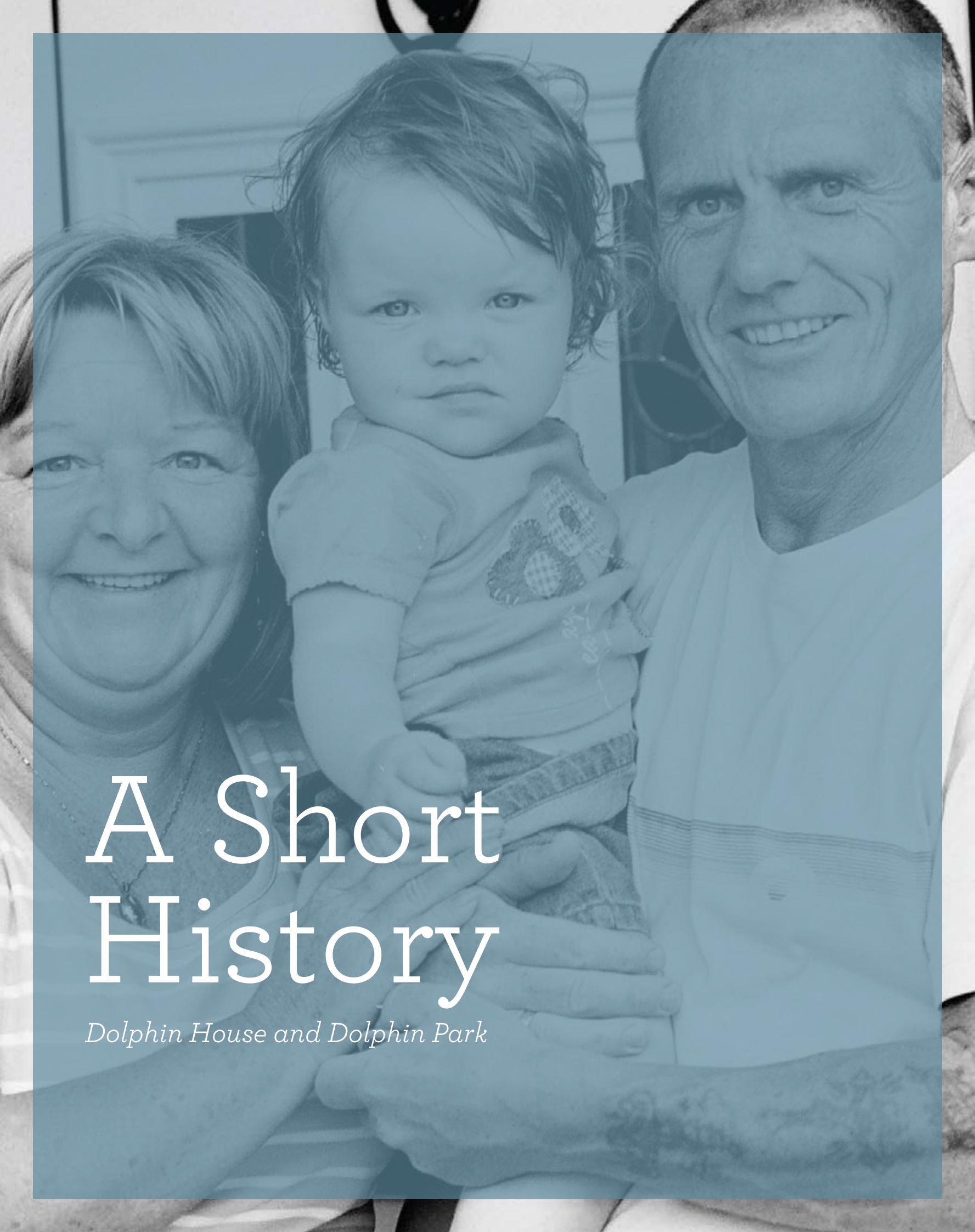
I would like to thank and acknowledge the sincerity of Dublin City Council for funding the architects, the communications and consultation facilitators and for continuing to actively engage and support the Joint Redevelopment Board. The Department of the Environment, together with City Council must now without delay fashion a new post-PPP delivery model, to ensure the residents' needs and vision outlined in this document become a reality. Other state agencies must also play their part. Together, in partnership, there is no reason why Dolphin should not become the new sparkling model for successful regeneration for the nation.

I am so proud to thank the residents of Dolphin House and Dolphin Park for contributing so much, for engaging so enthusiastically, for stating very clearly their needs and for dreaming of what a new future for Dolphin should contain. The authors of the report, Charlie O'Neill and the team at Public Communications Centre did a fantastic job. I would also like to thank the architects Sheridan Woods and the community facilitators, CAN, for their community sensitivity, their openness and vision and their willingness to embrace the community development principles. I would also like to thank Declan Redmond and Paula Russell from University College Dublin for contributing voluntarily in organising and overseeing the survey – a crucial evidence-based, professional part of this process – and Angela O'Neill from CAN for motivating the team to undertake it. Thanks also to Rory Hearne for co-ordinating the regeneration process, Wally Bowden for ensuring residents were supported in their involvement and to the other members of the Think Tank and Link Residents groups for their hard work and quality strategising.

I would also like to thank Fergus Finlay, the independent chair of the Joint Redevelopment Board for his dedication, determination, facilitation skills and good humour (much needed!) and Barnardo's financial support which has made much of this possible.

Changing times mean a time for change. We will work exhaustively to help shape the new big idea to deliver real and lasting change for Dolphin.

Dolphin has decided – wisely and clearly. That incredible clarity, which is so difficult to capture in community settings, gives us all – city and national policy makers and local people – the strongest of mandates to ensure that this particular tribunal of enquiry will shape a new history. A history which describes a sustainable physical and social regeneration for the people of Dolphin, a real boost for the Rialto area and a bright new model of regeneration for the city and the country.



A Short History

Dolphin House and Dolphin Park

After Ballymun, Dolphin House is Dublin's largest remaining public housing flat complex. It's situated just off the South Circular Road in Rialto close to the city centre and adjacent to the canal, key bus routes and within walking distance of the Luas. The estate also includes a cluster of senior citizens' housing called Dolphin Park. Dolphin House has 392 local authority residential units and Dolphin Park comprises 44 senior citizens' units with a combined population of around 920 residents. The total site area is 18.5 acres. Dolphin is a fully tenanted estate.

Physical and social problems

However, there are major physical and social problems on the estate. Much of the physical fabric is poor especially Dolphin Park's housing for the elderly which falls way below any minimum standards. On-going accommodation and maintenance problems have also dogged the wider estate including poor design and layout, insecure areas, severe sewage problems, dampness, overcrowding, unsuitable community facilities and in some cases no premises for vital community services.

Specifically, there is a serious problem in relation to waste clogging up baths, showers, sinks and toilets leaving many of these vital facilities unusable for hours and sometimes days. Because of this, at times, a pungent odour permeates the flats, and the external gulleys. This can make life severely uncomfortable and unhealthy for residents.

The absence of play areas and safe space means that many families are afraid to allow their children to leave the flat to play. As a result many children spend their day confined inside their flats with no exercise, play opportunities or interaction with other children.

In addition, because of historical neglect and exclusion, Dolphin experiences serious social problems; it suffers from many of the resultant indicators of poverty and in particular drug-related problems and issues of community safety.



Seizing opportunities

Despite these considerable challenges the community of Dolphin is strong, tightly-knit, pro-social and angry about the neglect over the years. In an effort to improve the circumstances and prospects for local people, the Dolphin House Community Development Association embarked on a programme of work during the beginning of the new millennium. This initiative was designed to secure the structures and mechanisms to deliver change. Regeneration had been happening in the Rialto and adjoining areas and also in various parts of Dublin city through these years. Given that Dolphin needed urgent and lasting improvement, local leadership felt that the estate might be in a position to benefit from an enlightened redevelopment/regeneration programme. Meanwhile, a number of new significant private developments on the boundary of the estate were applying for planning permission. It was felt that these could have a significant positive or negative impact on any redevelopment of the flats and that any new development would need to be sensitively designed and carefully planned so that it integrates in an intelligent and cohesive manner with the living community.

Dublin City Council plans

Prior to the Dolphin Decides Initiative outlined in this report, Dublin City Council had stated that its considered view was that the best way to deliver lasting improvements was to demolish and rebuild the estate through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement. In this regard, they completed a feasibility study for the redevelopment of Dolphin House/Park that included full demolition and rebuild with a 50:50 residential/commercial split. According to their plans, the current 436 social units would be replaced on site and there was to be approx 600 private units.

However, residents had very little input into this plan so community leadership advocated that local people should have a more meaningful say and active participation in planning and delivering any estate redevelopment.

A new way forward

The Joint Planning Process was formalised in November 2007 with the establishment of a Joint Redevelopment Board between Dublin City Council and the community. The Board comprises six residents' representatives (three residents, community worker and two Dolphin House voluntary groups representatives), three local councillors, two Dublin City Council representatives (the Project and Area Managers), with the Regeneration Worker as secretary. Fergus Finlay (CEO of the Barnardos charity) is the independent Chair of the Joint Redevelopment Board. Dublin City Council agreed that the community had to make its own decision about what it needed from regeneration and the Joint Redevelopment Board is the formal structure where decisions about regeneration take place jointly between Dublin City Council and the community.

The Board's terms of reference state:

"The JRB will facilitate a local understanding of Dublin City Council's feasibility study and other redevelopment plans, to explore them in the context of other redevelopment options and communicate these to the community so the community can make an informed decision about the future of their estate" and that "DCC will provide the necessary resources to the community to undertake this process" (JRB Terms of Reference, 2007, 1).

