

Building on Reality:

**A REPORT ON THE TRENDS IN SOCIAL HOUSING DEMAND AND
SUPPLY IN CORK CITY AND CORK SOUTH COUNTY**

NOVEMBER 2006

**TRENDS IN SOCIAL HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN CORK CITY
AND CORK SOUTH COUNTY**

Joe Finnerty and Cathal O Connell

UCC

November 2006

Commissioned by the Cork Social Housing Forum

Chairperson's Address

One of the aims of the Cork Social Housing Forum is to raise awareness of Social and Affordable Accommodation issues and to lobby the government and policy makers with a view to enhancing accommodation provision in Cork City and City Hinterland area. The Forum's objectives include influencing policy, research and networking.

The decision to carry out this research study on Trends in Social Housing Demand and Supply in Cork was prompted by the huge increase in the need for social housing and feedback from our client groups of their current housing difficulties.

As Chairperson, it was my privilege to work with such committed people to raise awareness of key housing issues and to put forward a number of key recommendations for consideration for positive change. The purpose of all our efforts is to put forward positive sustainable housing options which will assist policy makers in their decision making and will ultimately result in making tangible improvements in the quality of people's lives in our city and hinterland area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cathal O' Connell and Joe Finnerty from UCC who undertook this study on our behalf and to the supporting committee members, who are also members of the Forum who gave willingly of their time and commitment for the duration of the study.

Margaret O' Neill
Chairperson
Cork Social Housing Forum.

Monday, 11 December 2006.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRENDS IN SOCIAL HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN CORK CITY AND CORK SOUTH COUNTY

Joe Finnerty and Cathal O Connell

UCC

November 2006

Cork Social Housing Forum.

This report was commissioned by the Cork Social Housing Forum. The primary aim of the report is to undertake a review of indicators of demand for social housing, and of responses to this demand at the level of both policy and provision, in Cork city and its hinterland.

Social Housing.

Social housing refers to rental accommodation provided with state subsidy where allocation of dwellings is linked to social need and where the landlord usually has a non-profit status or is a state agency such as a local authority.

Affordable Housing.

Affordable housing is defined as owner-occupier, or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value. (*Cork Planning Strategy 2001: p.19*)

Main Findings from the Evaluation in this Report.

Households on the Waiting List.

As of 2006 there were a total of 4,810 households on the waiting list in Cork city. This had increased from 2,358 in 2005.

Household Profile.

58% of households on the waiting list comprise single persons, 28% single parents, 10% couples with children, and 4% couples only. Between 2004 and 2006 the proportion of smaller households (single persons and couples) increased from 52% to 62% of the total which equates to 2,982 households.

Socio Economic Profile.

Households appearing on the waiting list are particularly at risk of poverty and social exclusion by virtue of their low income and acknowledged housing needs. Sixty per cent of households on the waiting list cited affordability difficulties with their current accommodation as the reason for being on the waiting list.

Length of Time on List

The most recent data for 2006 (the third year of SAHAP) show that 2502 (compared to 850 in 2002), of waiting list households have been on the list for under one year, 577 (520 in 2002) for 1 – 2 years, 481 (362) for 2 – 3 years, 288 (273 in 2002) for 3 – 4 years, and 962 (277 in 2002) for over 4 years. If the 2005 level of new lettings is set against the 2006 waiting list figures, the time involved lengthens to nine years!

Responding to Social Housing Demand

The local authority (city council) met targets in direct provision and acquisitions in 2004 and 2005 as set out in the SAHAP but widely over estimated the contribution of casual vacancies to new lettings in those years. However meeting targets has been overshadowed by the rapid rise in demand for social housing which was not anticipated either by SAHAP or by the Joint Housing Strategy. In South County Cork, the principal reason for the discrepancy between target and outturn was the poor performance under Part V.

Nature of Response to Demand.

As stated above 62% of households on the 2006 waiting list are single person or two adult households who would ideally be accommodated in small units. In the course of the SAHAP just over 35% of city council planned new build (direct contract and Part V) will be one bed units. Demand from this source is clearly beyond the projections of SAHAP, even if they are attained. It is evident that the SAHAP did not envisage that the needs of all one and two person households on the waiting list would be met from local authority or voluntary sector provision. The underlying assumption in the SAHAP is that this demand would be met in the private rented sector, via rent supplement and the RAS. However, the performance under RAS indicates little progress to date in terms of transfer of private rented tenancies into this scheme.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that Cork City council fulfil its obligation to directly provide accommodation appropriate to the household types in need on its waiting list.
- The house building programme of local authorities should be determined by the extent of housing need. It is essential that this is understood in the context of needs factors such as the economy, immigration, household formation rates which are not static but are constantly changing.
- In relation to the Rental Accommodation Scheme, insofar as this becomes the long-term accommodation of many of the participating households, it is recommended that this rental accommodation meet quality standards in relation to e.g. cooking, washing, ventilation and storage facilities, and that regular inspections by councils occur to secure these standards.
- It is evident from this analysis that the targets set out in the SAHAP's have been inadequate to address the growth in housing need over their time frames. It is recommended therefore that a more robust methodology is devised so as to ensure that targets can more accurately anticipate growth in demand.
- It is recommended that the measurement used to generate the numbers of eligible households is refined to improve the accuracy and reliability of the resulting count, thus avoiding fluctuations in waiting list numbers within a very short time period.
- It is recommended that an analysis and evaluation of current practices, particularly in relation the choice between payments in lieu and the provision of dwellings, in the implementation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2002 (Amendment) in the city and hinterland areas is undertaken.
- With respect to Part V, ensure 20% of building land is allocated to social and affordable housing with at least half of this being allocated for social housing.
- It is recommended that in relation to the voluntary / non-profit sector, that Cork Social Housing Forum members assess their current provision of services and explore potential scope for future developments.

Cork Social Housing Forum

A core recommendation in the Cork City Partnership Local Development Social Inclusion Plan 2000 – 2006 was to raise awareness around the issue of social housing as a measure to prevent homelessness. The Community Development Unit of Cork City partnership facilitated the Social Housing Working Group, which was set up in April 2001 to organise a seminar on social housing. Various recommendations arose from the seminar held in October 2001.

The Housing Department, Cork City Council, hosted a follow up meeting to the Social Housing seminar in City Hall in March 2002. The Housing Department recommended that the Social Housing Working Group submit a proposal regarding the development of a Housing Forum at a forthcoming Strategic Policy Committee meeting.

The role of the community and voluntary sector was seen as one of working in partnership with the local authority to develop coherent and effective accommodation strategies to address the needs of those most disadvantaged in society. The Cork Social Housing Forum was established in December 2002 and officially launched in December 2004.

The aims of the Cork Social Housing Forum is to raise awareness of Social and Affordable Accommodation issues and to lobby the government and policy makers with a view to enhancing accommodation provision in Cork City and City Hinterland area. Objectives include influencing policy, research and networking.

Cork Social Housing Forum is made up of the following member organisations.

- Baile An Aoire, Sheltered Housing Project for Older People
- Cluid Housing Association
- Cork City Partnership
- Cork County Council
- Cork Simon Community
- Good Shepherd Services
- N.A.S.C.
- Respond Housing Association
- Social Housing Development Company Ltd
- Health Service Executive
- Society of St. Vincent De Paul
- Threshold Ltd
- Traveller Visibility Group
- Sophia Housing Association
- Disability Federation of Ireland.

If you would like further information on Cork Social Housing Forum contact the Chairperson, Margaret O' Neill, Threshold, 22 South Mall, Cork. Ph. 021-4278848.

Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Cork Social Housing Forum. The primary aim of the report is to undertake a review of indicators of demand for social housing, and of responses to this demand at the level of both policy and provision, in Cork city and its hinterland.

The formulation of this report takes place in the broader context of the National and Economic Social Council (2004) view that an additional 73,000 social housing units should be provided in the period 2004 to 2012. The NESC projection underpins the Housing Policy Framework of the new ten year National Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016*, which states that the implementation of “such an objective will be assessed in light of the work on the assessment of need, the emerging picture in relation to need, the evolution of the various housing programmes and the outputs achieved under these and the resources available.” (*Towards 2016*, p: 27).

This report reflects the objectives of *Towards 2016* by offering an analysis of trends in social housing need, demand and supply in the Cork area. It is informed from the perspective that the effectiveness of housing policies have a key bearing on processes and experiences of social exclusion, poverty and inequality. Given that social housing is accessible only on the basis of satisfying a means test, it is by definition sought by and allocated to households who are socio-economically disadvantaged. A shortage in the supply of social housing therefore serves to further the social exclusion of poor households who must contend with inadequate housing conditions in addition to their lack of economic resources. The role of housing policy performance in relation to social exclusion is acknowledged in the mid term review of the National Development Plan under the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (ESI OP) which stated that the greatest impact of the ESI OP on social exclusion was likely to be through progress against measures in relation to housing – confirming the importance of housing as a key determinant of social outcomes. (NESC 2004 6.22).

The primary approach used in undertaking this evaluation is an analysis of the period before and during the implementation of the *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plans 2004-2008* which local authorities are required to formulate. In adopting this methodology the range of sources involved in delivering social and affordable housing - directly from local authorities and the voluntary and co-operative sector, and through other forms of subsidised accommodation, such as and the private rental sector via the SWA Rent Allowance and the Rental Assistance Scheme (RAS) - is recognised.

Data Type and Time Scale

The data presented mainly comprise quantitative indicators in relation to housing in Cork City and Cork South County. Depending on data availability, data from 2004 up to 2006 are presented and analysed. By way of context, quantitative housing indicators from 1999 to 2003 are also provided and analysed. Qualitative data, in the form of a 2006 seminar with members of the Cork Social Housing Forum, informed the recommendations section of the report.

