The People's Transition - Phibsborough

Implementation of Community-Led Development for Climate Justice

Acknowledgements

This paper is one of two focused on the findings of The People's Transition pilot projects which have been conducted over the course of 2021. These pilot projects have been led by the Think-Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC) and supported by AIB.

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Executive Summary

Introduction The People's Transition describes a model for participative decision making that is intended to enable a community to benefit from the transition to a zero-carbon society. It aims to design climate solutions that give local people and communities ownership of assets of transition and thus enhance public support for climate action by tackling inequality and raising standards of living. The Phibsborough People's Transition began in March 2021. The intention of the project was to listen to, and learn from, the community's needs and abilities in Ardara and then attempt to design a number of climate solutions that would benefit the community and address a number of the main development priorities of the community.

The project had three phases. The first phase was the Mapping Phase. The mapping phase aimed to build a picture of the Phibsborough community, outlining a geographical scope for the project that represents the people who live there and the diversity of people living within the community. The key was understanding how people within the community could be included by assessing who was at greatest risk of being excluded. In addition to demographics and circumstances, the area was studied to understand the distribution of institutions and organisations, such as schools, churches and community groups, that play a significant role in the locality.

The mapping phase informed the roll out of the second phase – the Listening Phase. Because of complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this phase had to be designed without significant public gatherings. This ruled options such as deliberative mini-publics or other representative gatherings. Instead, focus groups were held and community rapporteurs were deployed to engage with various cohorts across the community and gather inputs on community needs, priorities and strengths. As the Listening Phase came to an end, a survey was sent around the community to ground truth the findings and ensure that the emerging picture of the community was correct.

Taking the information gathered during the mapping and listening phases, TASC worked with climate and sustainable development experts to spec out two solutions for climate action that address community needs and priorities. As can be expected, not all needs identified by residents could be addressed through community-led climate action, so it was necessary to home in on several pertinent issues.

The need for a higher standard of, and more affordable, housing was highlighted both in the mapping and listening phases. So was the need for employment and apprenticeship opportunities. This pointed to the potential for a socially inclusive climate action through the creation of a retrofitting cooperative developed to address these priorities. This, combined with a potential advanced market from anchor institutions, would create jobs and training opportunities within the community whilst addressing some of the issues faced by renters and homeowners.

The need for safer and more reliable employment opportunities was coupled with issues around traffic, pollution and transport formed the basis of the second solution. Addressing precarious working situations whilst reducing emissions from last mile delivery services, a bicycle courier cooperative was proposed as a potential community action. Providing an alternative to both van deliveries and extractive bicycle delivery services, this solution would support the local economy and general welfare of the community through a locally run delivery service.

By adopting an intentionally inclusive approach and targeting groups that my not otherwise be disposed to engaging in such a dialogue about the future of the community of Phibsborough, the People's Transition seeks to enable the creation of solutions grounded in expanding the capabilities of community members enable a freedom to achieve wellbeing and the real opportunities to do and be what they want to be. Given that the communities around Phibsborough are already strongly engaged in environmental issues, it is hoped that the proposed solutions can be advanced and demonstrate the importance of people-centred climate action in Dublin.

1. Introduction

Tackling climate change requires urged and unprecedented action in communities all around the world. Given the interdependent nature of the crisis, if climate action is to be enduring, then it must be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that its burdens and benefits are shared throughout society. While the importance of inclusive climate policy seems to be widely understood, there are few tried and tested frameworks for the co-creation of climate policy in European communities.

The People's Transition (McCabe, 2020) attempts to address this. It is a participative decision-making model for climate action. It views climate action as an enabler of local development, giving people and communities ownership of the transition to zero carbon societies. The model, which was developed through extensive consultation with communities and organisations around Ireland, seeks to deliver a bottom-up approach to transition that builds local wealth, enables local ownership of climate action and empowers local people. It aims to tackle inequality and raise standards of living through the delivery of climate solutions, thus proactively building social approval, and demand, for climate action.

To transfer the People's Transition model into practice, a set of pilot projects were run in two communities in Ireland. This report addresses the project undertaken in Phibsborough, a mixed commercial and residential neighbourhood on the northside of Dublin. The People's Transition began in the community in March 2021 and ran until October 2021.

Phibsborough represents many of the challenges, and opportunities, facing urban neighbourhoods in towns and cities in Ireland. There are members of the community with very high degrees of agency, active residents' associations and a tradition of active citizenship which gives the community an ability and willingness to engage decision-makers. In many parts, there exists a strong social fabric and a robust foundation for community-led development initiatives. There is also a high concentration of potential anchor institutions, such as the Mater Hospital, Mountjoy Prison and Technical University Dublin, that could act as community wealth builders.

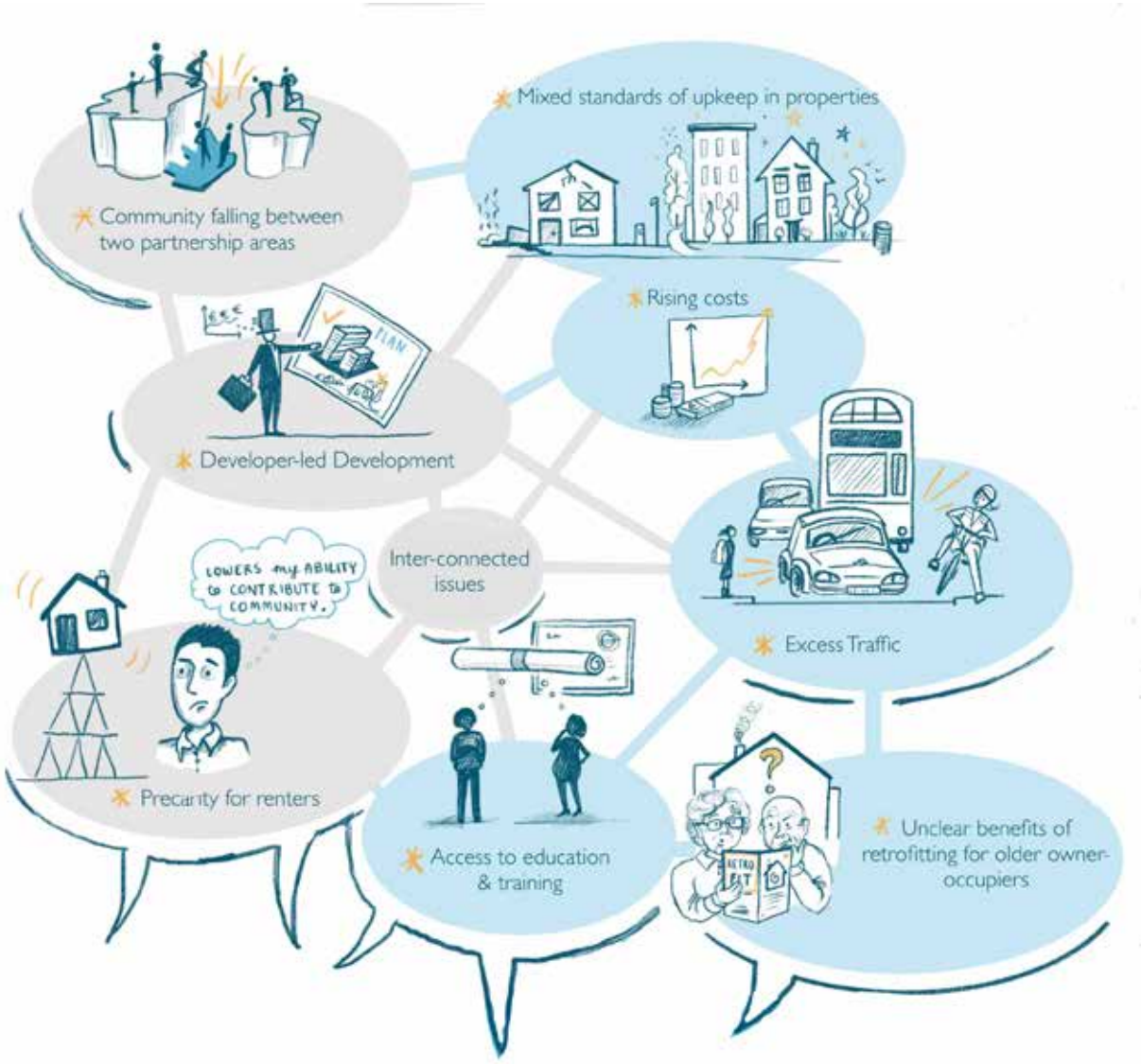
Equally, however, there is a high concentration of renters, new Irish communities and people in precarious working situations which can prove to be barriers that prevent engagement in community-based activities. Similarly, the geographic location of the community – on the boundary between electoral areas and development companies mean that there is a sense that at times the communities needs are overlooked. And despite the concentration of potential anchor institutions, there is yet no community wealth building strategy for Dublin which could set cultural standards.