Sub-groups of the JRB were formalised with agreed Terms of Reference to ensure that ongoing day-to-day challenges and development issues in the Dolphin House/Park area will be addressed and dealt with at all stages in the process.

The Joint Redevelopment Board provides the opportunity for genuine resident participation in the planning and development of regeneration proposals. It also provides a space for the community to work with Dublin City Council to ensure day-to-day issues are addressed. This has ensured an improved level of accountability of service provision and estate management by Dublin City Council and other state agencies and a greater level of community involvement than would have been the case if the body did not exist. Furthermore, the independent Chair has played a vital role in ensuring both parties worked together in a coherent and efficient manner and provided many important interventions that ensured momentum along the way.

Despite these optimistic structures and signs of hope, the social, maintenance and physical problems on the estate continued, and in some cases worsened. However, the scene was set to begin a process to deliver real and lasting change for local families and the wider community.

The 'Dolphin Decides' process was to grow out of this new climate for change.

From cynicism to hope

At the outset of the 'Dolphin Decides' process the mood of residents was decidedly one of pessimism, fear and a cynicism around engaging in any process about their future. Pessimism and fear had grown as a result of residents' negative experiences on previous engagements with Dublin City Council. In particular, a process in 2003, when locals engaged and consulted on improvement plans that were never followed through, left residents with no trust or confident rationale to become involved in any future initiative.

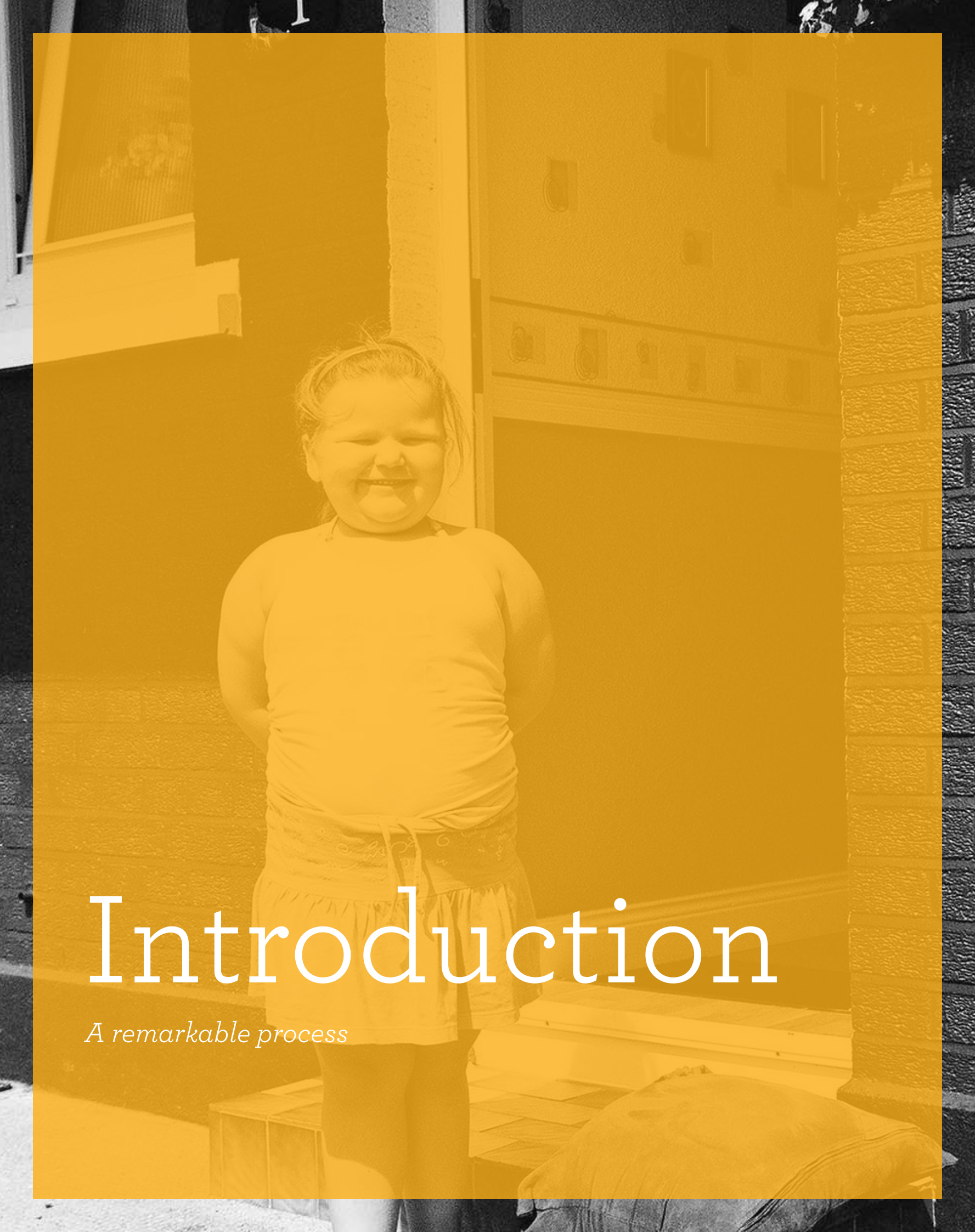
Coupled with this was a growing sense of fear and intimidation on the estate, mainly because of drug-related activities. This resulted in residents being frightened to talk about - or to be seen to engage on - issues to do with anti-social behaviour and drug dealing.

To counteract this, Dolphin's community leadership in partnership with the contracted consultants had to convince residents that

- the Dolphin Decides process was not an anti-social behaviour talking shop and
- that Dublin City Council and the Joint Redevelopment Board were genuine in their commitment that it would be a sincere engagement where residents voices would be respected and heard.

Through painstaking trust-building and incremental action, trust and active engagement were built. The prevailing mood changed to one of optimism and hope. By the end of the process there was a prevailing view among many residents that change was possible and that there were obtainable optimistic options for residents and families for the future.





Introduction

A remarkable process

In May 2008 Dolphin House Community Development Association embarked on a pioneering and remarkable programme of work. It had just successfully negotiated with Dublin City Council through the Joint Redevelopment Board the resources to design and implement a truly ground-breaking programme of consultation, research and communications. This was hard fought for in order to find out the layered views, feelings and ideas of the residents of Dolphin House and Dolphin Park with regards to how they saw their homes, their estate and their community and how the endemic problems might be addressed in a bright and effective way.

A landmark moment

After years of frustrating meetings and persuasion a milestone had been reached. The community was taking responsibility and control and was embarking on a best practice method of, on the one hand, giving residents quality and accessible information about regeneration and the possible pathways that lay before them, and on the other hand, engaging with each household to listen and learn. The Dolphin House Community Development Association achieved this by providing the settings and mechanisms for households to let the City know what they considered and sophisticated views and feelings were about their futures. And also what they felt about possible models of regeneration and estate improvement.

Technical assistance

REGENERATION WORKER

The Dolphin House Community Development Association had fought a difficult battle to fund the key position of Regeneration Worker. It had secured funding initially from the Canal Communities Partnership and subsequently from Dublin City Council. In February of this year DCC re-stated its support in principle and financially for the regeneration worker position but stated that at that time it was not in a position to fund the position on a full-time basis. Very fortunately for Dolphin House and the regeneration process, the Children's Charity, Barnardos then agreed to fund the position for two years – until March 2011. The regeneration worker was a key resource throughout the process. He supported the Dolphin House Community Development Association in its strategy around ensuring that day-to-day issues were addressed and supporting the community to build up its own capacity in terms of community leadership, understanding and capabilities.

The worker supported the Dolphin House Community Development Association in the Dolphin Decides process developing the briefs for technical expertise; in co-ordinating the tender management process; organising a community planning group with expertise from third level colleges and other communities going through regeneration; setting up block groups structures; co-ordinating the planning, consultation, and communications expertise to develop this report.

EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Dolphin House Community Development Association also negotiated resources to secure high-level technical assistance to do a number of things:

- *to assess the existing feasibility study carried out by Dublin City Council and its potential impact on the community, and;*
- *to develop viable potential alternative development options for Dolphin.*

As part of this, the Dolphin House Community Development Association invited tenders to supply technical assistance in community consultation and participation, communications, architecture and planning, financial viability and social regeneration. They subsequently called this new initiative 'Dolphin Decides'.

Anyone who has experienced estate redevelopment or regeneration will tell you it's a long journey. In many regeneration journeys residents are simply passengers. From the beginning of this process, the Dolphin House Community Development Association wanted residents to sit firmly in the driving seat.

What's more they had secured the resources – this is often the crucial missing key for communities – to utilise the best methods and to engage expertise on their side, on their terms. Sure enough this first stage of the journey turned out to be demanding but it was also a very enlightening and rewarding one.

‘Dolphin Decides’ and this report

This document is the detailed testimony of that journey. It provides a description of the process including all the evidence gathered along the way – the various reports, consultation processes, questionnaires, meetings, events, architects engagement, procurement options, financial viability information and much more.

It also gives you a factual summary of the outcomes and findings from all of this. Reflecting the struggle of people’s lives, these findings are deep, sophisticated and layered. So, to assist the reader this report also provides a helpful commentary from a local perspective on interpretations arising from the science of the findings.

Signposts forward

Finally, to continue to foster the spirit of partnership that has been carefully constructed between local leadership and Dublin City Council, this report also provides some helpful suggestions around next constructive key steps. This is to ensure that momentum is maintained and that the urgent and critical changes that are needed for children, adults, families and older people on the estate are given the best possible launchpad so that action can happen despite these difficult economic times. This is also a noble aspiration of City Council and indeed a core duty.