Data Sources and Literature Review

The principal data sources in this report consist of published and unpublished housing statistics on social housing need and on (projected and achieved) housing provision. It should be noted that the availability and detail of data varies between the city and the county. More detailed evaluation of trends in social housing output and demand was possible for the city given data availability. Projected housing provision is throughout placed in the context of the relevant policy documents and policy framework. These data sources and policy documents comprise:

- Cork Planning Authorities (2001). Joint Housing Strategy: Cork
- Cork City Council and Cork County Council (2001). Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020: Cork.
- Census of Ireland (2002) Volume 13 Housing: Dublin

- HSE Southern Region for (2002 & 2006) Data on Rent Supplement supplied by the CWS unit: Cork
- Cork City Council Housing Department (2004). Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008: Cork
- Cork County Council South Cork (2004) Housing Action Plan 2004 to 2008
- Cork City Council (2004). Cork City Development Plan 2004:Cork
- Edwards, C. & Linehan, D (2005) City of Difference: Analysis of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Cork City from Census 2002:Cork.
- Department of the Environment (Various Years). Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin: Dublin.
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006) 'Housing Statistics', (Excel Spreadsheet) October, www.environ.ie
- Cork City Council (Various Years). Assessment of Housing Need in Cork City, 1999, 2002 and 2005: Cork.
- Cork City Council (Fortnightly Meeting) Minutes of Ordinary Meetings of Cork City Council. www.corkcity.ie
- Cork County Council (Various Years) Assessment of Housing Need in Cork County, 1999, 2002 and 2005: Cork.
- Cork City Council Housing Department (principally Kearney 2006). Updates on social housing need in Cork city: Cork.
- Census of Ireland (2006) Preliminary Report: Dublin.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) Guidelines on preparing Action Plans for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008: Dublin.
- Finnerty, J. (2004) Report to Social Inclusion Unit on Housing Trends in Cork City: Cork.
- National Economic and Social Council,(2004) Report No.(112) Analysis of Housing Policy: Dublin.
- Government of Ireland, (2006) Towards 2016: Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2015: Dublin.

Definitions and Terminology

The Promotion of Social and Affordable Housing

According to the Housing Policy Framework under *Towards 2016*, the stated objective of housing policy in Ireland is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice (Government of Ireland 2006, p: 26).¹ The rationale for the promotion of social and affordable housing lies in the fact that while housing is a vital need, there typically exists a mismatch between household income and housing costs (what is sometimes referred to as 'cost-income gap'²).

Social Housing

Social housing refers to rental accommodation provided with state subsidy where allocation of dwellings is linked to social need and where the landlord usually has a non-profit status or is a state agency such as a local authority.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined as owner-occupier, or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value. (*Cork Planning Strategy* 2001: p.19)

Cork city hinterland

As noted above, quantitative housing data for the Cork city hinterland is less precise than for Cork City. For the purposes of this research, the 'hinterland' of Cork city is taken to be the administrative area of South County Cork. While including those suburbs of the city located in the county (e.g. Rochestown Road and Douglas and Grange, parts of Bishopstown and Mayfield), towns that have a substantial population commuting to the city (e.g. Ballincollig and Glanmire) and those Town Councils that also can be regarded as part of the Cork city hinterland, it also includes rural areas and Town Councils not strictly in the city hinterland.

¹ For similar housing aims at Cork level, see e.g. Cork Planning Authorities (2001) "To help enable the people of Cork, now and in the future, to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at a price they can afford" (p. 1)

² Doling, J. (1997), *Comparative Housing Policy* (Houndmills: Macmillan), ch. 3.

Research Aim

Overview of housing need in Cork City and Cork County South (Hinterland and Town Councils).

Research Tasks

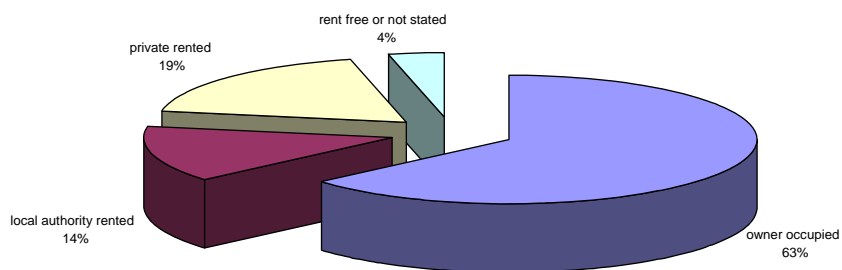
- Examination of issues around meeting social housing need in particular the level of match between housing outputs by tenure and type of household on Local Authority housing waiting list.
- Comparison of projected level of activity of total new social housing lettings in the Social and Affordable Housing Action Plans (SAHAP) and actual outputs.
- Comparison of projected level of social housing output by house size in the SAHAP, with existing and projected levels of social housing need, broken down by household size and type.
- Examination of activities under Part V, Private Rented Rent Supplement and Rental Allowance Scheme (RAS).
- Recommendations for housing policy and provision in Cork city and its hinterland.

SECTION I

TENURE PROFILE OF CORK CITY AND HINTERLAND

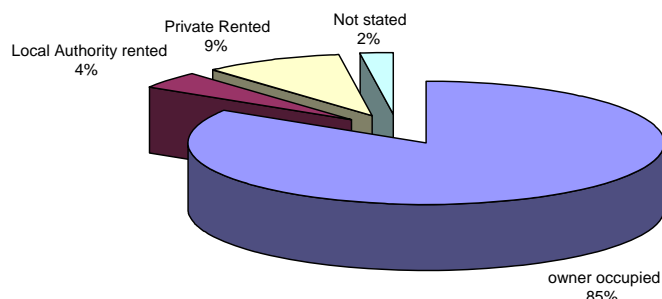
The tenure profile of the Cork region largely reflects the national pattern, with higher levels of renting and lower levels of owner occupation in urban areas than in rural areas. (See Fig 1 and Fig. 2) Owner occupied housing is the dominant tenure type, providing housing for almost one in three (63%) households. in the city and over one in four (85%) households in the county area. (This tenure comprises dwellings owned outright and those owned with a loan or mortgage).

Fig. 1 Cork City households by tenure, 2002



Source: Census of Ireland (2002), Vol. 13

Fig. 2 Cork county households by tenure, 2002



Source: Census of Ireland (2002), Vol. 13

The rental tenures (social and private rented) provide accommodation for a much smaller proportion of households than the owner-occupied tenure. However the proportion of rental dwellings in Cork city is higher than the national proportion, with 14% of dwellings classed as social rented and 19% private rented. In the county area just over 4% are social rented, less than half the national rate, and 9% are privately rented which is slightly below the national rate. Such tenure patterns in urban and rural areas are found elsewhere in Ireland and abroad, and are principally due to higher housing costs in urban areas depressing rates of owner occupation and increasing the need for private and social renting.

Overall Demand for Social and Affordable Housing

According to estimates contained in the *Joint Housing Strategy* (2001), between 34% and 37% of newly forming households in Cork city and county will not be able to afford to buy a house in the period 2001-2006. In the Cork city area, 40% of households were projected to be below the affordability threshold during this period. (Following the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, mortgage repayments are defined as affordable if they do not exceed 35% of net household income on a 90% mortgage.) That estimate assumed

that income levels would keep up with house price levels; since this assumption has not been borne out at city or county level, the estimate of the percentage of households below the affordability threshold would need to be revised upwards. (For data on house price inflation in Cork see the *Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin*.)

SECTION II

SOCIAL HOUSING NEED IN CORK CITY AND HINTERLAND, 1999 - 2006

Scale of need

Housing need 1999 - 2002

Need for Cork city social housing moved sharply upward during these years. The waiting list for Cork City social housing increased by 75% from 1,303 households in 1999 to 2,282 households in 2002 (see Fig. 3).³ The waiting list for Cork South County increased by 13% from 1522 households to 1,717 households over the same period.

Housing need 2004 – 2006

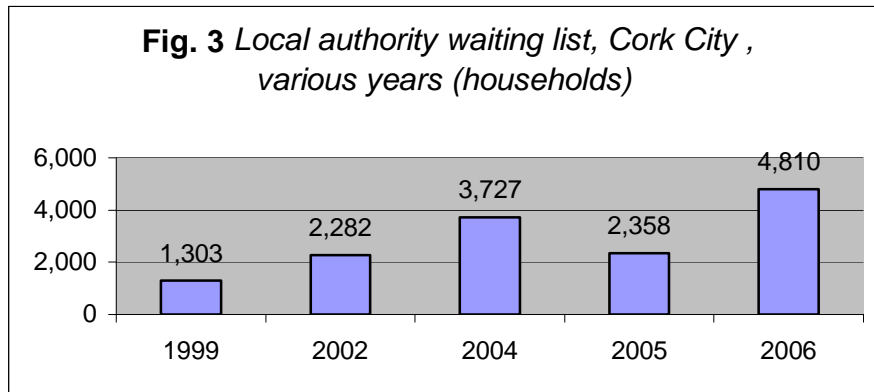
According to the Cork city SAHAP there were a total of 3727 households with unmet housing needs in 2004. In 2005, the list abruptly decreased to 2,358 households (see Fig. 3). The most recent data for early 2006 shows a huge increase to 4,810 households, which represents an increase of 369% since 1999.