The project had three phases, leading to the co-creation of solutions that address the needs of the community. First, a mapping phase made use of existing geographical and census data to outline

the groups of people that live in the community, giving particular attention to vulnerable groups and identifying challenges and opportunities for climate action. This information was used to design a listening phase, through which the TASC team engaged directly with the community to understand the needs and priorities of different groups and individuals.

The solutions outlined in the report are the result of thorough analysis of community needs and priorities identified in the mapping and listening phases. In response to the call for community led climate action laid out by the People's Transition, the solutions have been designed with expert input and grounded in the needs and priorities identified by the respondents from the Phibsborough community. The solutions developed are a retrofitting cooperative and a bicycle courier cooperative. Both of these solutions provide opportunities for employment, while the retrofitting cooperative additionally looks at the need for better housing standards, and the bicycle courier cooperative offers a means of addressing some of the issues raised around traffic and transport in the area.

These specific solutions are designed to meet the need for climate action whilst also being realistic and beneficial for the Phibsborough community. They provide a blueprint for how the People's Transition Model might be applied in a specific context.



PHIBSBOROUGH PEO
...DIVERSITY...
PARKS
...the ROYAL CANAL...
...COMMUNITIES DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES...
BAILE A
PHIBSBO
LISTENIN
MAPPING
Community falling between two partnership areas
Most people in Phibsboro rent from a private landlord
DIVERSITY
Higher than average levels of disability
CABRA
GLASNEVIN
9 ELECTORAL DIVISIONS
Some pockets of unemployment exist
Developer-led Developme
RENTING
LOWERS my ABILITY to CONTRIBUTE to COMMUNITY.
YOUTH
NORTH INNER CITY
Phibsboro has a young population
AGE 20-40
Precarity for renters
High concentration of potential anchor institutions
POTENTIAL
BUILDING WEALTH FOR OUR

OPLE'S TRANSITION

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99% AGREE
CHANGE is NEEDED

SOLUTIONS in the CITY

Mixed standards of upkeep in properties

Rising costs

Excess Traffic

Access to education & training

Unclear benefits of retrofitting for older owner-occupiers

Facilitating dialogue between landlords and tenants

Potential demand from "anchor institutions"

Reducing energy costs for tenants and owner-occupiers

RETROFITTING CO-OPERATIVE

Community-led and owned

Bringing advocates and practitioners together

New forms of training & employment

Zero emission last mile solution. (Last mile delivery = 20% of all delivery emissions.)

Reducing traffic congestion

DELIVERY BIKE CO-OPERATIVE

Quality employment opportunities both long and short-term (e.g. Community Employment Scheme)

Building a strong relationship with the local community

Co-operative model provides benefits and protections for workers

COMMUNITY . . .

Rothar

Key Terms

Climate action

Political, collective and individual action on climate change can take many forms. Climate action means stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including climate-related hazards in all countries; integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity with respect to climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. There are other challenges that intersect climate action and environmental protection such as enhancing biodiversity and improving water quality.

Community Wealth Building

Community wealth building or local wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. Community wealth building is a response to the contemporary challenges of austerity, financialisaton and automation. It seeks to provide resilience where there is risk and local economic security where there is precarity

Anchor Institution

An anchor institution is one that, alongside its main function, plays a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy. Anchor institutions generally have strong ties to the geographic area in which they are based through invested capital, mission and relationship to customers and employees. These institutions tend to operate not-for-profit. It is much simpler for private businesses to move, so there is no guarantee they will continue serving the local community in the long-term. However, there are examples of for-profit organisations playing the role of an anchor institution.

Local Development

Local development is the identification and use of the resources and endogenous potentialities of a community, neighbourhood, city or equivalent. The local development approach considers the endogenous potentialities of territories. Economic and non-economic factors influence local development processes. Among the non-economic factors, social, cultural, historical, institutional, and geographical aspects can be decisive in the process of local economic development

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonise three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies.

2. Phase I: Mapping phase

The mapping phase aimed to build a picture of the Phibsborough community, outlining a geographical scope for the project that represents the people who live there. An area was mapped to include the anchor institutions, schools, churches and community groups, that play a significant role in the locality. Identifying key actors and community leaders in various fields allowed for the inclusion of the groups associated with them in the project, helping the TASC team to connect with the community and identify their needs and priorities.

More detailed information was gathered from the area using census data. This allowed for an assessment of potentially underrepresented groups so that inequalities in participation could be better addressed during the listening phase. The mapping phase also helped to identify potential barriers that people might face to participate in climate action. On the flip side, opportunities for engaging in climate action were identified, with information collected on resources available to the community that might strengthen the project.

2.1 Community data

Information was drawn from the 2016 Census, which is the most recently available data source of sufficient resolution to differentiate the community of Phibsborough from the rest of Dublin. It should be noted that the information it provides might have changed in the intervening years, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. This data was necessary to ensure an inclusive and effective participation process, outlining how specific groups in the community are best reached and involved in the discussion.

A key finding was the large group of underrepresented voices in Phibsborough. 13% of the local population have a disability while 3% are working as carers. In some areas lone parents account for over 50% of families. Ethnic minorities make up 38% of the population, there are notable groups of refugees and asylum seekers, and members of the Traveller and Roma communities. 1 in 4 households do not have an internet connection, restricting access to

information and participation in decision-making. Recognising this diversity allowed TASC to facilitate participation and identify issues for specific groups.

Although there are affluent areas in the community, the Pobal Deprivation Index reveals pockets of deprivation In Phibsborough. In particular, issues exist around housing. Renters make up 55% of the population and there is a lack of public housing in the area (CSO, 2016). The high proportion of renters is one of the major points that was highlighted in the mapping phase since it presents a challenge for community led local development. The precarity of renting is an obstacle to community engagement since renters are less likely to be motivated to invest in the local community (Bates, et al., 2020).