The Dolphin House Community Development Association also firmly believe that the Dolphin experience can be a best-practice pilot for the city and the country – and, if a little bravery and inspirational leadership stands up – it can become a wonderful new model of regeneration in the post PPP era.



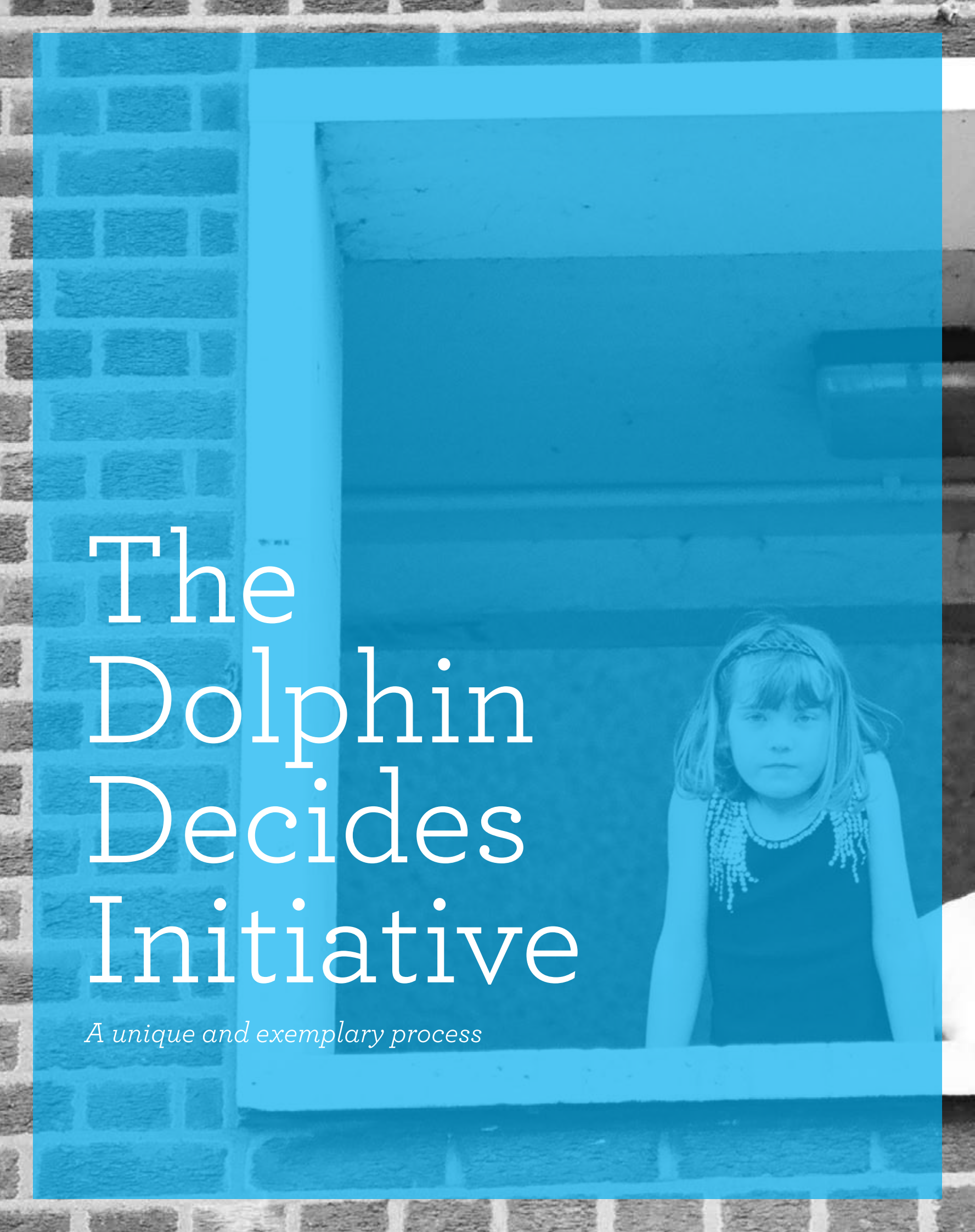
NEWSLETTER 3
APRIL 2009

WHAT
DOLPHIN
DECIDED

THE CONRS RESULTS

at the
Please read
your neighborhood

Dear Resident,
You're probably wondering about the overall outcome of the
Community Visits, discussions,

A young girl with a headband and beaded necklace is looking out from a window. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The background shows a brick wall and a window frame.

The Dolphin Decides Initiative

A unique and exemplary process

Four key influencing factors made this unique process exemplary:

1

Meaningful partnership

Firstly, it was partnership at its most intelligent and progressive. Though the battle to secure the process was frustrating, once it was in place, it was owned and supported by all key players. It was an example of City Council showing bright leadership and new locally-designed structures being allowed to work effectively – in this case community leadership and the Joint Redevelopment Board under the talented chairmanship of Fergus Finlay.

2

Quality as a benchmark

Secondly, it was a quality process. More often than not, excluded communities don't have the expertise or human capacity to design and implement sophisticated and proven methods of information-giving, consultation and fact-finding. The Dolphin House Community Development Association (DHCD) – because of its legacy of hard work and the emergence of new meaningful partnership ways of working – was able to demand and secure quality tools and external expertise to ensure that the process would be at once scientifically sound and socially sensitive.

3

Adequate resources

Thirdly, they had the resources to underpin the delivery of quality. In this instance, Dublin City Council demonstrated vision, pragmatism and a duty of care. This not only gave the Dolphin community control of the quality standards – it also made them take responsibility to ensure good outcomes and decrease dependency. Also, having adequate resources means that both the city and the community can stand firmly over the results. And all parties can own the implications arising around the urgent need for action.

4

Exemplary community development

Lastly, but importantly, local residents stood up to the plate and got involved. Dolphin's legacy of neglect, unfair stigmatisation, social exclusion and drugs problems, makes it far more challenging for residents to become active, to be visible in their activism, to believe someone is listening and to trust that change is possible.

In many communities local activism means that a small number of people shoulder all the weight while the vast majority are unable see a place for themselves to participate. However, in the Dolphin House setting, community development has moved onto the next level. More and more local people are getting involved both in the day-to-day battle for estate improvements and in the longer-term challenge of securing lasting physical and social change. It's a normal reality that not everyone wants to, or is able to, get involved at a deep level. This carefully-designed process, described in detail later in this document, allowed residents to get involved at different levels appropriate to their availability, interest or capacity.

1

6 Key components of the process

The process had six important strands:

1. *Designing and managing*
2. *Recruiting and preparing*
3. *Branding, informing and educating*
4. *Listening, debating and finding out*
5. *Completing the work programmes*
6. *Reporting*

Designing and managing

Once it was clear that an exemplary initiative was possible the Dolphin House Community Development Association began the important process of imagining how it might best work. What shape would it take? How could it be managed for best outcomes? It was clear it would have to:

- Be driven locally by strong and sensitive leadership
- Activate as much grassroots participation and engagement as possible
- Have flexible but robust structures

The Dolphin House Community Development Association set in train a number of crucial actions and new ways of working. At its core was a brave plan to reorganise and regenerate community engagement and to begin to grow new leadership.

Implementing a new structure for participation

Because – for historic and more recent reasons – there was a deficit of participation at many levels by residents, the Dolphin House Community Development Association decided to energise community involvement by setting up a precinct leadership structure. Each block of flats became its own community organisational precinct with a group of supported active residents – known as ‘link residents’ in each block who fed information to and from the households within their block. They also motivated residents to become involved and attend meetings and events.

These ‘Blocks Groups’ then met regularly as a group itself with the Development Association and at times with the external consultants, so that individual blocks’ concerns fed into, and became part of, the wider, united, estate-wide agenda. These Blocks Groups representatives effectively trained on the job, developed key skills and knowledge and built their capacity during the process. This is an often hidden benefit of providing technical aid to communities.

This structure underpinned, and was a key component of, all the elements of the ‘Dolphin Decides’ process such as community surveys, information and feedback meetings, briefing and engagement with external consultants, informal information sharing, study visits, communications, event management and reporting back.

The Development Association engaged positively with the Joint Redevelopment Board, chaired by Fergus Finlay. This body was treated throughout the process as the sole, competent and proper forum for providing updates on progress, discussing issues and problem solving any concerns between city council, wider Rialto interests and local leadership.

The Dolphin House Community Development Association also negotiated with the external experts a dynamic way of working that delivered maximum participation, learning and information-sharing across the estate.

2

Recruiting and preparing

Contracting proven and trusted external expertise

In order for local people to be facilitated to understand the implications of Dublin City Council's feasibility proposal and also for them to understand and develop their own viable alternatives, the Development Association issued a Request for Tenders for consultants to provide expertise in two core disciplines:

- Architecture, urban design and planning
- Community consultation and communications

After a rigorous tendering and interview process Sheridan Woods, Architects and Urban Planners, and separately, a consortium made up of Public Communications Centre and Community Action Network were appointed to carry out important and challenging contracts of work.

The Development Association also engaged with University College Dublin's School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy to secure expertise in:

- Professional qualitative and quantitative research and data collection.

The terms of reference and work programmes of these three sets of technical aid consultants were discussed and agreed. Everyone also made a commitment that the three sets of lead experts would work together in an integrated way and in the pursuit of best practice, would garner as much public involvement and empowerment as possible during the process.

Key meetings and milestones to progress these connected work programmes were set and protocols for engaging with and reporting to the Development Association were set down.

3

Branding, informing and educating

A core component of the Public Communications Centre/Community Action Network tender proposal was to ensure from the early stages of the initiative that the greatest possible number of people across the entire estate and Dolphin Park would become aware that an important consultation and feedback event was happening.