By contrast, the trend in Cork South County was in a sharply downward direction, declining from the figure of 1,717 households recorded in 2002 to 1,362 households in 2005, a decline of 21%. (see Fig. 4)

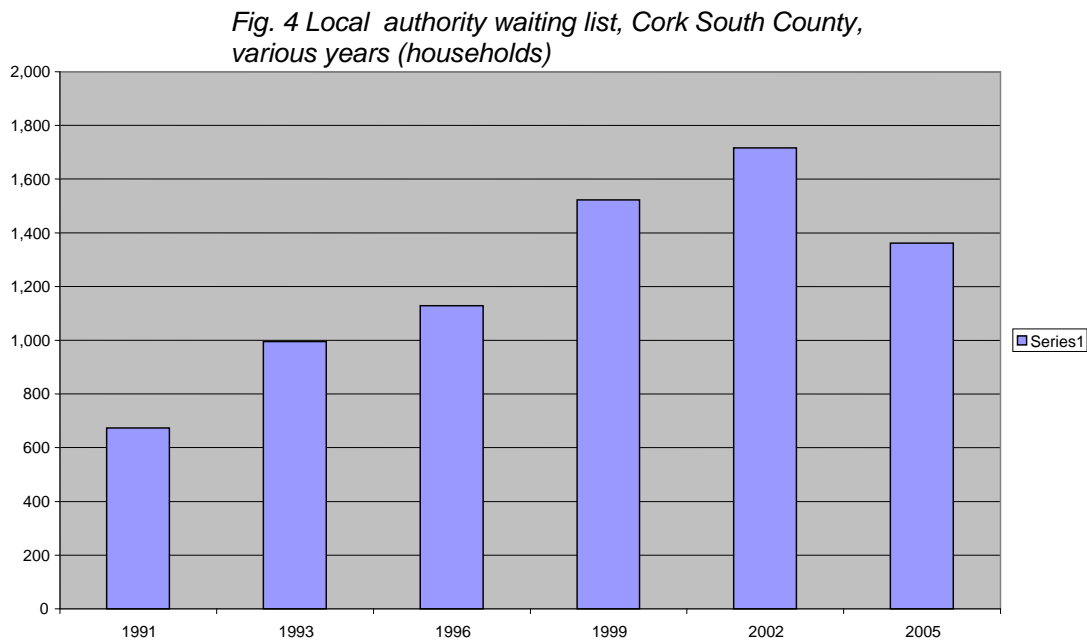
As noted above, the *Joint Housing Strategy* (2001) estimated that 40% of new households would face affordability problems in purchasing a home in Cork city during this period if increases in income levels kept pace with increases in house prices. House price inflation substantially above increases in disposable income would suggest that closer to half of newly forming

³ Numbers on the local authority list are used in this report as indicators of social housing need. In so doing, the approach employed by the Cork Planning Authorities (2001) has been adopted: “In assessing the requirement for social housing needs, it is assumed that the total need is made up of those applying to the Local Authority for housing. This approach may underestimate the total need for social housing, as some households may not apply to the Local Authority for housing, yet are still unable to purchase on the open market. On the other hand, a number of households applying to the Local Authority do so to avail of the private sector Rental Subsidy Scheme and do not wish to access social housing. *On balance, the Local Authority waiting lists provide the best available estimate of total numbers in need of housing*” (p. 21, our italics).

households in Cork city are in fact facing affordability problems. Though many of these households would be above the income eligibility criteria for social housing, continuing house price inflation would also impact on low-income working households just below the income eligibility thresholds.



Source: Cork City Council Assessment of Housing Need, 1999, 2002 and 2005, Cork City SAHAP, and Kearney (2006)



Source: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006)

According to the Cork city SAHAP there were a total of 3727 households with unmet housing needs in Cork city in 2004. Of these the largest proportion were single person households who comprised 47.65% of the total while a further 4.56% were households of two adults without children. Combined, these sources of housing need accounted for over 52% of total need in the city. The next largest proportion of households with housing needs were those made up of single adults with one child who accounted for over 27%.

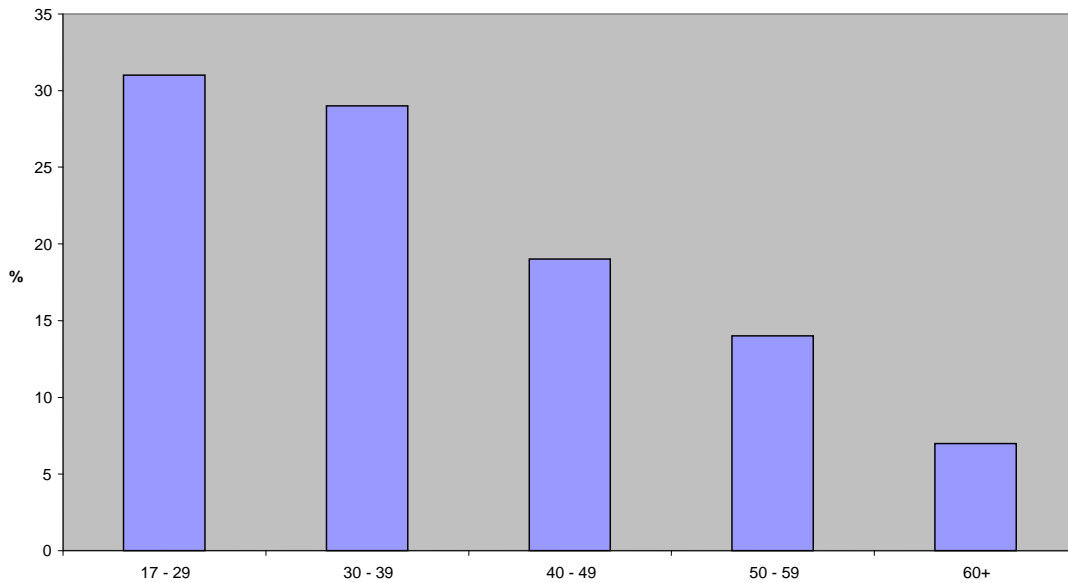
In summary therefore almost 80% of households were accounted for by single or two adult households or single plus one child households. The most recent data for 2006 is less detailed than that supplied in the SAHAP. Nonetheless, it shows that 58% of households on the waiting list comprise single persons, 28% single parents, 10% couples with children, and 4% couples only.

Between 2004 and 2006 the proportion of small households (single persons and couple) increased from 52% to 62% of the total which equates to 2982 households. However the target set by the SAHAP for one bed units from the local authority is only 289 between 2004 – 2008 less than 10% of the expressed demand in 2006. (See further analysis in Section 5)

Age Profile of Applicants for Social Housing in Cork

The most current and reasonably detailed data on Cork city housing list applicants (Kearney 2006) provides an age breakdown for single applicants only (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Single Persons on Waiting List by Age, Cork City 2006

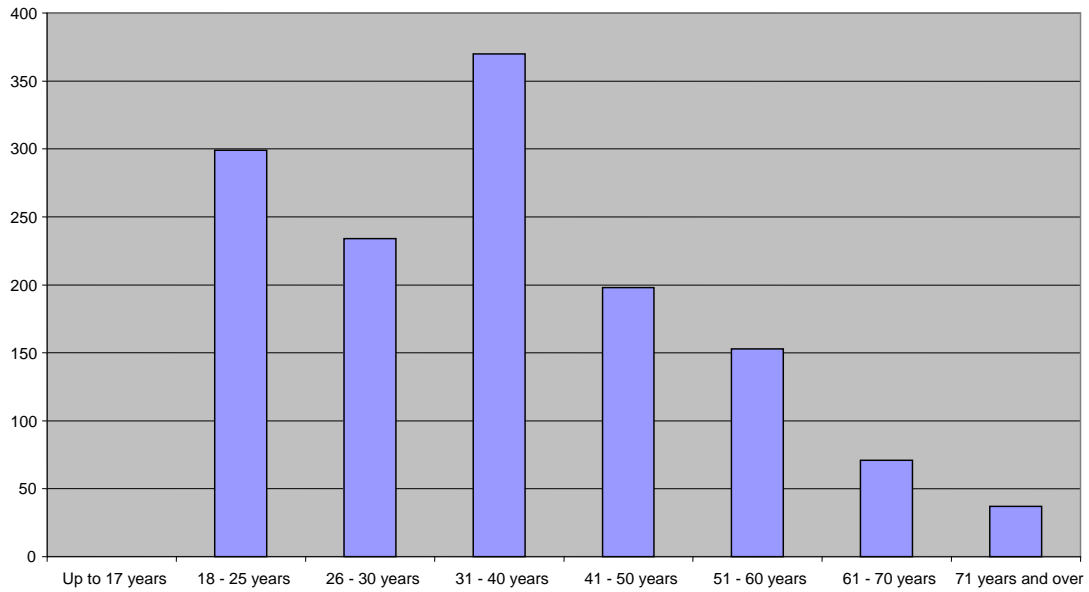


Source: Kearney (2006)

The single waiting list is dominated by younger applicants, with the numbers of applicants declining with age. Three-tenths of single applicants (31%) are between 17 and 29 years of age, and almost the same number (29%) are between 30 and 39 years of age. Approximately one-fifth (19%) of single applicants are aged 40 to 49 years, and one in seven (14%) are aged 50 to 59 years. A small percentage of single applicants are aged over 60 years.

For Cork South County, and examining data from the 2005 housing needs assessment on all households on the list, the largest age category was the 31 to 40 age group (27%), followed by the 18 to 25 age group (22%). (see Fig. 6) Roughly equal numbers were in the 26 to 30 age group and 41 to 50 age group (17% and 15% respectively. 11% were in the 51 to 60 age group, with 8% of applicants aged 61 or over.