Understanding the nature of employment in Phibsborough helps to identify barriers to community participation that people in certain occupations might face. Professional, managerial and technical workers make up 32% of the community, non-manual workers a further 12% and unskilled, semi-skilled and manually skilled workers make up 21%. An unemployment rate of more than 8% is likely to have risen since 2016 in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic (Beirne, et al., 2020).

The majority of employment is local, within Dublin. This is reflected in the modes of transport. Walking is the primary mode of transport in the community. Bus, minibus and coach rank second, with cars coming in third. Since the census took place, a LUAS extension was opened in the area, likely having a significant effect on this data alongside the higher proportion of people working from home during the pandemic.
The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 (DCC 2016) proposed new civic spaces for the community as well as improved public transport networks that should alleviate pressure from traffic. Much of this has not come to pass. Concerns around traffic have been raised by community-led projects like Phizzfest, an annual arts and culture festival. In 2014 the festival exhibited the 'Put Yourself in the Picture' project, asking people to make public their ideas for improving local infrastructure and quality of life. Traffic and the need for public transport were among the issues raised. In addition, improved walking and cycling infrastructure were highlighted during a public meeting called 'We need to talk about Phibsborough', which followed from the 'Put Yourself in the Picture' project.

2.2 Anchor Institutions

Anchor institutions hold the potential to play a significant role in a locality by making strategic contributions to the local economy. They generally have strong ties to the geographical area in which they are based through invested capital, mission and relationship to community members.

The diversity of potential anchor institutions available to the community offer a wide range of potential partnerships for community led climate action. Mater Hospital, Mountjoy Prison, Technical University Dublin, the National Learning Centre, and Dalymount Park all lend themselves to playing the role of community wealth builders. Dalymount Park, owned by Dublin City Council, is due to be rebuilt, providing opportunities for job creation and climate action. Following a community consultation process, a regeneration project has been approved to upgrade the stadium and develop community facilities including a library.

It is worth noting that Bohemian Football Club is a fan-owned club, essentially a cooperative. The ethos aligns closely with the concept of community owned climate action. Similarly, the Phibsborough Credit Union offers both a model for cooperative approaches while also being a potential resource to be drawn on in seeking to devise and resource community led approaches to climate action.

2.3 Active Citizenship

Alongside the rich potential for anchor institutions, Phibsborough has a strong tradition of active citizenship and community groups are already engaging in climate action. Most notably, the Sustainable Energy Community (SEC), the Climate Club, and the circular economy road map with a masterplan for energy and biodiversity, born out of the Tidy Town's initiative demonstrates the potential for community leadership. Similar SECs exist in Cabra and Stoneybatter and the initiatives are collaborating.

Established and actively engaged community groups have collected information on community needs and priorities over the past decade, like Phizzfest and its 'Put Yourself in the Picture' project. These findings fed into the mapping phase. Other groups are actively engaged in environmental action such as the Royal Canal Clean-up, the Act Now Collective and the Bohemian F.C. Climate Justice Initiative. Beyond this there are other organisations active in the community building resilience and addressing issues of poverty, such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Tenant's union CATU are very active in the community, organising defences against eviction and campaigns focused on addressing issues related to the housing crisis.

It was clear from an early stage that any suggested solutions emerging from the People's Transition would need to complement, rather than duplicate, existing efforts and that the #future success of the proposals from this People's Transition pilot project will rely on adoption by the strong network of community groups.

The TASC team has established initial relationships with community stakeholders including business owners, sports, arts and cultural organisations, as well as those working with disadvantaged groups. This was supplemented with publicly available data and information gathered by the community themselves. This mapping allowed TASC to focus on how the listening phase should be constructed so that it led to the development of solutions for the community.

2.4 Opportunities and barriers for participation

The primary barrier for participation was the COVID-19 pandemic. Ever changing restrictions caused a redesign of the project listening phase as the proposed mini-publics, called for by the model, were unlikely to meet required public health standards. This obviously severely limited the ability of the listening phase to reach its full potential. That said, the mapping phase enabled the design of a listening phase which would include those at risk of being missed.

Consultation fatigue is an issue in Phibsborough. A history of being over consulted and underserved by various development plans has led to a distrust of participative processes. The community has been let down by public policy in recent years, with a lack of political focus leading to the collapse of the Local Area Plan by a single vote in 2015. There was a risk that the resulting fatigue might curb enthusiasm for the project (Richards, Carter and Sherlock, 2004). This was taken into consideration when discussing the People's Transition project with community members. Other key barriers considered were issues concerning elderly members of the community who may not have internet access as well as cohorts who may not feel capable of participating or who may feel they do not have anything to offer such a process.

3. Phase II: Listening Phase

Based on the information gathered in the mapping phase, the listening phase was designed to foster trust, gather local knowledge, and build local capacity whilst further identifying community needs and priorities. It did so through a series of community dialogues that took different forms to ensure the diversity of groups in the Phibsborough community were represented. In total, 155 people were involved, with 65 key informants engaged through focus groups and interviews, and a further 90 through survey responses.

Given the large size of the Phibsborough community, the TASC team began by engaging on a one-on-one basis with key individuals that were representative of different cohorts. To counter potential underrepresentation, focus groups were then organised with travellers, young people, immigrants, renters, lone parents, the elderly, and disabled community members. Finally, community surveys were used to capture as broad an opinion as possible. These were held online due to Covid-19 restrictions, but an effort was made to support non-digitally literate community members.

A breadth of communication methods were employed to ensure information about the community dialogues reached as far as possible. Information on the project and opportunities to engage with it were circulated on relevant social media channels. Church newsletters and the mailing lists of non-profits working in the area were also incorporated in the communications plan.

A strategy was also developed for political engagement, since political support will be crucial for the implementation of the community's co-created climate action plan. The TASC team

met with key decision makers through ongoing meetings. Furthermore, the reports on the People's Transition pilot projects will be presented to a European audience through ongoing work with the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, which in turn will hopefully inform the ongoing development of the European Green Deal, and in particular the Climate Pact, the bottom-up component of the European Green Deal.

3.1 Community needs and priorities

The listening phase allowed that TASC team to understand the primary concerns, need and priorities of the community. This section details what was heard. While the People's Transition

pilot project, and the proposed solutions, can't address all community needs and priorities, it is important to set the solutions within the wider community development need.

Forty-four percent of respondents to the survey said that community was what they valued most about Phibsborough was the community. A community-led climate action plan for Phibsborough should build on this strength, ensuring a just transition rooted in participation of the community at every stage of the process. The community must feel the benefits of actions led by them, and this requires community needs to be addressed in parallel with climate action. Those who took part in the key informant interviews and the surveys appreciated the diverse mix of people and the village feel of Phibsborough. Cultural and socio-economic diversity are characteristics of the area that drew some residents to live there. Many described good relations with neighbours from a diversity of backgrounds.

3.1.1 Housing

Access to affordable, secure and adequate housing was the greatest need identified by migrants, renters and older homeowners. Difficulty in securing adequate finances such as a mortgage was highlighted by 92% of renters, with all agreeing that there is an issue of

affordable housing in the area. Some interviewees described sharing beds and bedrooms in their thirties since this was the only financially viable option. The standard of maintenance offered by landlords also varied. Where the standard was low, renters said they were less likely to care for properties.