CAN and PCC were anxious to create a sense of an 'always on' communications strategy over the months of the process. It was felt that this also needed to create a sense of energy and interest while at the same time, not raising unrealisable expectations among residents. It was in this context that the 'Dolphin Decides' brand was developed. This was used throughout the process and created a sense of an active initiative which had serious goals and was timebound.

Residents needed to be as fully informed as possible if they were to make a bright and meaningful assessment of existing and future options. Therefore Sheridan Woods, Public Communications Centre and Community Action Network, together with the leadership and the Blocks Groups, community development worker and regeneration worker, instigated a programme of education and information. This involved the production of high quality newsletters, public meetings, workshops, site visits, a regeneration community festival, and regeneration-themed community development work by local services for children, young people and adults.

4

Listening, debating and finding out

Once the education programme and information sharing initiatives gained momentum, local leadership in conjunction with the external technical aid providers began to devise and offer the tools, settings and events to listen to and document the views, worries, ideas, vision and preferences of as many residents as possible across the estate. These tools and mechanisms included things like:

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Art programmes
- Meetings
- Workshops
- Work by local services with key groups like children, young people, adults and elderly
- Community events like festivals
- Site visits to other regeneration projects

In all of these settings and events, the views and ideas of residents were documented and fed into the Development Association and also into the work of the external consultants.

5

Completing the work programmes

Alongside the ongoing intensive and valuable leadership work of local community development, the work programmes of the contracted experts had to run their course to completion and meet key deadlines. Because they were working in an integrated way, their work programmes integrated into each core component of the Dolphin Decides process.

ARCHITECTURE, URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING

Sheridan Woods, Architects and Urban Planners, were engaged to provide technical support to assist local people in:

- A. assessing City Council's proposed plan for Dolphin and
- B. to develop, based on strong analysis of needs and issues identified by local people and leadership, viable alternative options to improve and/or regenerate the estate.

Their full report including a summary is contained in Appendix III.

Sheridan Woods programme of work involved:

- Carrying out a survey and analysis of the existing social, economic and environmental context.
- Doing site visits with residents to a range of regeneration projects and estates, including O' Devaney Gardens, Marmion Court, Poplar Row, Fatima Mansions and St. Michael's Estate.
- Completing an assessment of Grove Village, Manchester, which was an example of particular regeneration processes being undertaken in the United Kingdom.
- Completing a SWOT analysis of the Dolphin Estate
- Identifying and getting agreement on key Vision Statements and a template for assessing any proposed development options
- Coming up with a range of alternative development options and comparing them in terms of meeting local needs.
- Attending key community leadership meetings and also wider residents meetings and workshops to assess their needs and also to explain Sheridan Woods' work process and the options they developed.

To define a vision or set of agreed key vision statements, it was necessary to identify the agreed social, economic and environmental aspirations for the estate. The main issues which continuously emerged were safety, drugs-related problems, regeneration of the built environment and larger unit sizes. These issues informed both the vision statements and the criteria identified for assessing any development options.

The agreed Vision Statements were:

Social Vision Statement

'A safe, inclusive and active Dolphin Community, with a broad range of local recreational facilities and activities designed for all ages. A Dolphin Estate that allows for the evolution and growth of an integrated, healthy, and vibrant community'

Economic Vision Statement

'A diverse and buoyant local economy sustained by a locally educated and trained workforce'

Environmental Vision Statement

'A regenerated Dolphin Estate, that is safe, attractive, well maintained and environmentally friendly. A Dolphin Estate that provides high-quality housing and community facilities for the residents that they serve'

The agreed Assessment Criteria were also grouped under Social, Economic and Environmental themes. They included many important issues like maintaining the existing population; meeting the housing requirements of existing residents; providing for a mix of tenures; ensuring a mix of unit types; providing a range of quality community infrastructure; delivering active well-lit streets and spaces; providing education and training facilities; building retail and commercial facilities; developing housing units that are energy efficient and environmentally-friendly; ensuring adequate open space; ensuring appropriate building heights and effective maintenance and management of the estate.

Identification and Comparative Assessment of Development Options

Based on their research, community consultation, programme of work and the development of the vision statements, three development options were identified by Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners. These were carefully developed in order to provide residents with a series of sample choices that would meet their identified needs to varying degrees and at various scales of development. Based on their research and engagement with community, Sheridan Woods set themselves key criteria for development of options:

- *A viable community; enough people and enough stability to support a vibrant local economic and social life.*
- *Feasibility; that it would be doable in terms of economics*
- *In line with the vision of the present population.*

The options they developed provided residents with understandable plans each having different social and physical implications in terms of living in Dolphin House during and after the development work. These options included:

Option 1.

Refurbishment

Option 2.

Partial Refurbishment and Intensification

Option 3A.

Complete Demolition and Redevelopment

These three options and the original Dublin City Council plan (Option 3B) were presented in a special newsletter which was circulated to all residents and services on the estate. Options three and four were presented as options 3A and 3B as they both envisaged complete demolition and redevelopment. All four options were objectively explained and analysed in terms of their scope, impact and how well they might need the self-identified needs of people. Each option was illustrated as below.



DOLPHIN DECIDES

The steps to making a decision read your

Dolphin Process
3 simple and powerful ways to have your say on Dolphin House/Park

1 Read about the community options explained in

The architects who have been hired by COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION in Dolphin House/Park have prepared a wider area, and listening to residents' views. Please have a good read to make sure you're

Option 1: Refurbishment

Sheridan Woods explained that this option to refurbish the Dolphin Estate represented the least amount of intervention in terms of the physical regeneration of the estate. The main objective of this development option was to alleviate anti-social behaviour problems through good design. However, they note that anti-social behaviour is a social problem which a physical solution on its own cannot fully address. In this option they also identified minor interventions to improve the recreational value of semi-private spaces and the living standards of individual units. It included proposals like lift access to all blocks; a controlled access system to communal staircases; private balcony spaces; relocation and improvement of car parking; children's and young people's play facilities and landscaped communal spaces; new portacabin buildings for community uses, and; improvements to existing wastewater infrastructure.

Designated On-Street Parking	
Landscaped Courtyard & Children's Play Space	
Controlled Lobby & Lift Access	
Private Balcony / Open Spaces	
Refurbished Residential Units	
New Children's Playground & Multi-Purpose Pitches	
New Portacabin Community Buildings	
New Bin Storage	



Option 2: Partial Refurbishment and Intensification

Intensification means increasing and maximising the facilities, buildings and activity on site to create a more vibrant and sustainable environment. This development option proposed the demolition of the existing accommodation at Dolphin Park, the horse shoe block adjacent to Herberton Road and the long blocks in order to facilitate this. They proposed that refurbishment should also happen on the remaining horseshoe blocks. This option also suggested that new blocks be constructed immediately north of the remaining horse shoe blocks in order to create a closed perimeter block. The existing three bedroom units were to be refurbished to two bedrooms within the horseshoe blocks to bring them up to current standards where possible.

Designated On-Street Parking 

 Landscaped Courtyard & Children's Play Space

 Controlled Lobby & Lift Access

 Private Balcony / Open Spaces

 Ground Floor Retail / Commercial Units with Residential Units on Upper Floors

 Retail and Commercial Building

 Refurbished Residential Units

 New Residential Units

 Public Open Space

 Community Facilities



Option 3A: Complete Redevelopment

This scenario involved the complete redevelopment of the Dolphin Estate, the demolition of all existing buildings on the site and the construction of new buildings, streets and spaces. This option examined the feasibility of phasing the overall regeneration of the estate and limiting the extent to which the de-tenanting process would occur. This proposal sought to reconcile urban design considerations with the existing block structure and the overall phased development of the site.

- New Residential Units
- Ground Floor Retail / Commercial Units with Residential Units on Upper Floors
- Retail and Commercial Buildings
- New Community Building
- Public Open Space
- Courtyards



Option 3B: Dublin City Council Proposal

This option was prepared in October 2007 by MCO Projects Ltd. on behalf of Dublin City Council. This scenario also comprised the demolition and redevelopment of the estate but because it preceded the Dolphin Decides initiative, it was obviously not informed by the baseline study, vision statements and criteria prepared in the course of this study by the Sheridan Woods architects. It proposed the construction of 1036 units in total, comprising 436 social housing units and 600 private housing units.

- New Residential Units
- Ground Floor Retail / Commercial Units with Residential Units on Upper Floors
- Retail and Commercial Buildings
- Educational Uses
- Public Open Space
- Courtyards





COMMUNITY CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Sheridan Woods work programme needed to be underpinned and guided by sound community development principles and ways of working. The Dolphin House Community Development Association was anxious that the work of the architects and the work of the community consultation/communications programme led by Community Action Network and Public Communications Centre would integrate and ensure the best possible experience, learning and capacity building for residents and leadership. In fact, this was a core goal also of the external technical experts when they tendered for the task.

If residents were to be aware that an important consultation, listening and decision-making exercise was about to happen, they needed to be informed and persuaded to get involved. They needed to be given quality information and learning opportunities. They were also about to embark on a process where they would be provided with tools like workshops, questionnaires and focus groups to assist them in feeding in their views, feelings and ideas. If residents were to understand the complicated issues of regeneration and urban planning and if they were to be enabled to make sound and wise decisions about what they wanted for their own futures and for the wider estate, that information and education programme needed to be appropriate and effective.

To further increase the challenge, a deadline had to be met – all of this was to ultimately happen within a seven month timeframe. This wouldn't have been possible without good local structures and strong community planning. Public Communications Centre and Community Action Network worked deeply and extensively with the Dolphin House Community Development Association. Together they designed and implemented a comprehensive plan to meet this demanding brief.