Fig. 6 All households on waiting list by age, South County Cork 2005

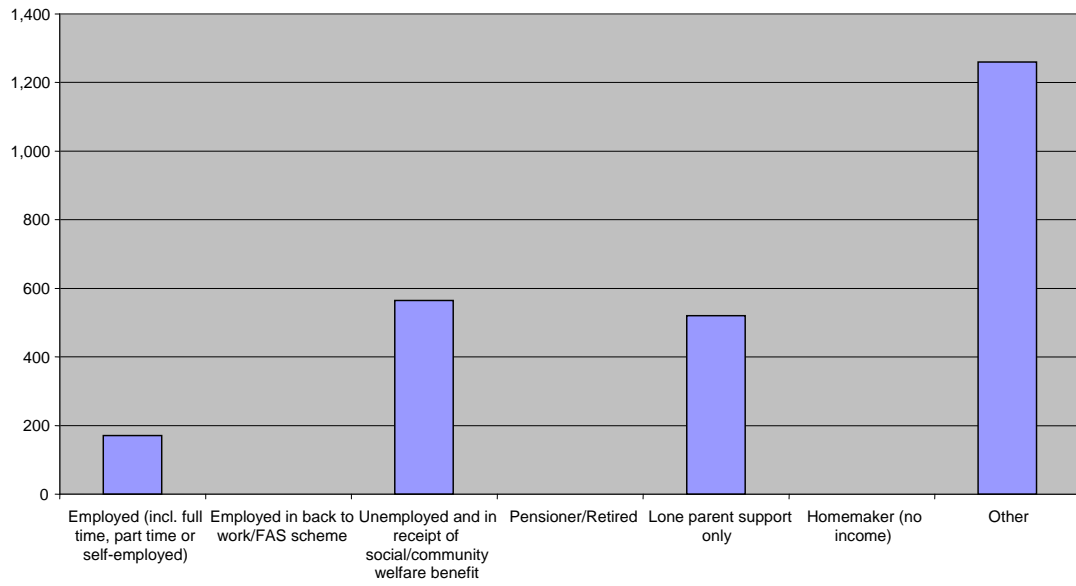


Source: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006)

Income profile and type of housing need of households on waiting list

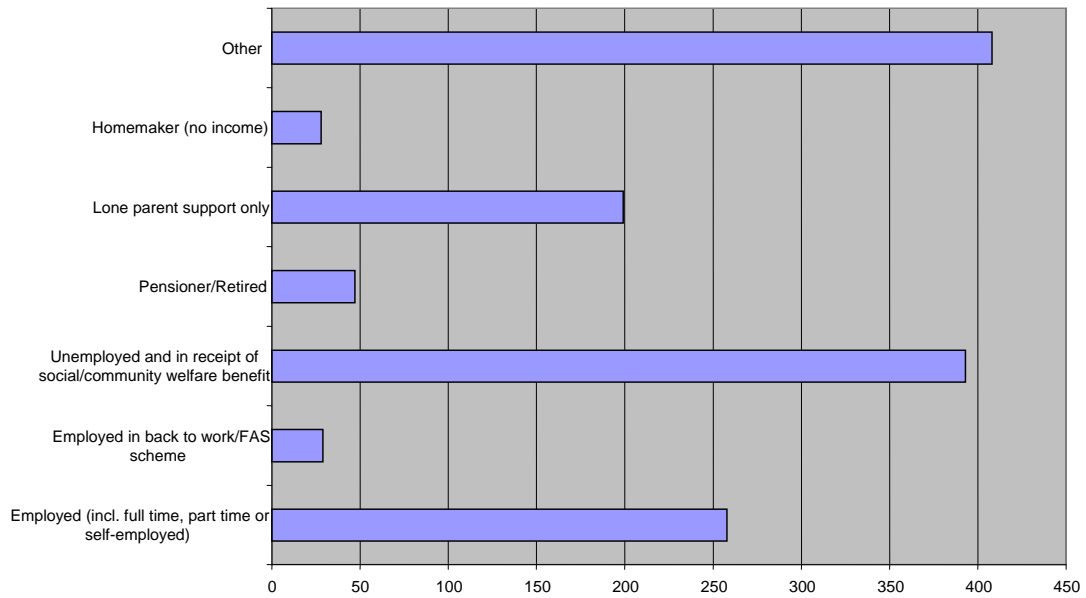
Households appearing on the waiting list are particularly at risk of poverty and social exclusion by virtue of their low income and other risk factors and poor housing conditions (Threshold 2005). While Kearney (2006) does not supply a detailed breakdown of households by income source, a detailed breakdown for 2005 is available from the *2005 Needs Assessment* for both Cork City (Fig. 7) and Cork County South (Fig. 8).

Fig. 7 Social housing need by income source, Cork City 2005



Source: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006)

Fig. 8 Cork South County waiting list by income source, 2005

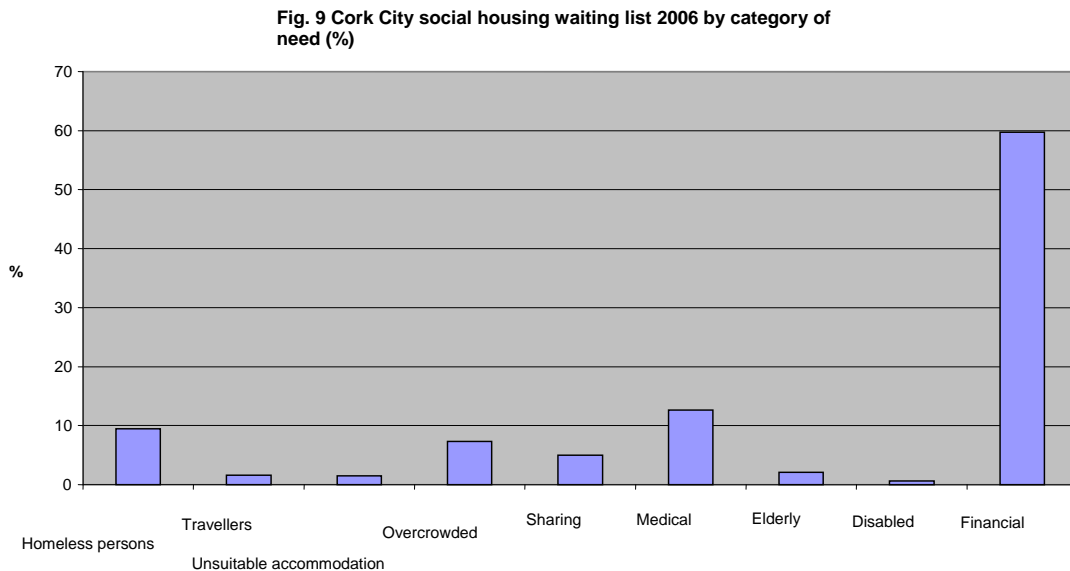


Source: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006)

Those in receipt of social / community welfare benefits, and of lone parent payments, feature prominently on both waiting lists. However, the large ‘other’ category hampers the analysis of this income data.⁴

Nature of housing need of those on waiting list

Data is also available on the kinds of housing deficit or need which make current waiting list households eligible for social housing. As Fig. 9 illustrates, three fifths of such households in Cork city had affordability difficulties with their current accommodation.



Source: Kearney 2006

For Cork South County, the predominantly financial nature of housing need is even clearer, with 72% of households falling into this category in the 2005 needs assessment (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006).

⁴ It should be noted that the category described as “other” probably include households reliant on incomes such as long term invalidity and disability payments. At the time of submitting this report, the requested clarification was unavailable from the Housing Statistics section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Summary of Housing Need Trends in Cork

- Demand has increased consistently in Cork city both prior to and during the period of SAHAP, with a total of 4,810 households registered in need of housing in early 2006. Demand has been more erratic in Cork South County; nonetheless there were some 1,362 households on the waiting list in 2005.
- Over 20% of households on the 2006 city waiting list have been there for over 4 years. This is an increase of 133% compared to the waiting list of 1999.
- Under 10% of households on the 2006 city waiting list are classed as being employed while almost 80% have an income source of social welfare benefit or lone parent support.
- The main cause of current housing need in both city and south county is financial, with between 60% and 72% of households on these waiting lists having affordability difficulties with their current accommodation.
- Over 62% of households on the 2006 city waiting list are made up of single person households (58%) or couples with no children (4.5%).
- After single persons, households with one adult and one child make up the second largest category on the 2006 city waiting list at 27% of the total.

SECTION III

Social and Affordable Housing Action Plans 2004 – 2008 for Cork City and South County

Under direction of the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, local authorities are required to prepare Social and Affordable Housing Action Plans (SAHAP) for the period 2004 to 2008. A central part of these plans is the formulation of detailed delivery measures including realistic targets and time frames to meet existing and anticipated needs (DoEHLG 2004). The wider policy context for the city and county SAHAPs is set by the Cork Planning Authorities' *Joint Housing Strategy* (2001), the *Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020* (2001), and the *Cork City Development Plan 2004* (2004).

Cork City

As noted below, the current Cork city SAHAP estimates that 3,727 households are on the city council waiting list. It anticipates that the main supplier of social housing over the period 2004 – 2008 will be direct provision by local authorities, including, casual vacancies acquisitions, turnkey developments and Part V units; voluntary and co-operative sector provision under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme and the Capital Assistance Scheme will account for a smaller percentage of output.

Table 1 below sets out the total number of dwellings estimated under the SAHAP 2004–2008 from local authority and voluntary & co-operative providers in Cork city. This includes dwellings from all sources – direct build, acquisitions of new dwellings under Part V and purchases of second hand homes. The proposed number of dwellings coming on stream in the period 2004 – 2008 is 3924, including 1195 arising from casual vacancies and 2260 arising from new build ('units completed under contract').