Interviews with renters revealed that while there was a strong desire for community integration, a lack of secure tenure and rising rents prevented young people from putting down roots in the area. An increase in evictions in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic was also noted. This cumulative uncertainty around housing has consequences for sustaining the sense of community that so many people in Phibsborough value.

The issue of affordable housing was emphasised by business owners who recognised that they have to pay higher wages to ensure their employees can afford local rent or commuting costs. This has a significant knock-on effect for business owners, since about half of cafe and restaurant costs go towards wages.
Aside from attaining housing, the standard of available rentals was also an issue, as highlighted by this resident:

Unclear benefits of retrofitting for older owner-occupiers

> *"We live in a Victorian terrace and it's not insulated to modern standards. It's too hot in summer and too cold in winter... modern insulation and heating or air conditioning would be a big improvement to our lives."*

Retrofitting homes is a measure that can improve comfort for residents as well as improving energy-efficiency and reducing bills over time. But access to information on retrofitting is not sufficient for people to avail of its benefits. It is also challenging to undertake retrofitting in an area with such a high proportion of renters, since there is a lack of incentive for landlords to carry out work that is expensive but has benefits primarily for the tenant.

Elderly residents also said that they would not live long enough to see the financial benefits of retrofitting, although many were in a situation of fuel poverty, with people sometimes staying in one room of their house to reduce the costs of heating. The lack of capacity for retrofitting has ramifications both for climate action in the community, and the standard of housing available to residents.

It seems that while socially conscious housing development has been lacking, developer-led building has been on the rise. The surveys highlighted widespread concern over the number of developer-led buildings that had been approved without an agreed local area plan in place. Residents emphasised the importance of protecting the community from gentrification, a process that would remove for many what makes Phibsborough special. The issue was raised by one resident who said:

> *"Any development should add to the existing heart of Phibsborough, not replace it."*

Priorities differed between renters and homeowners, with most homeowners responding that housing challenges did not apply to them. The primary concern for homeowners was the provision of high-quality local services, with 88% stating that this was of a high or pretty high priority in their life. Nevertheless, 40% of homeowners said that paying electricity and home heating bills was an issue. The same proportion of homeowners expressed concern over the difficulty of saving for home-improvement schemes. So, while there are differing levels of uncertainty around housing in the community, it is an issue by a large proportion of both renters and homeowners.

3.1.2 Community Space

Phibsborough is seen to have a convenient location that is well served by public transport and with a good selection of green spaces. Still, 91% of the community are eager for change. The need for physical improvements in the area was highlighted by almost everyone. Specific priorities for change differed among groups and individuals, but they all move in the same direction of local development that addresses societal needs.

A distinctive spatial identity with a high-quality physical environment is outlined by Dublin City Council as being a priority for making Phibsborough a key district centre in the city. The Dublin City Development Plan includes a viable retail and commercial core, and a comprehensive range of high-quality community and social services. Despite the best

Excess Traffic

laid plans, bureaucracy was seen by several residents as a barrier to even the simplest improvements to the public realm, such as planting trees and improving green spaces.

3.1.3 Traffic

The need for traffic calming measures and an overall reduction in traffic was highlighted by homeowners, with 79% citing these as the most important improvements needed for the area. Residents across the surveys and interviews emphasised traffic that prevents the main areas of Phibsborough from being accessible for pedestrians or cyclists. Traffic pollution was also highlighted as a significant drawback to living near the main roads.

The roadside space taken up by car parking was mentioned as a barrier to infrastructure that would allow more cycling and walking, as well as the installation of roadside charging stations for electric cars, which are currently in short supply. In areas surrounding the centre of the village, parking on footpaths was seen as a serious antisocial tendency, making navigating the village challenging for pedestrians and exceptionally so for those with disabilities.

The size of the main roads through the village were criticised as being an impediment to community development and numerous residents suggested city-wide solutions like a congestion tax or free public transport could reduce the volume of traffic and thus allow greater space for footpaths and cycling.

3.1.4 Local business and an evening economy

The expansion of an evening economy and development of more local businesses were frequently raised as means of improving the local economy and community spirit. This is

hindered in part by the rise in developer-led building, and also the replacement of small businesses with shopping centres and retail parks. Survey respondents expressed concerns over a serious lack of local and small businesses, noting that:

> *"When we moved to Phibsborough there was a huge range of shops locally, bookshops, clothes shops, butchers, jewellers, music shops, etc. These have disappeared."*

Community falling between two partnership areas

3.1.5 Access to green space, litter and safety

Another point met with widespread consensus was the need for green spaces, community growing spaces and meeting places. A desire for more trees on streets and biodiversity in parks was also highlighted by many residents, with 75% of respondents strongly agreeing that this was a priority. These measures would have benefits not only for the appearance of the area, but also for reducing air pollution, an issue that was mentioned by several residents. Furthermore, the provision of more public recycling bins and enforcement of littering fines were suggested as measures that might overcome littering and illegal dumping in the area.

> *"Rubbish is a big problem in the area. Not just litter but dumping, lack of adequate disposal facilities and a lack of governance of the issue"*

As well as creating new public spaces, improving and promoting existing ones could see positive changes for people in Phibsborough. The promotion of the Royal Canal and Tolka valley as green spaces would have physical, mental and social benefits, as well as nurturing the sense of community and the formation of local spatial identity. One barrier to these spaces is disability, with 89 respondents raising a lack of access to these and other local amenities.

The question of public spaces links to concerns that were raised widely about safety in the community. Young people highlighted an increasing lack of safety, noting that many of their friends had already moved farther away to areas such as Glasnevin, Finglas and Donaghmede. Interviews about community safety highlighted concerns around drug use and a lack of police enforcement to address drug dealing, as well as other criminal activities. In addition, suggestions were made for harm reduction initiatives such as safe injection facilities

and services for people suffering with substance misuse.

Creating more social hubs and programs for children and young adults was raised as a measure that could contribute to a counter-narrative in terms of safety and opportunities for young people. Many young people stay indoors because of a combination of concerns over safety and a lack of social activities to engage in.

3.1.6 Employment

Concerns for young people extend to opportunities for employment and housing. The majority of respondents agreed that there is a need for more opportunities through local apprenticeships and traineeships with an emphasis on long-term employment, job security and resilience. Dedicated efforts to support equality, diversity and inclusion in employment were also raised. One interviewee who had moved to Phibsborough from Brazil described the challenge of finding secure employment with a liveable wage as a foreigner. Precarious, irregular and zero-hour contract work was also highlighted as a serious issue for community members struggling to make ends meet. Concerns around employment were raised mostly by renters and people from under-represented groups. While inclusion was agreed on in all responses, many homeowners felt that questions concerning employment and education were not applicable to them.

3.2 From priorities to solutions

Taking the from information gathered during the mapping and listening phases, TASC worked with climate and sustainable development experts to spec out two solutions for climate action that address community needs and priorities. Understandably, not all needs identified by residents could be addressed through community-led climate action, so it was necessary to home in on a number of pertinent issues.

It must be stressed that this is not an exact science, and others, looking at the same set of needs and priorities, may land on different climate solutions. However, it is hoped that the

process, as much as the proposed solutions, provoke thought as to how the investment in climate action can address, rather than perpetuate, existing development needs.