Some of the main components of this were:

A Local Communications Plan

A comprehensive plan was devised to ensure that local people were informed and understood the process. This involved devising the branding and key messages for the initiative. 'Dolphin Decides – Residents together shaping our neighbourhood by October 30th' became the identifying banner for the initiative.

Two editions of a high quality newsletter were written, edited, designed, printed and distributed to every household on the estate. The first one introduced and explained the initiative and encouraged people to take part. It outlined the timeline that was to unfold and how people could become more informed or feed back their views. This also contained a survey in order to inform the architects and the Dolphin Decides Initiative of the needs and priorities of residents in terms of the physical and social environment. The second edition of the newsletter presented various community-inspired development scenarios for people to consider.

A giant banner was erected on the gable end of a central block of flats to ensure every resident and visitor knew the process was up and running.

Residents View-finding Meetings

At the end of June and the beginning of July an initial series of seven meetings – one for each block and one for the elderly in Dolphin Park – was organised to get a clear picture from residents of what they wanted from any future regeneration. Using innovative picture prompts and key proactive questions combined with dialogue sessions, the meetings served to begin to get a view of what people thought. These sessions were also successful in spreading the word that something important was happening and in beginning a cross-estate conversation.

Meeting with architects

Later in July the community met directly with the Dolphin House Development Association's architects to give their views, aspirations, needs and ideas. This was designed and facilitated using best practice and exemplary community development principles.

Integration into local services and events

The themes of regeneration and future community planning were integrated into various estate-based programmes with children, young people and adults. The Dolphin Summer festival in July was themed 'Dolphin Decides' and provided information and opportunities to feed back.

A survey of young people regarding their views, feelings and ideas for regeneration was organised through the Rilato Youth Project and fed back to influence the Dolphin Decides programme.

Social Regeneration

An important day-long session on social regeneration was designed and hosted for local workers, leadership and residents. This garnered some key thoughts and ideas on priorities for any social regeneration plan which would have to accompany any physical redevelopment (see Appendix IV).

Newsletter Two

In late October a second and very important newsletter was issued. This profiled the various options developed by the architects and Dublin City Council's plan. The newsletter went through each in detail and analysed their strengths and weaknesses against local priorities. It asked residents to consider each option carefully and platformed the landmark UCD community survey which was to follow where they would be asked to rate each option and other important questions.

Architects Meeting with Block Groups.

With careful facilitation, on Monday October 20th the architects shared their analysis and insights with Block Group representatives and community leadership on the various options they developed and Dublin City Council's plan. Participants were encouraged to interrogate each option and to utilise the architects' expertise and insights.

UCD Community Survey

From the outset of the Dolphin Decides process it had been agreed that a comprehensive door-to-door survey would have to be undertaken in order to capture accurately the views and preferences of residents at a key moment in time. This survey was to be a landmark and central component of the Dolphin Decides initiative. When combined with the outcomes of the various community meetings and the social regeneration session, its findings would form a definitive set of tangible results of the entire Dolphin Decides process. It would need to capture not only the quantitative and headline preferences of residents, probably more importantly, it was also designed to capture some key qualitative information – the nuances and layers of insight behind those quantitative findings. A summary of these survey results are outlined in the next chapter of this report. The full survey report is contained in Appendix VI. The survey form itself is contained in Appendix V.

In order for the survey to work to maximum effect the Dolphin House Development Association knew it would have to prepare local leadership and local residents well. It was imperative that as many households as possible would understand and have had time to think about the questions they would be asked in the survey. Having engaged in a comprehensive information-sharing, communications, community engagement process over months, the Development Association were confident that a critical mass of residents was now ready to complete this landmark questionnaire survey.

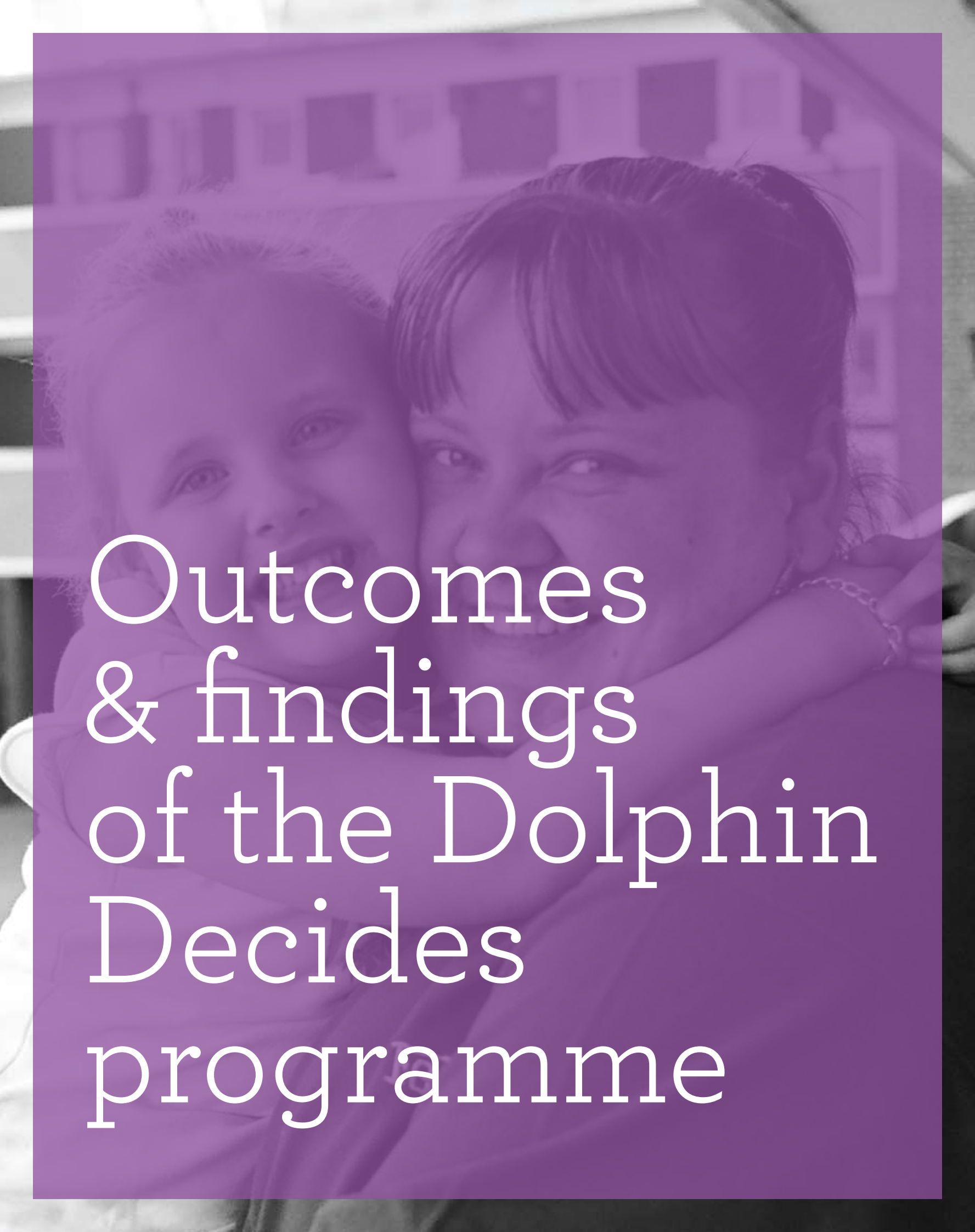
After a series of briefings, University College Dublin's School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy, kindly agreed to partner up with Dolphin House Community Development Association. They were charged to help plan, design, oversee and ensure good practice around the implementation of the survey and the processing of the findings in order to guarantee the scientific integrity of the initiative. For Dolphin, and the Dolphin Decides initiative, UCD's involvement was an invaluable component of technical aid that contributed enormously to the quality and integrity of the process. Furthermore, the lead principals from UCD also agreed to engage at a deep level with the community and the other technical aid consultants to ensure the survey would be effective and would contribute to capacity-building and leadership development on the estate.

A comprehensive, accessible and practical survey form was designed and developed. It contained carefully constructed key questions around each development option and Dublin City Council's original plan. It was designed to ascertain the layered views and preferences of residents while not raising unrealistic expectations around what was possible in terms of a regeneration plan for Dolphin. It also garnered crucial information on what residents felt about for instance, private housing on the site; their own housing-type preferences; background information on their own housing circumstances; their views on the Dolphin Decides community engagement process; the effectiveness of newsletters and so on.

Residents and workers were trained in how to complete the survey door-to-door; how to engage residents in its completion without influencing responses; and the process and governance was overseen by the UCD principals.

The survey was an enormous success. A total of 352 household surveys were completed achieving a huge response rate of 80 per cent far exceeding the needed statistical norm. It also attracted a healthy response rate from each of the blocks and from Dolphin Park ensuring that no single block was over-represented in the survey. The survey thus provided an opportunity for the majority of households in Dolphin House and Dolphin Park to voice their considered opinion.





Outcomes
& findings
of the Dolphin
Decides
programme

Key findings from Sheridan Woods final report

A copy of Sheridan Woods full report is provided in Appendix III. The following is a summary of the key issues and findings contained in their final report.

Sheridan Woods analysed the four development options based on their identification of community priorities and needs – 1 Refurbishment, 2 Partial refurbishment and Intensification, 3A Complete demolition and redevelopment (Sheridan Woods) and 3B Complete demolition and redevelopment (Dublin City Council’s original plan). Sheridan Woods social and environmental assessment of the development options reveals that the greatest social and environmental gain can be derived from development option 3A. Integrated development is achieved with respect to urban form, streets and spaces. An identifiable neighbourhood centre is proposed comprising a community centre and public park. Building heights range from 3 to 6 storeys and as such generate appropriate public and semi-private open spaces. Furthermore, the proposed layout has been designed to be phased over the regeneration process and could potentially occur in 7 phases, providing for continuous review of the master plan and improvement of design standards throughout the development process.