Table 1 Planned Social Housing in Cork City: 2004-2008

Local Authority Housing	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Casual Vacancies	300	280	260	250	250	1100
Long Term Voids Refurbished and Relet	10	5	5	3	3	26
Units Acquired under Part V	5	8	10	15	15	53
Units completed under Contract	266	255	258	270	292	1341
Units added/removed under regeneration	+40	+48	-58	+40	+40	110
Net Additional Local Authority Stock for Letting	621	596	475	578	600	2870
Voluntary and Co-operative Housing	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Casual Vacancies	10	15	20	25	25	95
Units made available under Part V	0	0	10	15	15	40
Voluntary and Co-operative direct provision	168	162	176	197	216	919
Total Additional Voluntary and Co-operative for letting	178	177	206	237	256	1054
Total Additional Social Rented Housing available for letting.	799	773	681	815	856	3924

Source: Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008

Dwellings provided by voluntary and co-operative providers under the C.A.S. devolve mainly on specialist provision for homeless and elderly persons. As a

result the profile of dwellings tends towards smaller one and two bed units. However it must be borne in mind that this output is targeted and is not generally viewed as general needs provision – thus its impact on the waiting list (the bulk of which is composed of single person and childless households) is limited.

Excluding the CAS output therefore means that single person households on the waiting list are largely reliant on other sources – ie direct local authority provision or rent supplement private rented accommodation. While the SAHAP indicates that the output of one and two bed units from the city council will increase in the period 2004 to 2008 ie 642 out of 1394 units (see Table) this is unlikely to meet the level of demand from single adult headed households.

Table 2 Proposed Voluntary Sector Housing 2004 – 2008
(Capital Assistance Scheme: Homeless and Elderly Provision)

C.A.S Housing Starts	2004	Out turn 2004	2005	Out turn 2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	0		0		0	0	0	0
3 Bed Units	0		0		0	0	0	0
2 Bed Units	0		20		20	20	30	90
1 Bed Units	121		80		100	110	110	521
Hostel Bed Spaces	10		15		0	0	0	
Total	131		115	111	120	130	140	611

Source: Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008

Table 3 Proposed Voluntary Sector Housing 2004 – 2008
(Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme)

C.L.S.S. Housing Starts	2004	Out turn 2004	2005	Out turn 2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	0		0		1	1	1	3
3 Bed Units	25		31		36	42	46	180
2 Bed Units	10		13		15	20	25	83
1 Bed Units	2		3		4	4	4	17
Total	37		47	12	56	67	82	283

Source: Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008

Table 4 Proposed Local Authority Housing Programme Cork City 2004 – 2008

(Local Authority Housing Starts	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	6	7	9	11	11	44
3 Bed Units	138	140	136	144	150	708
2 Bed Units	54	50	78	80	91	353
1 Bed Units	73	66	45	50	55	289
Total	271	263	268	285	307	1394

Source: Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008, Table 7

Cork County South

Table 5 *Planned social housing in Cork County South, 2004-2008*

Local Authority Housing	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Casual Vacancies	100	115	107	112	114	548
Long Term Voids Refurbished and Re-let	28	17	15	13	11	84
Units Acquired under Part V	14	76	158	115	117	480
Units completed under Contract	121	224	163	180	184	872
Units added/removed under regeneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Net Additional Local Authority Stock for Letting</i>	263	432	443	420	426	1,984
Voluntary and Co- operative Housing	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Casual Vacancies	19	19	23	24	26	111
Units made available under Part V	4	10	14	11	11	50
Voluntary and Co-operative direct provision	226	101	64	63	63	517
<i>Net Additional Voluntary and Co-operative for letting</i>	249	130	101	98	100	678
Total Additional Social Rented Housing available for letting.	512	562	544	518	526	2,662

Source: Cork County SAHAP 2004-2008
Appendix B p. 34

Table 6 Proposed Voluntary Sector Housing Cork County South 2004 – 2008
(starts)

(Capital Assistance Scheme: Homeless and Elderly Provision)

C.A.S Housing Starts	2004	Out turn 2004	2005	Out turn 2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	-							
3 Bed Units	--							
2 Bed Units	29		19		25	25	25	123
1 Bed Units	52		32		2	2	2	90
Total	81		51		27	27	27	213

Source: Cork County South SAHAP 2004-2008 Table 11 p. 22

Table 7 Proposed Voluntary Sector Housing Cork County South 2004 – 2008
(starts)

(Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme)

C.L.S.S. Housing Starts	2004	Out turn 2004	2005	Out turn 2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	8		1		1	1	1	12
3 Bed Units	77		35		21	20	20	173
2 Bed Units	60		13		14	14	14	115
1 Bed Units	-		1		1	1	1	4
Total	145		50		37	36	36	304

Source: *Cork County SAHAP 2004-2008* Table 12 p. 22

Table 8 Proposed Local Authority Housing Programme Cork County South 2004 – 2008 (starts)

(Local Authority Housing Starts	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total No. of Units
4 Bed Units	7	8	8	8	13	44
3 Bed Units	70	131	91	103	100	495
2 Bed Units	43	83	63	68	70	327
1 Bed Units	1	2	1	1	1	6
Total	121	224	163	180	184	872

Source: *Cork County South SAHAP 2004-2008*, Table 7 p. 19

Summary of Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008.

- According to the Cork City SAHAP the total additional social rented dwellings available for letting will be 3924, made up of 2870 local authority and 1054 voluntary and co-operative units.
- While the largest single source of units provided under the SAHAP will be 872 local authority units completed under contract equating to 30% of local authority additional stock, 548 units or 19% additional stock will come from casual vacancies.
- In contrast only 9% or 95 additional units in voluntary and co-operative housing will come from casual vacancies while 87% or 919 additional units will come from direct provision which is proportionately double that of local authority additions.
- The contribution in the city under Part V will amount in total to 93 units made up of 53 local authority and 40 voluntary units. This is 2.4% of the total new social housing lettings envisaged over the lifetime of the City SAHAP.
- In the course of the SAHAP just over 21% of local authority new build (direct contract and Part V) will be one bed. This is despite the fact that according to the SAHAP 52% of households assessed as being in need of housing are one and two person households without children, which has increased to 62% by 2006.

Summary of Cork County South SAHAP 2004-2008.

- According to the Cork County SAHAP the total additional social rented dwellings available for letting over this period will be 2794, made up of 2104 local authority and 690 voluntary and co-operative units.
- The largest single source of units planned under the SAHAP is 872 local authority units completed under contract equating to 31% of local authority additional stock. 548 units or 320 additional stock are to come from casual vacancies in the local authority sector.
- 4% or 111 additional units in voluntary and co-operative housing are to come from casual vacancies, while 19% or 517 additional units are planned via direct provision.
- The planned contribution to social housing lettings from Part V in Cork County is to amount in total to 662 units, made up of 600 local authority and 62 voluntary units. This is 23% of total new social housing lettings envisaged under the South County Cork action plan, and almost ten times greater than the Part V contribution envisaged under the City SAHAP.
- Over the course of the South County SAHAP 100 of the new build (direct contract) and Part V will be one bed (or 5.2% of total new direct build and acquisitions). However of that figure a large proportion will be devoted to housing for older persons and special needs housing. 665 units (35%) of the total new build and acquisitions will be one and two bedroom units, a much lower percentage than is planned in the City SAHAP.

SECTION IV

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTION PLAN HOUSING TARGETS BY OUTTURNS, 2004 – 2005

Supply of Social Housing in Cork City

Level of New Build and Acquisitions

Activity prior to SAHAP (1999 – 2003)

Residential construction and acquisition in relation to social housing in Cork City has fluctuated over the period 1999-2003. Overall social housing output (local authority and non-profit) showed a clear decline in the period 1999-2003 (with the exception of 2002, which saw a modest spike in output), with output decreasing from 282 units in 1999 to 192 units in 2003. Non-profit (or voluntary) output displays a more erratic profile over this time period. Just under 50 units were produced in 1999. While negligible activity was recorded in 2000, 37 units were constructed in 2001 and 97 units in 2002. Production then declined to 77 units in 2003.

Activity in the first two years of SAHAP (2004 – 2005)

In the first two years of the Cork City SAHAP, there was an increase in social housing output with 281 units produced in 2004 and 386 units in 2005.

As shown in Table 9, there was a substantial improvement in local authority performance in 2004 with a 46% increase in output – rising from 115 to 281 units (new build and acquisitions). This also more than met the target of 266 units for 2004. The 2005 outturn of 263 units also exceeded the target for that year.

In 2004 the voluntary and co-operative sector set a target of 168 but no units were recorded. A substantial turnaround was achieved by the production of 123 dwellings in 2005, which nonetheless fell short of the target of 162.

A target of 5 Part V units was set for 2004 for the local authority, of none was achieved. In 2005 a target of 8 units was set of which none was achieved. In relation to voluntary and co-operative housing no Part V activity was provided for in the action plan.