With regards what the TASC team focused on in terms of the outcome of the listening phase, there were several clear issues that interlink with climate action. For instance, a need for higher standard of, and more affordable, housing was highlighted both in the mapping and listening phases. So was the need for employment and apprenticeship opportunities. This pointed to the potential for a socially inclusive climate action through the creation of a retrofitting cooperative developed to address these priorities. This would create jobs and training opportunities within the community whilst addressing some of the issues faced by renters and homeowners.

The need for safer and more reliable employment opportunities was coupled with issues around traffic, pollution and transport formed the basis of the second solution. Addressing precarious working situations whilst reducing emissions from last mile delivery services, a bicycle courier cooperative was proposed as a potential community action. Providing an alternative to both van deliveries and extractive bicycle delivery services, this solution would support the local economy and general welfare of the community through a locally run delivery service.

By adopting an intentionally inclusive approach and targeting groups that my not otherwise be disposed to engaging in such a dialogue about the future of the community of Phibsborough, the People's Transition seeks to enable the creation of solutions grounded in expanding the capabilities of community members enable a freedom to achieve wellbeing and the real opportunities to do and be what they want to be. Fundamentally, this is an effort to achieve rights-based climate action which signatories of the Paris Agreement committed to in 2015. Climate action based on rights, equity and dignity is likely to proactively build social approval.

4. Phase III: Solutions Phase

Having completed the mapping and listening phase, the TASC team worked with relevant experts to identify potential solutions for the community that would both accelerate climate action, address local needs and priorities, and build community wealth. The team settled on developing two concepts – a retrofitting cooperative and a bicycle courier cooperative. These solutions should not be considered the only possible collective climate initiatives that could be undertaken in Phibsborough, they were just two initiatives which the team felt would be feasible and implementable.

4.1 Cooperative Models

Cooperatives are democratic businesses that operate on a broad-based ownership and follow internationally shared principles that embed concern for the wider community (Perrin and O'Hara 2020). They are driven by an ethos of solidarity and mutual aid, rather than competition, fostering a vibrant and diverse local economy where the community is the main beneficiary. By producing equitable outcomes and promoting ethical practices, cooperatives are well suited to tackling climate and societal challenges at the local level. They are a strategy for community wealth building since they redirect wealth back into the local economy and place control and benefits in the hands of local people.

Cooperative energy projects have increased in popularity throughout the EU driven partly by renewable energy and retrofitting support schemes (Caramizaru and Uihlein 2020). Energy cooperatives aim to maximise local value and contribute to the social and economic welfare of communities through the promotion of circular economies. They can bring EU, national and regional policy goals closer to citizens, improving local acceptance and enthusiasm for the energy transition. They can foster citizens' participation and control over decision making in a democratic manner, integrating consumers independent of their income and sharing benefits with those who cannot participate. Engaging citizens through collective energy actions can reinforce the valuable sense of community identified in the listening phase whilst supporting an energy transition.

4.2 Solution 1: Retrofitting Cooperative

More than a fifth of all energy consumed globally is used to power homes (Nakicenovic 2007), and this is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions in cities. The Dublin City Council Climate Action Plan (2019) targets a 33% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020 and 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The plan specifically mentions the facilitation of bottom-up community led approaches, and actively engaging and informing citizens on climate change.

There is clearly a need to improve energy efficiency in homes to meet these goals, and retrofitting is a means of achieving this. But the measures needed are often costly and do not reach the people who need them most. Energy efficiency in rental properties is lower than in owner-occupied homes or social housing (Melvin 2018), something that is impacting the 55% of residents who rent in Phibsborough.

Ireland's long-term renovation strategy (2020) estimates that more than 1.5 million buildings will need to be retrofitted by 2050. The Program for Government (2020) and the Climate Action Plan (2019) set targets to retrofit 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2 and to install 400,000 heat pumps in existing buildings over the next 10 years. This equates to almost 30% of all residential buildings in Ireland. The 2022 Budget announced €202m for residential and community retrofit schemes and confirmed plans for an additional scheme

- partly funded by the European Investment Bank - that enables credit institutions to offer loans to support home retrofitting at reduced interest rates. The carbon budgets proposed in 2021 highlight a commitment to 600,000 retrofits between 2020 and 2030, indicating a desire to increase ambition in the next Climate Action Plan.

Retrofitting is done by contractors with specific training to carry out the necessary installations, as well as to assess houses for building energy rating (BER) certificates. There is a unique opportunity here for a cooperative activity to support the national roll out of retrofitting. This could address numerous needs and priorities identified by the community

including the need for local jobs and apprenticeships, creating accessible solutions for more at-risk groups such as elderly people in the community, acting as a mediator between renters and landlords to improve the energy efficiency of rented properties and building local wealth that could be used to address other community concerns, such as the lack of community space or the creation of an evening economy.

4.2.1 What is retrofitting?

Retrofitting applies measures to buildings that reduce the energy needed to live comfortably in the property such as: roof and wall insulation, low energy lighting, photovoltaic solar panels (PV), heat pumps, and heating controls. It is an efficient means of contributing to the EU's climate goals, encompassing economic, social and environmental targets. The European Green Deal aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050 whilst ensuring that nobody is left behind in the process.

As well as providing a community-led climate solution, the cooperative retrofitting project outlined here looks toward achieving the goals of the People's Transition model by providing social outcomes in parallel with climate action. Comfort, health and wellbeing are all benefits for low income residents, as well as reduced energy bills which help alleviate energy poverty. This is significant since, retrofitting has been possible primarily for those with the ability to

pay the upfront costs (Vilches, Barrios Padura and Molina Huevla, 2017). Of major importance in this initiative is the creation of a program for lower income groups and those in fuel poverty who do not have the ability to pay. Initiatives such as community-led retrofitting cooperatives could, and should be enabled to serve those living in energy poverty to create a double benefit of employment and higher standards of living. Gains in energy efficiency allow investments to be paid back over time, which can be supplemented through energy credit savings schemes that provide incentives for retrofitting. Given the work needed there are significant opportunities for job creation, skills training and apprenticeships. This goes towards addressing unemployment in Phibsborough, which was identified during the mapping phase.

Each retrofitting project should adopt different strategies to accommodate local needs, but all retrofit work will have similar technical aims. Heat loss in homes is experienced through draughts, the roof, the windows, walls and the floor. The reduction of air penetration through draught-proofing, installing insulation, heat controls and energy-efficient appliances, are all forms of 'shallow retrofitting'. A 'deep retrofit' involves making multiple energy upgrades to a home such as the replacement of inefficient windows and doors, renewable heating systems such as an air-source heat pump, a good ventilation system to maintain air quality, and the introduction of renewable energy technologies such as solar panels. Before a retrofit takes place, an assessment is made by a qualified person to determine the BER rating of the house and recommend retrofitting options.