An economic assessment of the development proposals was also undertaken and is appended to their report (Appendix E of their report). This assessment is based on construction costs for each development option as prepared by Davis Langdon PKS and the current market value of residential and retail and commercial property in the area. In this regard:

- *Development option 1 generates no capital and would rely entirely on government funding*
- *Development option 2 would generate a loss under current market conditions and would also rely heavily on government funding*
- *Development option 3A has the potential to make a profit under current market conditions subject to lower construction costs, and*
- *Development option 3B would make a profit with respect to current market conditions and the range of construction costs identified.*

From their report it’s clear that development option 3B is the most advantageous generating a potential profit under current market conditions. However, the environmental assessment of this option is not as positive as development option no. 3A given the significant building heights and the resulting injury to open space, particularly within courtyard spaces, poor integration with surrounding buildings, and the limited potential to phase the development over any more than 4 phases.

Sheridan Woods make the point that potential to maximise the economic viability of option 3A could be provided for by increasing the number of private units achieved through more efficient design solutions which do not require significant increases in building height or a reduction in open space. They also note that any increase in the number of private units on the estate would improve the overall mix of tenure achieved and as such would have a positive social impact.

They come to the conclusion that option 3A subject to possible variations, represents the most appropriate development option for the regeneration of the Dolphin Estate.

They suggest that the implementation of this option would benefit from a partnership comprising voluntary housing associations, community representatives, representatives from Dublin City Council, a private developer and financial backers.

They make the point that by fixing the private developers profits, excess profits could be reinvested in the community through the sale of social housing units to residents by means of affordable housing schemes or by means of a social programme.

Furthermore, they point out that a partnership could provide for the joint preparation of detailed design briefs for individual phases thereby ensuring a greater input from community representatives throughout the regeneration process.

The outcomes and findings of the Dolphin Decides process are contained in four key summaries gleaned from the following reports and results:

1. Sheridan Woods Architects final report
2. Report on the Blocks Groups meetings
3. Report on the Social Regeneration session
4. The results of the UCD community survey

Key findings from Blocks Group meetings

Peter Dorman of Community Action Network facilitated these important sessions held on the 20th and 23rd of October 2008. A copy of the full report is provided in Appendix II.

The meetings were held to consult residents on their reactions to the four options for regeneration previously outlined in this document.

1. Refurbishment

2. Partial Refurbishment and Intensification

3A. Complete Demolition and Redevelopment (Sheridan Woods)

3B. Complete Demolition and Redevelopment (Dublin City Council)

At both meetings, the options were presented and residents analysed and commented on them within smaller groups containing neighbours from their own block. Each participant also filled in a one page questionnaire to identify a front-runner a non-runner and which options they could live with. 88 residents attended the meetings and 55 filled out the questionnaire.

Of these;

- 48 saw option 3A as a front runner
- 2 saw option 1 as a front runner.
- 3 saw option 3B as a front runner.
- 1 saw option 1 as a front runner.
- (1 did not indicate a front-runner, but wanted demolition)

- 48 would rule out option 3B
- 10 would rule out option 1
- 9 would rule out option 2
- Nobody would rule out option 3A.

- 8 indicated that they could live with option 1 where they had another option as a front-runner.
- 8 indicated that they could live with option 2 where they had another option as a front-runner.
- 1 indicated that they could live with option 3A where they had another option as a front-runner.

The preference.

Option 3A was preferred because;

- It replaces completely the existing units (total demolition)
- It has lower heights than the other total demolition option i.e.; option 3B.
- It has lower population density than the other total demolition option i.e.; option 3B.
- It offers more of a chance of getting preferred accommodation type (house) than the other total demolition option i.e.; option 3B.
- It has less private development than the other total demolition option i.e.; option 3B.

While an overwhelming preference for option 3A is indicated, conditionality and questions remain. These include;

- *How many people can be accommodated in houses albeit as part of a duplex?*
- *How many storeys are required? (The lower the blocks the more preferable generally.)*
- *Where will people actually live on the estate?*
- *How will the public and private relate to each other? What impact will a new population have on the existing community?*
- *How would the estate be managed?*
- *What process will be used to take the decision?*
- *What level of choice will people have about where they are accommodated and who their neighbours will be?*
- *Will accommodation be improved to a standard that will make it worthwhile moving?*
- *What community facilities and services are envisaged? How will a social agenda be catered for?*

The minority voice.

Some participants preferred option 1 and one person wanted no change at all. Those preferring option one were mostly concerned at being sure of their neighbours.

NEWSLETTER 3
APRIL 2009

WHAT
DOLPHIN
DECIDED

THE RESIDENTS COMMITTEE

This
at the
Please read
your neighbour

Dear Resident,
You're probably wondering about the overall outcome of the
discussio

Key findings on the Social Regeneration Session

A copy of the full report is provided in Appendix IV.

This meeting was held on the 19th of September 2008 and was attended by 27 people who are involved in supporting the community work in Dolphin House. Its purpose was to:

- *Begin to scope out Social Regeneration priorities for Dolphin House;*
- *To consider the opportunities for progressing this agenda through the physical design of a regeneration.*

The meeting was facilitated by Peter Dorman of Community Action Network and involved a number of practical and creative exercises and brainstorming for the smaller subgroups and the entire attendees. These exercises explored issues like basic needs, inequality, barriers to enjoying full social engagement; the effect of antisocial behaviour and intimidation; the negative effects of poverty and unemployment; health impoverishment; poor literacy; social exclusion; poor community and recreation facilities; poor maintenance; mental health especially depression and stress; limited appropriate education opportunities and other issues.

In terms of solutions and a vision of what might improve the social regeneration of the area the key insights that emerged were:

- *Participation by all age groups in meaningful decision-making structures*
- *Provision of resources to support a social agenda.*
- *Delivering on basic services such as policing.*
- *Challenging the current policy of privatisation.*
- *The need to strengthen existing initiatives and community facilities for all age groups and cohorts so they can become more sustainable*
- *Creating opportunities and spaces for arts and cultural activities.*
- *Creating an integrated structure to facilitate joint planning.*
- *Learning from the work of other communities on a social agenda.*
- *Developing innovative educational responses*
- *Addressing the fear of anti-social behaviour and reclaiming the public realm with pro-social and carnival activities.*
- *Developing a positive vision of Dolphin as something people can unite around; "The Great Estate!"*
- *Developing an ambitious inspiring plan '21 years-21 steps' from pregnant mother to 21 years old.*
- *Residents and workers could engage in a public campaign on the issue to pressurise authorities to act.*
- *Workers need to build alliances with those in other communities on the issue.*
- *The development of the Dolphin Alliance*
- *The Social Agenda should be based around the principle of maintaining and sustaining the community and insisting on state support for that.*
- *That the social regeneration brief needs to be built into the physical plan for the area.*

Key findings from the community survey overseen by UCD

A copy of the full survey results is provided in Appendix VI.

As explained earlier this was a comprehensive door-to-door survey to capture accurately the views and preferences of residents at a key moment in time. When combined with the outcomes of the various community meetings and the social regeneration session, its findings form a definitive set of tangible results of the entire Dolphin Decides process.

The survey was an enormous success. A total of 352 household surveys were completed achieving a huge response rate of 80 per cent far exceeding the needed statistical norm. It also attracted a healthy response rate from each of the blocks and from Dolphin Park ensuring that no single block was over-represented in the survey. The survey thus provided an opportunity for the majority of households in Dolphin House and Dolphin Park to voice their considered opinion.

The survey asked peoples' opinions on each of the individual options separately to explore what people thought of each option. During January and February, UCD's School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy analysed the survey data and the following results emerged:

Option 1 Refurbishment

MORE NEGATIVE THAN POSITIVE RESPONSES

Of those who gave their opinion on this option 56 per cent thought it either poor or very poor. Only 25 per cent thought it either good or very good.

When they examined the opinions across the blocks there were some differences. For example, 70 per cent of respondents on block 1 thought it poor or very poor. However, and by contrast, 58 per cent of respondents in block 3 thought it good or very good.

Option 2 Refurbishment, demolition and some new development

VARIED RESPONSES

Of those who gave their opinion on option 2, approximately 36 per cent of respondents thought it either good or very good. Twenty eight per cent thought it average while 37 per cent thought it either poor or very poor. Thus, there was less agreement on this option, perhaps reflecting the varied components.

Over half of those who answered this question in blocks 3 and 5 thought this option was either good or very good.

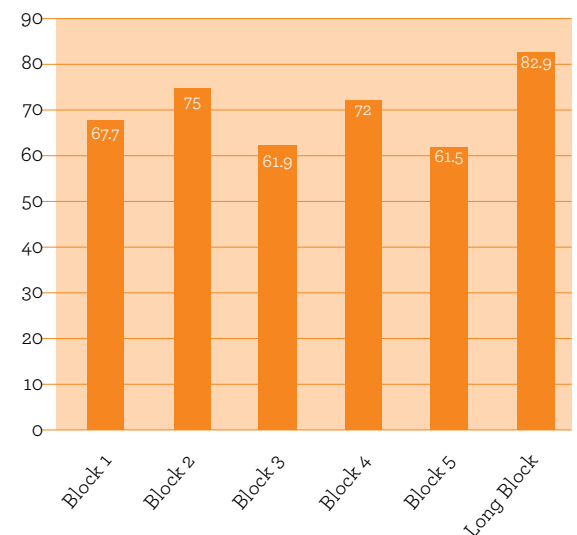
Option 3A Complete demolition and redevelopment (Sheridan Woods)

MORE POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE RESPONSES

Of those who gave their opinion on option 3A, approximately 72 per cent of respondents thought it either good or very good. Only ten per cent were of the view that it was poor or very poor. Thus there was much more positive than negative opinion on this particular option.