Table 9 Projected and actual outturns for 2004 and 2005 of Cork City SAHAP

	Target 2004	Out turn 2004	Out turn 2004 as % of SAHAP Target	Target 2005	Out turn 2005	Out turn 2005 as % of SAHAP Target
Local Authority Units completed under Contract	266	281	105.6%	255	263	103%
Local Authority Units Acquired under Part V	5	0	0%	8	0	0%
Voluntary and Co-operative direct provision	168	0	0%	162	123	76%
Voluntary and Co-operative Units made available under Part V	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Casual Vacancies Local Authority	300			280		
Casual Vacancies Voluntary and Co-op	10			15		
Total Casual Vacancies	310	142	46%	295	146	50%
Total Additional Social Rented Housing available for letting.	749	423	56.4%	720	532	74%

Sources: Cork City SAHAP 2004-2008, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Annual Statistics Bulletin 2004 and 2005

Note: data for casual vacancies for voluntary and coop housing are not available

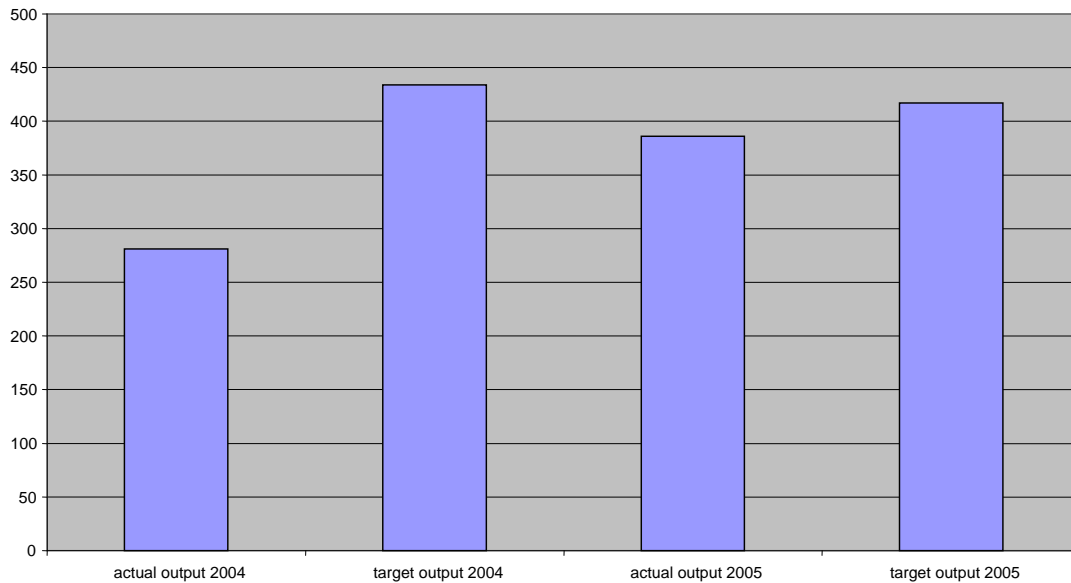
Cork County South local authority SAHAP

Table 10 Cork County South Local authority SAHAP targets and outturns

Local Authority Housing	Target 2004	Outturn 2004	Out turn 2004 as % of SAHAP Target	Target 2005	Outturn 2005	Out turn 2005 as % of SAHAP Target
Casual Vacancies	100	90	90%	115	123	107%
Long Term Voids Refurbished and Relet	28			17		
Units Acquired under Part V	18	129		95	122	
Units completed under Contract	121			224		
Units added/removed under regeneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Additional Local Authority Stock for Letting	267	219		451	245	

Under Part V 35 units were acquired by the local authority sector for the entire Cork County area in 2005 (which included West and North County Cork as well as South County Cork) despite a target of 95 units for the Cork County South area alone. (No units were produced in this period by the voluntary and co-operative sector in Cork County.) In 2004, a total of 7 units were acquired under the Part V scheme in the entire Cork County area, despite a target of 18 units for the Cork County South area alone. (Again, no units were acquired by the voluntary and co-operative sector in this period.)

Fig. 10 Cork city social housing construction versus targets, 2004-2005



Source: Dept. of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (2006)

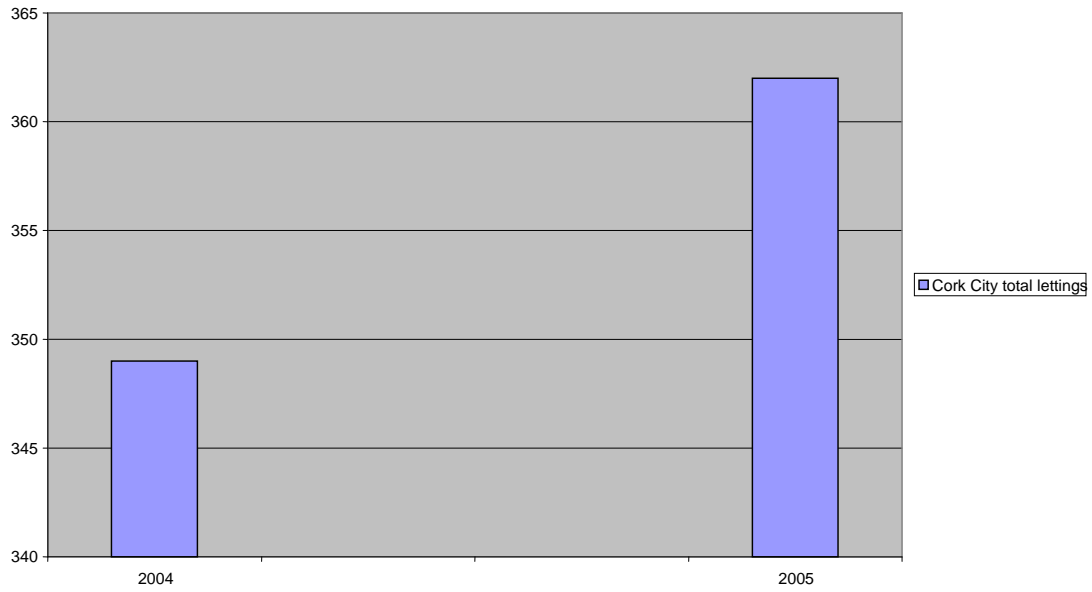
Total new lettings

Activity in the first two years of Cork City SAHAP (2004 – 2005)

The total number of housing units allocated in a given year is made up not only of new build and acquisitions, but also of previously tenanted social housing that has become vacant. In 2004 there were a total of 349 local authority lettings in Cork city (comprising 207 new lettings and 142 casual vacancies). In 2005, total lettings increased slightly to 362 (comprising 216 new lettings and 146 casual vacancies).⁵

⁵ These statistics use the categories and data presented in Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006), which differ slightly from the data presented in the preceding analysis.

Fig. 11 Cork City total lettings

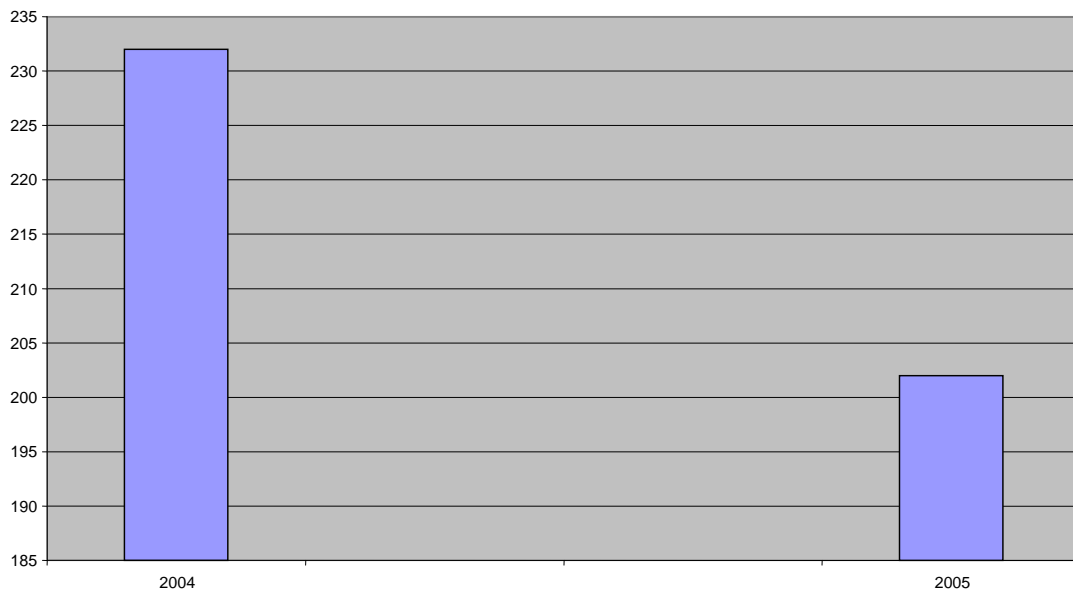


Source: Dept. of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (2006)

Note: excludes unavailable data for voluntary housing vacancies.

In Cork South County, total new lettings declined over the same period, from 232 units in 2004 to 202 units in 2005.

Fig. 12 Cork south county total new lettings 2004-2005



Source: Dept. of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (2006)

Analysis of social housing outturns re targets set in Cork City SAHAP for 2004 – 2005.

The local authority met targets in direct provision and acquisitions but widely over estimated the extent of casual vacancies in 2004 and 2005.

There were no completed voluntary units in 2004. These two factors account for the divergence between SAHAP targets and outturns. If the current trend in the shortfall is maintained there will be a deficit of 947 units by the end of the SAHAP which is a 24% shortfall in targeted activity.

SECTION V

SOCIAL HOUSING: TRENDS IN DEMAND AND SUPPLY

One method of assessing the implications for households of the trends in supply and demand presented above, is to calculate social housing lettings in a given year as a percentage of the numbers of households on the waiting list in that year. This measure gives an indication of the extent to which new social housing lettings impact on the waiting list.