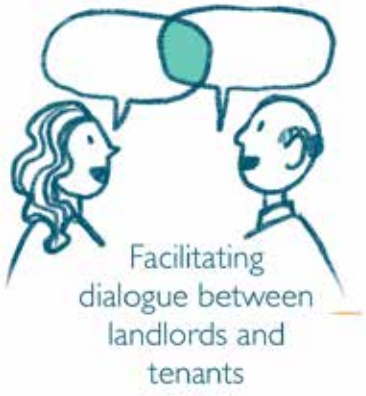
4.2.2 Challenges

Despite the apparent urgency to retrofit most of the existing housing in Ireland and the EU, there is stagnation in building renovation with only 1% of buildings in the EU retrofitted each year (Monteiro, et al., 2017). Financial barriers originate from high upfront costs associated with retrofits and long payback periods. There are also information barriers since stakeholders in the value chain may lack the regulatory framework, the operational skills and ability to maintain and operate the necessary equipment. This means that there is a time-lag in training workers with new technologies and to meet new standards set in place by regulating authorities. It is also easy for property owners to be confused or sceptical about new technologies, especially where supply chains are struggling to keep up with innovations in retrofitting.

The willingness, or lack thereof, of homeowners and landlords to carry out retrofitting is also a barrier to a successful retrofitting rollout. The hassle of moving out for the period of a deep retrofit, as well as the uncertainty of quantifiable outcomes raises further issues. One of the greatest challenges in Phibsborough may be the high number of rented properties, leading to split-incentives where landlords do not pay energy bills. While BER ratings, required in all rented properties, can inform tenant choices in some areas, it is less likely to have an effect where there is high demand for lower-value properties.

The landlord-tenant challenge can be overcome by a combination of factors. Where there is greater concern for tenants by landlords, especially by those with few properties, or where the landlord has emotional attachment to the property, there tends to be a greater willingness to retrofit (Lang, et al., 2020). Where landlords do retrofit, they are more likely to install basic measures associated with a shallow retrofit than the higher-cost, more complex deep retrofits. Equally, issues would arise with deep retrofits as to where tenants would live during the process. A final risk is that the retrofit property could then secure a higher rental income, meaning the original tenant could be displaced in favour of a tenant with a greater ability to pay an increased rent. Such "Green Gentrification" has been witnessed in other areas of Europe (von Platten et al., 2021). Strong tenancy rights are essential to ensure a just renovation wave.

A key benefit of a retrofitting cooperative could be as an advocate for retrofitting locally and a mediator between landlords and tenants on the issue. Involving a reputable third-party that bridges the gap between landlords and tenants by providing information and expertise that inform mutually beneficial choices can also be of significant help. This is a matter that might



be addressed through the involvement of a retrofitting cooperative and trusted advocacy groups. A straightforward communication scheme that involves all stakeholders from the beginning is essential to ensure that each understands the benefits of retrofitting and trusts the process.

Financing is both the greatest barrier and the most significant route to retrofitting. It is therefore crucial that finances are used to incentivize rather than deter retrofitting by means of grant schemes, subsidies, and low interest loans. Combining such incentives with providing an advanced market guarantee for a cooperative model could ensure a local development co-benefit for the renovation wave.

> *"One of the biggest challenges to tackling climate change is public acceptance of the risks and the associated demand for solutions to reduce these risks through policy and services."*
>
> - DCC Climate Action Plan

4.2.3 A retrofitting cooperative

There is no one size fits all model for a retrofitting project. Variable needs of buildings and residents mean that plans need to be customizable. Like a company, a registered cooperative is a legal entity that can act on its own, enter contracts, and be responsible for its actions. The long-term sustainability of a retrofitting cooperative comprehensive feasibility study to arrive at the most suitable business model for the context but the cooperative model would ensure a collective governance and benefit structure that would enable local wealth building activities.

Administrative, managerial and technical support can be provided by a dedicated staff within the cooperative itself. The cooperative should initially carry out house assessments and shallow retrofits as a means of meeting the needs of low-income households and those at risk of fuel poverty, whilst building the skills of the retrofitting workforce for later expansion to deep retrofits. It should also initially act only as an intermediary, providing information and housing assessments, and making links between clients and contractors whilst assisting with the administrative tasks associated with applying for grants. This is an important role since retrofitting can be daunting, especially for non-ability to pay clients, people with disabilities and the elderly. In this sense, the cooperative can act as a 'one-stop-shop' that links the various service providers needed to carry out retrofitting projects so that the process is simplified for clients. A core staff carrying out assessment and administration, linking contractors and clients. The cooperative would then charge a fee for this service to either or both parties.

Similar initiatives already exist in Ireland. Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC) operate as a one-stop-shop, leveraging grants from SEAI to under the Better Energy Communities Scheme. Their services cover technical surveys, contractor quotations, project management, quality assurance, and partnership with local financial institutions. ECTC are working with local Credit Unions to promote opportunities for grant-aided retrofits, with Credit Unions offering Green Loans to assist homeowners in covering their part of the grant-funded retrofit works.

4.2.4 Small beginnings

By starting small and keeping initial costs low, the cooperative for example by providing smaller services such as shallow retrofits that allow time for the cooperative to gain knowledge and build trust in the system. By linking in with local institutions, or existing

community-led initiatives such as the Sustainable Energy Community, the cooperative could facilitate training that would allow the development of the necessary technical expertise. This would also allow the cooperative to explore new opportunities that emerge either new funds or increasing demand.

Collaborating with local and regional authorities can facilitate access to finances and cooperative investments, as well as securing wider acceptance of the cooperative approach (Crook, et al., 2018). A number of organisations exist in Ireland to provide support through funding, advice, mentoring and training, such as Rethink Ireland, formally the Social Innovation Fund Ireland.

Similarly, the Community Services Programme (CSP) is a government initiative that supports community companies and cooperatives to deliver local social, economic and environmental services tackling disadvantage. They provide co-funding contributions toward the cost of employing a manager and equivalent full-time positions. This program focuses on serving people who are typically distanced from the labour market, including ex-prisoners. Other sources of funding may include social housing associations, European projects such as Interreg, Department of Social Protection, Business Energy Grants, and Labour Activation Schemes.

Furthermore, the community cooperative model allows for members to buy shares in the enterprise, thus creating capital whilst also sharing the benefits through the wider community. But buying shares in a business that people are unfamiliar with could depend on good communication and trust-building. While running costs of the cooperative could be provided for through any of these means, and income from ability-to-pay clients, the cost of installing retrofits might be covered through grants from organisations such as SEAI that exist specifically to support non-ability-to-pay clients. These grants are applied for on an individual basis by landlords and homeowners. As mentioned in the previous section, a cooperative can play a crucial role in this process.

Engaging with the larger institutions in the community can also provide a steady work flow that supports financial security for the cooperative. Working with these key players will build

credibility for the cooperative, heightening the possibility for future work. Having these projects set up early in the process can give peace of mind to employees and anyone with shares or investments in the cooperative.

4.2.5 Prioritising the workforce

The creation of a workforce, embedded in the local community and equipped with the necessary skills, is central to the principles of a cooperative. As well as providing managerial roles, the creation of a retrofitting cooperative will provide new technical roles for people in Phibsborough and neighbouring areas. In order to fill the initial cohorts of trainees, the cooperative could link in with new skills training being offered by the new retrofitting centres of excellence in the Education and Training Board, or the structure offered by Work Integration Social Enterprises to support disadvantaged people to prepare for and participate in the labour market. The cooperative could both target long-term unemployed in the community and providing an environment to allow them to reengage in the workforce, while also providing prestigious apprenticeships or retraining programmes in technical trades that will be increasingly valued in the coming years.