There was very little variation across blocks with regard to option 3A below. However, there was most agreement in the Long Block with nearly 83 per cent of the respondents in the Long Block saying this option was either good or very good.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ANSWERING GOOD AND VERY GOOD IN RELATION TO OPTION A



Option 3B Complete demolition and redevelopment (Dublin City Council)

MOSTLY NEGATIVE RESPONSE

Of those who gave their opinion on option 3B, approximately 17 per cent of respondents thought it either good or very good. However, almost two thirds (63 per cent) of respondents thought it either poor or very poor. So of all of the 4 options this got the most negative of responses.

While overall this option was thought of as poor, 36 per cent of respondents in block 2 thought it either good or very good.

The preferred Option: Complete Demolition and Rebuild

A key question of the survey was which of the 4 options residents preferred. In this question the residents were in a sense comparing all of the options.

In answering this question 67 per cent indicated that they preferred demolition and redevelopment. Only 6 per cent preferred option 1 (refurbishment) and 15 per cent preferred option 2 (Refurbishment, some demolition and new build), 7.7 per cent said they would like none of the options and 4.4 per cent they would like to keep things as they are. Of those who chose demolition and redevelopment, 93 per cent chose the Development Association's plan for redevelopment (Option 3A), with only 8 per cent choosing the Dublin City Council option (Option 3B).

Differences between blocks and Dolphin Park preferences

When we examine the overall preference by block there are some interesting differences. A quarter of respondents in block 4 favoured option 2. Blocks 1 and 2 had had higher proportions of respondents who preferred option 3A. While the long block and block 1 had the most respondents who said keep things as they are.

While throughout Dolphin House residents overwhelmingly opted for complete demolition and rebuild, over 90 per cent of respondents in Dolphin Park (senior citizens) indicated that they favoured none of the major regeneration options. The Dolphin park residents provided detailed qualitative comments regarding their needs in the survey which can be summarised as having a separate bedroom, and an extra bedroom, a bigger kitchen, a bathroom with a shower, communal facilities and better security. Many Dolphin Park residents wanted more detailed information on senior citizen accommodation.

Private Housing

Most residents accept a mix of public and private households on the site but not too much.

When asked about whether the inclusion of private housing in some of the options was a good idea, 42 per cent of respondents agreed while 35 per cent disagreed. The remainder either did not know or the question was not answered.

When asked about what was an acceptable level of private housing 47 per cent said that a maximum of 30% of private housing was acceptable, with 23 per cent of respondents saying that over 30% private housing was acceptable.

Personal housing preferences

Residents express a preference for traditional housing. Residents were asked about the type of accommodation they would prefer in a regenerated Dolphin. The survey stressed that there may not be any or very few conventional houses in any regeneration but did include this accommodation option, to ascertain people's preferences. Respondents were asked to rank their top three preferences. Of those who answered this question, 51 per cent said their first preference would be a house. The next most popular first preference being a ground floor apartment. When the second preferences are studied the highest percentage, 47.8 per cent of residents, expressed a preference for a duplex townhouse with one apartment above.

Consultation

The survey shows that the efforts at consultation of the community were successful.

Meetings

Over half of the respondents 53 per cent said they went to the block meetings. The majority of those who attended the block meetings in October 2008 found the presentations and the break-out groups helpful.

Newsletter

With regard to the community newsletter, which outlined the potential regeneration options, 65 per cent of the households read the newsletter. Of those households who read the newsletter, 90 per cent found it useful and 86 per cent said it was a help in understanding the options.





Key issues,
conclusions
and pathways
forward

The Dolphin Decides initiative has revealed valuable learning in terms of the feelings, concerns, ideas, preferences and ambition of Dolphin residents. Behind the quantitative facts and statistics lie layers of important meaning and significance. For the Dolphin House Development Association it is absolutely vital that these insights and key issues do not get lost in headline findings. This has been a sophisticated and careful process and the analysis of the findings should also be treated in a careful and sophisticated manner.

As a community representative organisation, we have a solemn duty of care to represent with honesty and integrity the residents of this estate. Having been immersed in this exemplary civic process it is clear to us and the independent consultants that a number of key issues and insights present themselves strongly arising from the various meetings, workshops, study visits, discussions, focus groups and surveys.

7 Key issues and insights

1

There was an enormous participation rate from residents and leadership in the overall Dolphin Decides process.

2

110 people attended at blocks meetings.

3

The UCD survey which had a response rate of 80% provides a convincing and uncontestable benchmark of residents' feelings, ideas and preferences.

4

This gives enormous scientific and moral validity to the insights and findings contained in this document.

5

The provision of technical aid resources and the implementation of the Dolphin Decides process has paid enormous dividends for the community – and for the wider partnership process – in terms of capacity to engage; personal confidence; understanding of key issues; understanding of other stakeholder's points of view; benchmarking where local people's opinions, preferences and concerns are at, and; signposting constructive pathways forward.

6

The Sheridan Woods Report provides City Council or prospective developers – and indeed the residents of Dolphin – with socially-accurate and scientifically-sound baseline criteria (planning guidelines, height, density, sustainability) to devise or assess any future plans for the estate. This provides all stakeholders with a wonderful resource and a highly practical tool.

7

The Dolphin Decides initiative provides other communities with a strong and convincing model of an important and exemplary process to undertake before reaching their regeneration phase.

10 Main Specific findings

1

In terms of the 4 options presented to residents, the resultant preferences are clear:

Option	Thought the option was very good or good	Thought the option was poor or very poor
1	25%	56%
2	36%	37%
3A	72%	10%
3B	17%	63%

- **Demolition 67%**
(93% of these for 3A and 7% for 3B)
- **Demolition/Refurbishment 15%**
- **Refurbishment only 6%**

So, there is a clear demand and need for significant regeneration: 82% opted for significant regeneration – either for full demolition (67%) or demolition and internal refurbishment (15%).

2

The selection of option 3A as a preference by a majority of residents must be understood in light of the criteria Sheridan Woods set themselves for developing the various options based on their research and engagement with the community:

- A viable community; enough people and enough stability to support a vibrant local economic and social life.
- Feasibility; that it would be doable in terms of economics
- In line with the vision of the present population.

Option 3A was developed in the context that, based on soundings from Dublin City Council at the time, the most likely funding model would be through a Public Private Partnership mechanism. Given that most residents stated

clearly they wanted a house and a lower density of private, 3A represents for locals not what they want, but the best available option put to them at that time. Therefore the Dolphin House Community Development Association believes that the way forward is not simply about developing a plan based on option 3A.

3

Residents reject the notion of a high rise development. They see low rise as more compatible and necessary to build a strong, cohesive and safe community with a positive identity.

4

Most residents accept a mix of public and private households on the site but feel the number of private units shouldn't overwhelm the strong tradition of public housing and community identity.

5

70% want to stay in the estate.

6

65% of residents cited Dolphin's most positive asset as good neighbours.

7

The Dolphin House Community Development Association is clear that it is imperative that the considered opinions, feelings and concerns of those who stated in good faith that they did not want any form of regeneration are heard and acted on. Many residents have been living on the estate for a long time, some for their lifetime. They have grown up with the

flats and they have invested time, significant personal income in internal refurbishments and an unquantifiable measure of emotional and psychological attachment to their homes and neighbourhood. The flats are fundamental to their lives, memories, personal histories, losses, social highlights, community rituals, family stories and friendship attachments. These heart-felt attachments must not be bulldozed and buried by blunt demolition and refurbishment.

8

Any pathway forward for development must take on board the views, feelings and ideas of the elderly residents of Dolphin Park. Over 90 per cent indicated that they favoured none of the major regeneration options. The Dolphin park residents provided detailed qualitative preferences such as having a separate bedroom, and an extra bedroom, a bigger kitchen, a bathroom with a shower, communal facilities and better security. They also wanted more detailed information on any proposals for senior citizen accommodation.

9

There is a widespread firmly-held view among residents and community leaders that Social Regeneration is as important as physical redevelopment.

10

The biggest concerns are community safety/drugs/intimidation and a poor built environment.

11 Key pathways forward

The Dolphin House Community Development Association believes passionately that the ambition and vision of the Dolphin Decides initiative must be continued and just because the short-lived PPP experiment has failed in other estates, Dolphin must not be allowed to spiral into further social deprivation, anti social problems and despair. The recession has seen the dawn of a new era of big bold decision-making at a political level and brave new solutions and smart strategies are the order of the day. The city and the state cannot afford to remain caught in the post-PPP headlights, passive and simply ‘wait it out’ while communities decline – they must find other viable and visionary solutions. Dolphin is perfectly placed to become the setting for such a smart solution.

The Dolphin House Community Development Association believes it is possible to achieve the vision statement developed by Sheridan Woods based on resident consultation:

- *A safe inclusive and active Dolphin Community with a broad range of local recreational facilities and activities designed for all ages. A Dolphin Estate that allows for the evolution and growth of an integrated, healthy, and vibrant community.*
- *A diverse and buoyant local economy sustained by a locally educated and trained workforce.*
- *A regenerated estate that is safe, attractive, well-maintained and environmentally friendly. A Dolphin Estate that provides high-quality housing and community facilities for the residents that they serve.*

1

A Master plan (this is a detailed agreed plan for the physical development that will take place on the Dolphin site) must be negotiated and developed in full consultation with the community. A model of regeneration must be developed that can provide funding to realise this ambitious but absolutely deserved future for Dolphin residents.