Length of time on local authority waiting list

Waiting list prior to Cork City SAHAP

In 2002, 455 households (20% of those on the waiting list) were newcomers to the waiting list for local authority housing in Cork City. 395 households (17% of the total) had been waiting for less than a year. 520 households (23% of the total) had been waiting for between one and two years. 362 households (16% of the total) had been waiting for between two and three years. 362 households (16% of the total) had been waiting for between two and three years. 273 households (12% of the total) had been waiting for between three and four years, while 277 households (approximately 12% of the total) had been waiting for over four years (see Table 1). (Note the SAHAP published in May 2004 returned a list total of 3727.

Table 11 Length of time on local authority waiting list, Cork City 2002
(households)

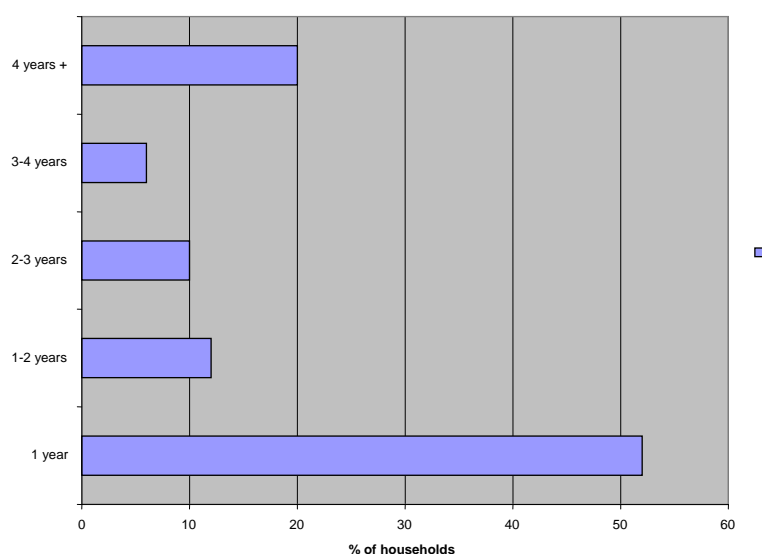
		%
LESS THAN 1 YEAR	850	37
BETWEEN 1-2 YEARS	520	23
BETWEEN 2 - 3 YEARS	362	16
BETWEEN 3 - 4 YEARS	273	12
MORE THAN 4 YEARS	277	12
<i>total hhds</i>	2282	100

Source: Cork City Council Assessment of Housing Need 2002

Waiting list in the third year of Cork City SAHAP (2006)

The most recent data for 2006 show that 52% (2502) of waiting list households have been on the list for under one year, 12% (577) for 1 – 2 years, 10% (481) for 2 – 3 years, 6% (288) for 3 – 4 years, and 20% (962) for over 4 years. This very large number of households registered as being in social housing need over the year since the March 2005 housing assessment accounts for the doubling of the numbers on the Cork city waiting list.

Fig. 13 Cork city waiting list by waiting time, % households (Kearney 2006)



Ratio of demand to supply prior to and during Cork City SAHAP

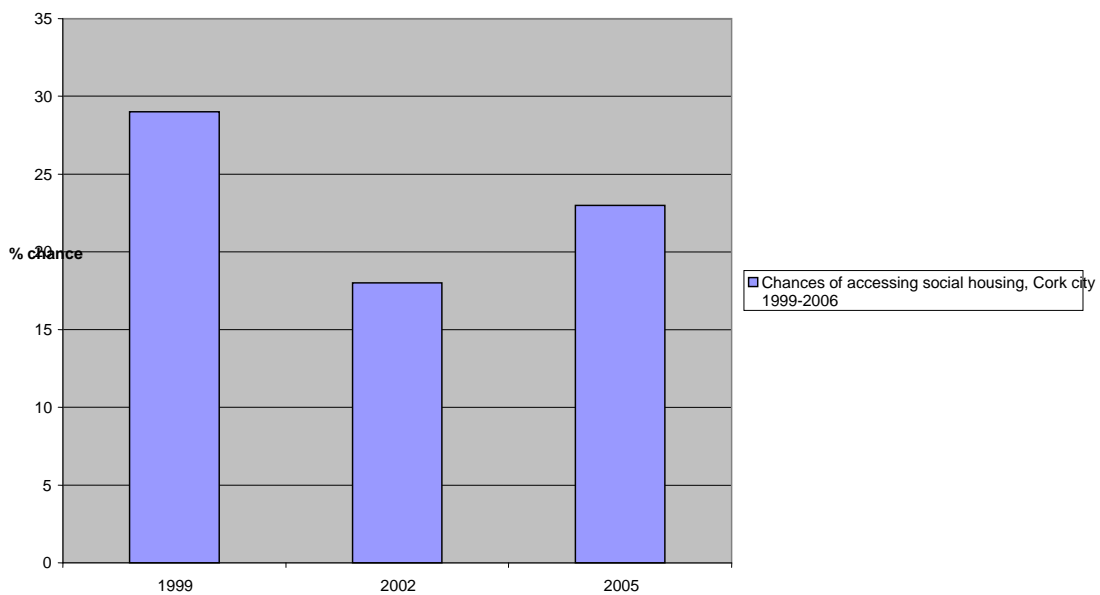
Looking at the data from 1999 and 2002, there was a decrease from 29% to 18% in the chances of a household accessing social housing according to this approximate measure. ⁶ This had improved somewhat in 2005 to a 23% chance of accessing social housing. However, the massive increase in the 2006 waiting list means that the situation has again deteriorated.

Should this growth in demand, or even a proportion of it, continue into the foreseeable future the targets as set out in T16 for local authority output over the period 2007 to 2009, even if they are attained, inevitably come into question. In that period local authorities nationally are expected to deliver 2000 new dwellings. However only a proportion of these will be provided in Cork city and its hinterland. Already therefore on the basis of growth in

⁶ A figure for total allocations for the non-profit sector is not available, and the slightly lower measure for new build was used instead.

demand in Cork city the T16 targets would appear to be inadequate and require significant upward revision. Despite the fact that arising from policy changes over the past decade, local authority housing programmes are now accompanied by a range of additional social and affordable housing provisions the reality is still a large degree of reliance obligation on city and county councils to meet social housing need

Fig. 14 Chances of accessing social housing, Cork city 1999-2006



Source: calculated from Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin 1999 and 2002, and Cork City Council Assessment of Housing Need 1999, 2002 and 2005

Put another way, the 1999 level of new lettings would have taken approximately three-and-a-half years to clear the waiting list in that year, whereas the 2002 level of new lettings would have taken approximately five-and-a-half years to clear that year's waiting list. While the 2005 level of new lettings would take almost four and a half years to clear the waiting list, if the 2005 level of new lettings is set against the 2006 waiting list figures, the time involved lengthens to nine years!

Summary of Trends in Housing Need and Supply in Cork City prior to and during SAHAP

- In overall terms social housing output (local authority and non-profit) showed a clear decline in the period 1999-2003, followed by an increase from 2004 onwards.
- New lettings have fluctuated between a low of 278 in 2000 to 532 in 2005 which is the highest number in the six year period since 1999.
- There was a decrease from 29% to 18% between 1999 and 2002 in the chances of a household accessing social housing in Cork city.
- By 2005 this had improved to a 23% but according to 2006 figures this had deteriorated as a result of a huge upsurge in demand over the course of the year.
- The 2005 level of lettings would take approx 4.5 years to clear the waiting list, however the 2006 waiting list would take 9 years to clear if set against the 2005 level of lettings.

SECTION VI

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The private rented sector expanded by over 50% in Cork City during the 1990s. Over 7,800 households - almost one in five households in Cork City - rented their accommodation from a private landlord in 2002, and this is likely to have increased when the detailed results of Census 2006 are available.⁷

Nature of demand in the Private Rented Sector

A recent national study by the Combat Poverty Agency has established that households in the Private Rented Sector (PRS), rather than those in the home ownership tenure, face the greatest problems of affordability (as measured by proportion of income going to meet housing costs).⁸ Nationally, it is estimated that over one-third of households in the private rented sector are in receipt of rent supplement. Over the past fifteen years, the rent supplement scheme has expanded in a dramatic and unplanned manner to become a vital strand of Irish housing policy.

Eligibility for rent supplement effectively depends on a household being in receipt of social welfare or a back-to-work allowance. These households are unemployed or unable to work due to caring responsibilities or disability. Without help in paying their housing costs, many of these households would end up staying with family or friends in overcrowded or unsuitable conditions, and many would end up homeless.

During the week ending April 26th 2002, there were 3,783 claimants in the Cork City and environs area qualifying for this form of housing benefit.⁹ This has increased to 5,425 claimants in the week ending April 28th 2006 which

⁷ Calculated from Central Statistics Office (2004), *Census 2002 Volume 13 Housing*, Table 19 p. 42.

⁸ Fahey, T. et al. (2004), *Housing, Poverty and Wealth in Ireland* (Dublin: IPA).

⁹ Note that it is not possible to calculate precisely the number of claimants as a % of all PRS households in Cork City, since (a) the category 'claimant' is different from that of 'household'; (b) the geographical area for which rent supplement data is available does not correspond exactly to the boundaries of Cork City.

equates to a 43% increase on the 2002 figure. Data on these claimants broken down by income source is given in Table 3.

Table 12 Rent supplemented households by source of income, Cork City and environs, 2006

Source of income	2006 (%)
Supplementary Welfare Allowance	7
Unemployment Assistance/Unemployment Benefit	23
Training and Education	9
Disability	21
One parent family payment	17
Asylum seekers, refugees	9
Pension	7
Other income	7

Source: CWS Support Unit, Southern Health Board

Note: the geographical area to which the data in Table relate to HSE administrative areas which are broader than the boundaries of Cork City (see footnote 6).