Shallow retrofits can often be carried out within the early part of retrofit training. It can therefore be feasible to up-skill workers, including the long-term unemployed, to a level where they can carry out work such as draught-proofing and fitting energy counters. Higher-skill roles can initially be carried out by private contractors, while partnering with training institutions such as the National Learning Centre and Technical University Dublin can bring on local workers through time to a level where they are capable of carrying out higher-skill work. By way of example, Dublin City Council seeks to support sustainable and strategic social enterprise and innovation through its Economic Development Office and the Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee. There are also Local Enterprise Offices located in each Local Authority Area of Ireland, offering 'soft' support in the form of training and mentoring, as well as offering direct financial support to microenterprises with fewer than ten employees. Skillnet Ireland is a government support agency that facilitates participation in workforce training. Specific training support for people with convictions is available through PACE, an organisation that assists with employability and social enterprise programmes. The Kickstart fund, run by the Probation Service in collaboration with the Irish Prison Service, also provides support for the development of social enterprises operating within the criminal justice sector. The latter two support mechanisms could see collaborations with Mountjoy Prison, identified in the mapping phase as a potential anchor institution in Phibsborough.

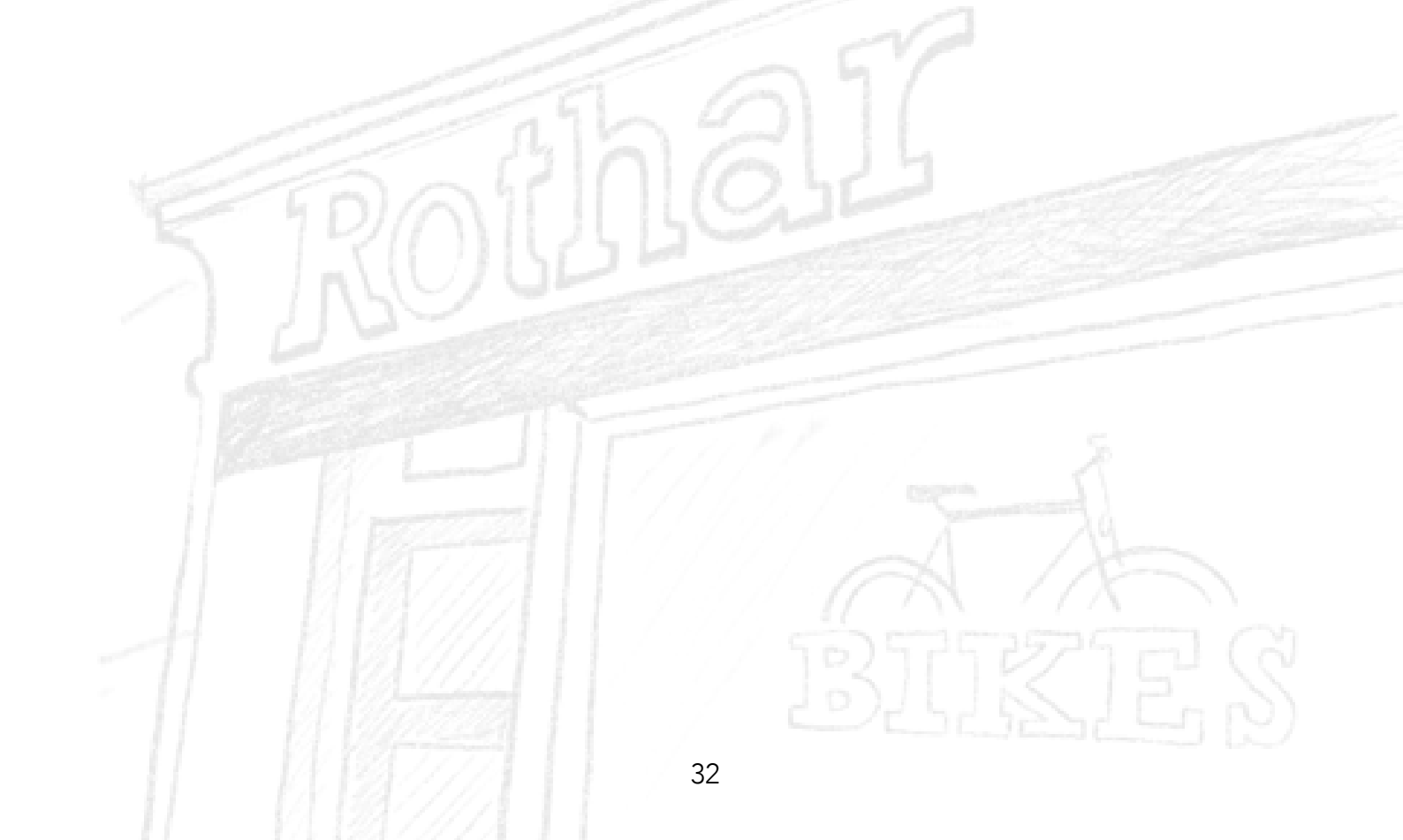
The retention of workers is a challenge in a scenario where private companies may be able to offer more lucrative jobs. Once the cooperative has invested in training workers, it should lay out incentives that ensure a proportion stay and support long term sustainability of the model. It is hoped that where workers are recruited on the basis of community value and the principles of a cooperative enterprise, they will likely tend towards staying. The opportunity for further training, allowing workers to progress within the cooperative, will also provide

incentive. This can be achieved through apprenticeship schemes, which run over longer time-scales and allow workers to become fully integrated in the cooperative. At the same time, the cooperative must ensure that workers are treated and paid fairly and provided with safe working conditions and equipment to carry out their job.

Again, there are local examples of such initiatives. Energy Action Limited is a registered charity that visited Tory Island, Donegal, in 1990. They provided information on retrofitting and promoted the creation of Community Based Organisations that could carry out work locally. Two projects were created: Action Inishowen and MFG; and both have grown incrementally since then. These organisations were able to deliver the SEAI Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme by providing attic and cavity wall insulation, ventilation, draught proofing, fitting tank jackets, lagging of pipes, installation of light bulbs and giving energy advice. Staff were trained externally and non-ability-to-pay clients were identified through eligibility criteria. The created 450 local jobs and has delivered 60,000 home insulations to date.

4.2.6 Advocacy and Mediation

Starting small and meeting achievable objectives will reduce the risk of losing support in the early stages of the enterprise. As a community-embedded initiative, the cooperative would be well placed to make use of existing groups, networks and institutions within the community, drawing on them for advocacy support and information sharing through the community. This could be expanded to membership of larger national and EU-wide networks of energy communities and cooperatives, leading to further knowledge and skill sharing.



4.3 Solution 2: Bicycle Courier Cooperative

In 2020, Dublin City Council pledged to reach safe levels of air pollution by 2030 under a program delivered by the World Health Organisation and the Climate Clear Air Coalition. Globally, freight transport contributes 30% to road transport emission and the demand for delivery services has increased in response to a rise in e-commerce, next-day home delivery, and Covid-19 lockdowns (Verlinghieri, Itova and Collingnon, 2021).

Reducing traffic congestion in Phibsborough requires providing alternatives to current needs that are met by cars and vans. The Metrolink and BusConnects services outlined in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, if delivered to drive a reduction in car usage, provide a means of reducing demand for vehicles which can be bolstered by reducing the use of delivery vans and cars, replacing these services with greener alternatives. However, as traffic returns to pre-pandemic levels, there is an opportunity to revolutionise the delivery sector so that it benefits people's health and wellbeing whilst delivering climate goals.