2

On the positive side, trust and optimism has been built. This has been carefully achieved and hard-earned. The regeneration planning process must continue. The regeneration consultation process between Dublin City Council and the residents at the Joint Redevelopment Board should be maintained and the role independent Chair must be continued. Significantly, Barnardos, a children’s charity has had to step in and fund Dolphin’s Regeneration worker, which should obviously be a civic post.

3

Best practice from the City Council-championed Fatima Mansions regeneration project points to the necessity and advantages of the Board becoming a legal entity that continues to be properly funded, ensuring the project wins a quality and appropriate regeneration; that it builds towards sustainability and maintains resident participation.

4

It is vital that the funding provided for the key Regeneration Worker by Barnardos for two years is provided subsequently by Dublin City Council. Dublin City Council always stressed that when a project was in place then funding for a full-time Regeneration Worker would be provided. It is vital DCC honour that agreement.

5

Meanwhile, day-to-day improvements must go ahead such as supporting community safety; working with the Gardai; solving the sewerage problems; providing play areas; improving the interiors of flats and stairwells; improving Dolphin Park and other priorities. A community environment group will be set up where residents and the Dolphin House Community Development Association can work together to improve the environment of Dolphin House. Furthermore, it is essential that DCC maintain the inside of flats, the stairwells and general areas of the flats complex to highest quality standards to ensure that the cycle of physical decay does not worsen.

6

The lesson from other communities is that a vital Social Regeneration Plan must be developed immediately building resident leadership and capacity; community confidence and events; training; enterprise and employment; education support; community health strategies; family and child support; arts and cultural activities; addressing anti-social and drug related issues. This plan must build on and support the many vital services operating in Dolphin (Health, Elderly Support, Youth Project, Homework Club, Eolas Adult Education, CE Employment support). These are crucial supports for local people to better themselves and their community, build their life choices and also to provide family and estate-wide protection against the recession. This planning must start from day one and not be sidelined until physical regeneration commences.

7

We know from other case studies that delays in regeneration have a devastating impact on community. The longer it drags on, the greater the likelihood that key community leaders and more stable residents will leave. In this scenario the area will end up being a sink estate for the most vulnerable with all the resultant negative consequences manifesting themselves. The DHCD A will work to ensure regeneration commences as soon as possible. It is important the other stakeholders particularly, DCC, the DOE and other state agencies do the same.

8

It was agreed at the start of the Joint Redevelopment Board process that the allocation of vacant flats in Dolphin House would continue. This was to avoid the nightmare dereliction scenario of de-tenanting, the blocking-up of flats, physical and social deterioration and the loss of strong residents. This allocation process must continue.

9

The Dolphin House Community Development Association believes strongly that the architects who were hired as community technical aid should continue to be employed with a specific practical focus to explore other viable regeneration models and to develop the masterplan. In their report they point to a number of interesting and viable models abroad that would be worthwhile interrogating in some detail not only from a community interest but, probably more importantly, from City Council's point of view as they search for new models for other stalled regeneration estates in a post or delayed PPP era.

10

Given the success of the partnership process and the trust that has built up, any future development/changes in Dolphin must continue to be made in full consultation with residents at this structure.

11

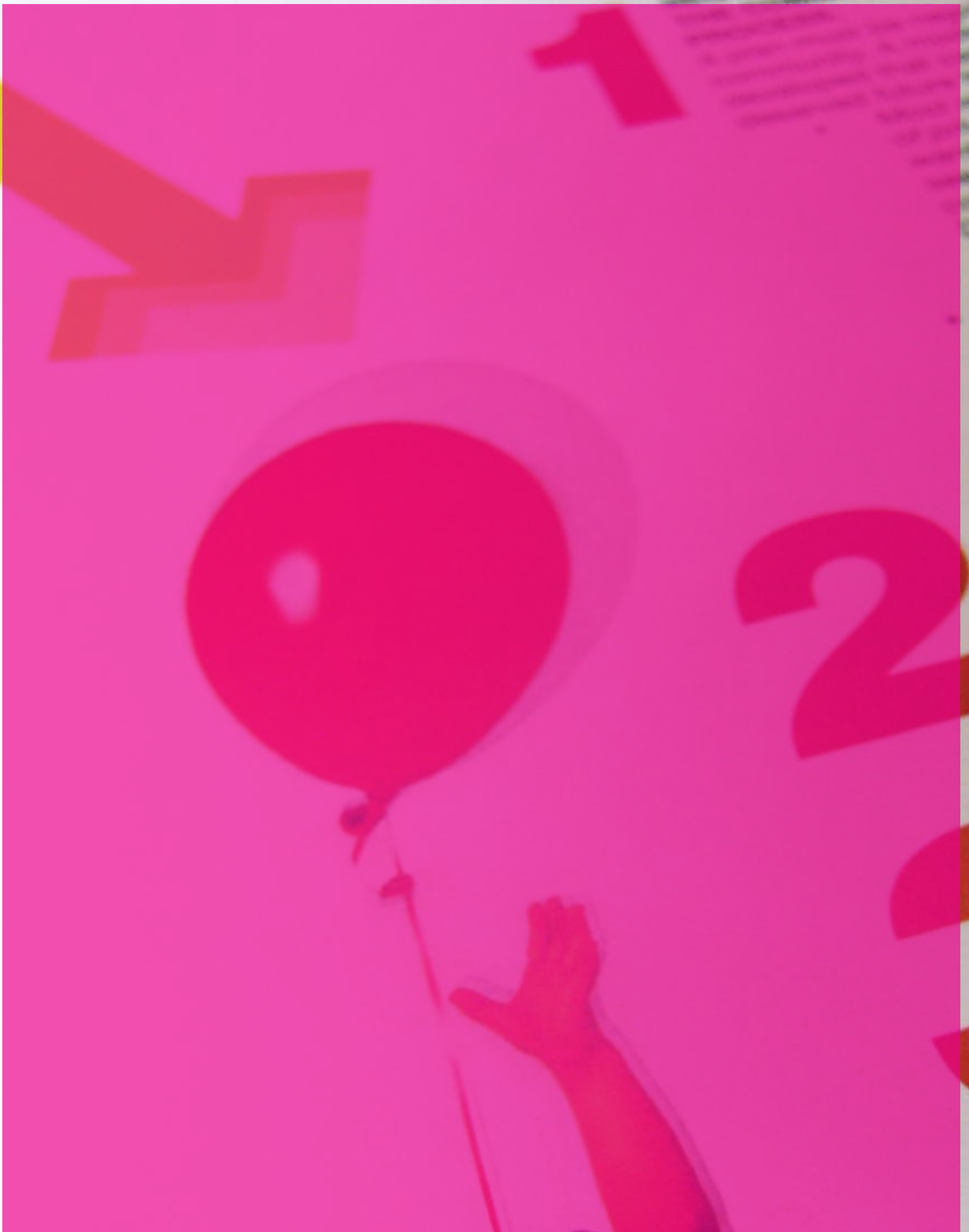
Active residents' participation must continue in consultation around regeneration and community activities. The highly successful Blocks groups, regular meetings, newsletter and information provision must continue to be supported.

Conclusion

By any standards, this has been an exemplary and rewarding process. A previously-neglected community has engaged in an enlightened, practical and mutually beneficial partnership with the highest civic authority. Dublin City Council must be saluted for resourcing and owning this innovative initiative.

New structures have been established locally, in particular the Joint Redevelopment Board. The capacity of residents has grown through the process. Leadership has been developed. Local people have had their say in a respectful and comprehensive way.

Put together, all of this – the Dolphin Decides initiative – marks the first wonderful step towards delivering a sustainable and rewarding future for the residents of Dolphin. It goes without saying that given the current economic challenges, that same vision, intelligence, duty of care and ambition now needs to continue and in fact to grow. The Dolphin House Community Development Association is ready to play its role. We hope the city will live up to its recent local reputation and remain an enthusiastic, respectful, visionary and action-focused partner in order to deliver what is a basic set of human rights for the good people of Dolphin House and Dolphin Park.





Dolphin Decides Timeline of Main Events

July 07

Regeneration Worker employed on part-time basis

November 07

JRB set up with Fergus Finlay as independent chair. DCC present their PPP feasibility study for complete demolition and regeneration

Feb 08

Resources secured for technical aid to assess feasibility and develop community plan

May 08

Technical expertise appointed

June 08

Block groups set up

June 30th, July 1st and 2nd

Initial block group meetings

Thurs 10th July

Visit to O' Devaney Gardens, Poplar Row (Ballybough) and Marmion Court regeneration projects

Wednesday July 16th

Residents provide their views to community architects (Sheridan Woods)
7pm Community Centre

First newsletter distributed

July 22nd

CEO Barnardos and JRB Chair Fergus Finlay launches Dolphin Decides Summer Project.

Resident and young people's survey undertaken for architects.

September 19th

Social Regeneration Planning Meeting for workers and voluntary groups, residents, ,

Mon Oct 6th 7pm

Visit to Fatima apartments and inside houses

Wed Oct 8th

2nd Newsletter Written and distributed with outline of architects analysis and options

Mon Oct 20th

Block Groups Joint meeting. Architect presents analysis of options & feasibility study

November and December 08

Survey of all residents of Dolphin on the regeneration options done by Sheridan Woods and DCC. Survey supervised by UCD Department of Geography and Planning & CAN. Every flat knocked on three times, morning, afternoon and evening.