As Table 3 indicates, almost half (44%) of claimants were in receipt of some form of unemployment payment or disability benefit. Just over one-sixth (17%) of claimants were single parents. Approximately one-tenth (9%) of claimants in some form of training or work schemes; an identical number (9%) were refugees or asylum seekers.

Registration of Landlords in the Private Rental Sector

The *Residential Tenancies Act 2004* requires private landlords to be registered with the Private Rented Tenancies Board to facilitate inspections of premises and to ensure proper management procedures are in place (e.g. use of rent books). Research has shown that rent-supplemented tenants often have to endure accommodation that is of poor quality and poorly managed.¹⁰

¹⁰ Kiely, J. (2005), Seeking a home on rent supplement. Experience in Cork City in 2004 (Cork: Threshold).

The number of landlords registered with Cork City Council has increased by 65% in the period December 1999 to December 2003; whilst the number of houses registered has increased by 245% (see Fig. 8).

The takeover of the registration function by the Private Rented Tenancies Board has resulted in a somewhat different reporting format, but the latest statistics show that just under 9,000 units are registered in Cork city and county by mid-2006.

Private Rental Supply and Responding to Housing Demand

As has been noted earlier, households composed of single persons comprise the largest component on the waiting list. According to the SAHAP the private rental sector is destined to play a important role in offering a response to housing demand from single person households:

“A new government initiative has been introduced to establish contractual agreements between housing authorities and private sector accommodation providers as a means of meeting social housing demand and reducing dependence on supplementary welfare allowance payments.Cork City Council recognises the importance of the private rental sector in meeting housing needs and considers that the establishment of long term contractual arrangements with the sector, designed to provide stability and security of tenure for tenants, will improve the viability of this option for many seeking local authority housing.” (SAHAP 2005: 22)

This is re-affirmed in the City Manager’s report on Budget 2006 which states that:

“In 2005, the Rental Accommodation Unit was set up to address the housing needs of rent supplement recipients under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. The new arrangements will involve Cork City Council progressively assuming responsibility for accommodating rent supplement recipients of eighteen months continuous duration who are assessed as having a long term housing need.” (p. A8).

Reflecting the national picture where there were 1,590 cases received by the RAS across all local authorities and 505 transferred from Rent Supplement to RAS, uptake of the scheme has been modest in Cork city also. According to the Housing Statistics Bulletin 2005 a total of 270 cases were received by Cork city council RAS. Fifty were transferred from Supplementary Rent Supplement to the RAS, there were no cases transferred from Rent Supplement to other social housing options. There were no cases returned under the RAS by Cork County Council in 2005.

Table 13 Rental Assistance Scheme, Cork City and nationally, 2005

Local Authority	No. of cases reviewed	No. of cases transferred from SWA	Cases transferred to social housing
Cork City Council	270	50	0
All participating Local Authorities	1,590	505	101

Source: DoEHLG website

Arising from discussions with members of the Cork Social Housing Forum at the June 2006 seminar, it appears that a major focus of activity under the Cork city RAS involves voluntary sector transfers into the scheme. The participation in the RAS by the voluntary sector is cited in the Housing Framework of Towards 2016. While this activity represents important progress under the terms of reference of the RAS, the engagement with existing and prospective landlords in the private rented sector has yet to yield tangible results. Though contractual arrangements with landlords under the RAS are included in T16 the performance to date is extremely low.

Rent Supplement and Access to Tenancies

In light of the housing output scheduled under the SAHAP referred to above, the private rental sector is likely to be the only accessible source of accommodation for the majority of single person and childless households in the Cork area. However, research into local newspaper advertisements for

one bedroom units and bedsits in Cork city during the period 14th to 25th August 2006, found that only 10% of these were (a) within the mandatory rent levels set by the Department of Community and Family Affairs and (b) accepted rent supplement (unpublished Threshold research, 2006). This effectively rules out such households from securing accommodation and compounds the competition between them where they are considered for tenancies.

SECTION VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Meeting Social Housing Need: The Policy Context

(1) Social Housing Provision

Over the past decade and a half the nature of how social housing need is responded to in Ireland has changed significantly. Until the early 1990's the primary role in meeting need fell to local authority housing departments. Voluntary and co-operative bodies played a much more minor and specialist role and the private rented sector rent allowance scheme was a far less significant source of housing subsidy.

Since the early 1990's the direction of Irish social housing policy has been to diversify housing supply through, as the Plan for Social Housing (1991) stated, "an enhanced contribution from the voluntary and co-operative sector". Social Housing: The Way Ahead (1995) which followed up the Plan for Social Housing re-affirmed the principles of the policy through improvements to schemes and setting new targets. Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2002 offered a further source of supply through stipulating that local authorities can ensure up to a maximum of 20% all residential development over a certain size is retained for social and affordable dwellings.

Voluntary and co-operative organisations do undoubtedly now play a more broadly based role as housing providers and depending on their size and capacity now offer general needs provision through many still focus on special needs provision which is evident in their output levels. However despite the shift in emphasis at a policy level there is still a clear onus and expectation that local authorities will continue to fulfil the primary responsibility as providers of general needs social housing.

(2) The Role of the Private Market

In the face of growing demand over supply of social housing the private rental sector is seen as the only option for many households seeking accommodation. The supplementary rent allowance continues to expand reflecting this shortage of other social housing supply and expenditure is now approximately €450 million per annum. However reforms to the governance of private renting such as the Rental Assistance Scheme have been slow to take root with initially modest take up rates reported though it must be acknowledged that the scheme is at an early stage of implementation. In addition issues around quality of accommodation remain to be addressed if the state is to engage with private landlords in long term contractual commitments. (Some moves in this direction have recently been signalled in DoEHLG 2006, *Action on Private Rented Accommodation Standards*.)

(3) The Role of Planning and Development Legislation

The performance of local authorities under Part V has been extremely modest, largely as a result of the dilution of its original intention to the point that local authorities who take cash in lieu of dwellings in order to provide social housing in locations apart from private housing developments now run the risk of reinforcing the social segregation which the clause was intended to combat in the first place. (Brooke, 2006).

Main Findings from the Evaluation in this Report

(1) Extent and Nature of Social Housing Demand in Cork City.

Households on the Waiting List: As of 2006 there were a total of 4,810 households on the waiting list in Cork city. This had increased from 2,358 in 2005.

Household Profile: 58% of households on the waiting list comprise single persons, 28% single parents, 10% couples with children, and 4% couples only. Between 2004 and 2006 the proportion of smaller households (single persons and couples) increased from 52% to 62% of the total which equates to 2,982 households.

Socio Economic Profile: Households appearing on the waiting list are particularly at risk of poverty and social exclusion by virtue of their low income and acknowledged housing needs. Sixty per cent of households on the waiting list cited affordability difficulties with their current accommodation as the reason for being on the waiting list.

Length of Time on List: The most recent data for 2006 (the third year of SAHAP) show that 2502 (compared to 850 in 2002), of waiting list households have been on the list for under one year, 577 (520 in 2002) for 1 – 2 years, 481 (362) for 2 – 3 years, 288 (273 in 2002) for 3 – 4 years, and 962 (277 in 2002) for over 4 years.

(2) Responding to Social Housing Demand

The local authority (city council) met targets in direct provision and acquisitions in 2004 and 2005 as set out in the SAHAP but widely over estimated the contribution of casual vacancies to new lettings in those years. However meeting targets has been overshadowed by the rapid rise in demand for social housing which was not anticipated either by SAHAP or by the Joint Housing Strategy. In South County Cork, the principal reason for the

discrepancy between target and outturn was the poor performance under Part V.

Nature of Response to Demand: As stated above 62% of households on the 2006 waiting list are single person or two adult households who would ideally be accommodated in small units. In the course of the SAHAP just over 35% of city council planned new build (direct contract and Part V) will be one bed units. Demand from this source is clearly beyond the projections of SAHAP, even if they are attained. It is evident that the SAHAP did not envisage that the needs of all one and two person households on the waiting list would be met from local authority or voluntary sector provision. The underlying assumption in the SAHAP is that this demand would be met in the private rented sector, via rent supplement and the RAS. However, the performance under RAS indicates little progress to date in terms of transfer of private rented tenancies into this scheme.

Recommendations arising from this analysis and from consultations with members of the Cork Social Housing Forum.

- It is recommended that Cork City council fulfils its obligation to directly provide accommodation appropriate to the household types in need on its waiting list.
- The house building programme of local authorities should be determined by the extent of housing need. It is essential that this is understood in the context of needs factors such as the economy, immigration, household formation rates which are not static but are constantly changing.
- In relation to the Rental Accommodation Scheme, insofar as this becomes the long-term accommodation of many of the participating households, it is recommended that this rental accommodation meet quality standards in relation to e.g. cooking, washing, ventilation and storage facilities, and that regular inspections by councils occur to secure these standards.
- It is evident from this analysis that the targets set out in the SAHAP 's have been inadequate to address the growth in housing need over their time frames. It is recommended therefore that a more robust methodology is devised so as to ensure that targets can more accurately anticipate growth in demand.
- It is recommended that the measurement used to generate the numbers of eligible households is refined to improve the accuracy and reliability of the resulting count, thus avoiding fluctuations in waiting list numbers within a very short time period.
- It is recommended that an analysis and evaluation of current practices, particularly in relation the choice between payments in lieu and the provision of dwellings, in the implementation of Part V of the Planning

and Development Act 2000 and 2002 (Amendment) in the city and hinterland areas is undertaken.

- With respect to Part V, ensure 20% of building land is allocated to social and affordable housing with at least half of this being allocated for social housing.
- It is recommended that in relation to the voluntary / non-profit sector, that Cork Social Housing Forum members assess their current provision of services and explore potential scope for future developments.