This potential has been illustrated by a group of active citizens in the Chorlton area of Manchester in the United Kingdom. Starting out as a community response to the first Covid-19 lockdown, Chorlton Bike Deliveries is a community shareholder cooperative. The inability of many people to do their own shopping coincided with an increase in spare time for many people who were furloughed from work. The Chorlton area has a high density of independent shops and businesses that fit well with the cooperative bike delivery model.

The cooperative has a commercial arm that pays cyclist on an hourly basis, serving businesses and their clients, and a community arm of volunteers that delivers excess vegetables from allotments, library books and unsold stock from supermarkets to local food banks. They are expanding their commercial arm through regular business to business deliveries, including restaurant to workplace lunch deliveries for businesses, and blood sample deliveries for the NHS. This model provides the prototype for the second solution being proposed by the People's Transition Phibsborough.

4.3.1 The Cargo Bike and the community

While regular bicycles can be used in a cycle delivery cooperative, they are often capable of carrying out food deliveries only. While there are incentives for this kind of delivery service, it consists of late working hours, low profit margins, and is subject to inconsistencies in orders. It is also a market that is dominated by large delivery companies, making it difficult for small cooperatives to carve their niche. Cargo bikes allow for a wider range of deliveries, and a cooperative might choose to use a mix of bicycle styles to suit their business model (CycleLogistics 2019).

A cargo bike is an elongated bicycle with either two or three wheels that is often powered by a combination of the cyclist and a battery, making it capable of carrying a significant load. Cargo bikes costing around €1,000-2,000 can carry around 80kg, while more expensive bikes are often capable of carrying up to 350kg. These bikes can have a battery power output of up to 250 W and provide electrical assist up to 25km/h.
Cargo bikes offer a competitive speed when compared with vans, since they can move past stationary traffic, use bus lanes and benefit from additional cycling infrastructure such as bike lanes. There is also no time lost looking for parking spaces. In fact, cargo bikes have been shown to be 1.6 times faster than vans (Verlinghieri, Itova and Collingnon, 2021), delivering nearly seven parcels per hour compared with only four parcels by vans. They also cost a fraction of buying a car or van, with hardly any fuel cost, low insurance cost, and lower maintenance and insurance costs.

100,000 cargo bikes were introduced throughout Europe between 2018-2020, estimated to be saving the same amount each month as flying 24,000 people from London to New York and back.

4.3.2 Beyond the gig-economy.

Under the current widely-accepted model of a cycle delivery company, riders are classed as independent contractors and forced into precarious working situations that offer no guarantee of a minimum wage or employment benefits (Temperton 2018). This is the case of large multinational companies running cycle courier businesses who hire workers on low wages and precarious contracts. Cooperatives provide a more ethical model for food delivery systems that can be expanded to a wider range of freight (Jones, Muldoon and Siravo, 2021). A cooperative allows its employees to become part of a community of riders that are working to improve their own business. By creating a worker-owned cooperative, the couriers would benefit both from their role and the growth of the business.

A cooperative allows businesses to build a solid relationship with the people delivering their products, and customers can be assured that they are supporting their local economy and the general welfare of the community. A successful cooperative will require a dedicated team to create a business plan, research the local market, and set out ways to ensure a healthy culture within the cooperative (Jones, Muldoon and Siravo, 2021).

It can be difficult to acquire clients when there are already big players in the delivery market. A cooperative would be able to overcome this challenge by showcasing the opportunity for strong business partnerships and community benefits. Placing value on the ability of a cooperative to foster community resilience can be used to encourage people and businesses to transfer from existing and extractive delivery services.

4.3.3 What kind of deliveries?

Typically, cycle delivery companies have focused on the market for on-demand orders, utilising online platforms that manage orders and arrange delivery. This model usually involves late working hours and has low profit margins along with fluctuating demand for orders. A cooperative might therefore choose to expand its business model to include other types of delivery. Scheduled deliveries from business to customer provide a reliable source of

work that can be planned in advance.

This means that several deliveries can be aggregated in one journey, with riders spending less time waiting for orders to come in and more time out on deliveries. Examples include food deliveries between workplaces and restaurants, or the blood deliveries mentioned in the Chorlton Bike Deliveries case study. Deliveries for community groups can also be incorporated under this model, such as collecting excess food from supermarkets and restaurants for food banks. While this kind of work might initially be carried out on a voluntary basis, it could also be funded by the profits of the cooperative, the funding plans of community groups, or external funding and donations.

Finally, business-to-business delivers provide an avenue for a cooperative to explore. This might include food items from a wholesaler warehouse to a restaurant. A rather unique example is Two Wheeled Oracle, a cycle courier company in Portland, Oregon, that specialises in transporting legal documents between law firms and court. This demonstrates the breadth of possibilities and opportunities for creativity that exist in setting up a cycle delivery cooperative.

Dreaming big: Pedal Me is a cargo and passenger bike service founded in London in 2017.

By engaging with several local businesses and services, they aim to promote a new concept of urban logistics that they call the Agile Urban Mobility Network. Combining point-to point and multi-drop jobs as well as passenger and freight transport, they can move between a high-density network of pick-up and drop-off points. This adaptive approach, which combines the benefits from bikes' reliability in traffic fluctuations and direct links to customers, allows for greater reliability in the service they deliver. Pedal Me riders are employed full time, with pre-scheduled shifts and hourly pay. They are provided with a thorough training program to ensure a safe working environment.

4.3.4 Digital platforms

While hiring a logistics manager can ease the running of a bike courier cooperative, there are digital means of simplifying the process whilst reaching a wider base of clients. CoopCycle is a federation of bike couriers and cooperatives that pools resources and fosters solidarity between cooperatives. One of their services is a software that assists with fleet management, placing and sorting orders, and providing a smartphone app to clients and riders. These new programs, sometimes called 'platform cooperatives' are tech enterprises owned and democratically run by their workers. They allow workers to streamline their workflows and keep the benefits themselves.

4.3.5 Finance, governance and employment

Cooperatives often rely initially on the hard work of their founding members, and it is important to anticipate the investment of time and effort that will be required by the core team setting it up (ICOS 2012). A group of people that already have strong working relationships with one another will be more likely to persevere and succeed.

The most common model for a cycle cooperative is that of a worker cooperative, where workers hold shares and share the benefits and risks, as well as having equal votes regardless of the number of shares they own. Cooperatives can also raise capital through loans from financial institutions including private banks, credit unions and social lenders like Community Finance Ireland and Clan Credo. Cooperatives generally have more difficulty accessing capital due to the limited return they can offer to investors. At the same time they benefit greatly from tax reliefs and incentives for democratic and not-for-profit enterprises. Investments for equipment might also be raised through donations or crowdfunding platforms if the cooperative has demonstrable societal benefits.

It is often difficult for cooperatives to get support from government agencies and investors since the necessary frameworks are not always in place. An overall lack of awareness of cooperatives by grant funders, legislators and other organisations that might be in a position to provide support, is a challenge that must be navigated. This might be done with the support of cooperative networks that can share information and experiences with those who are just getting started.

Governance support can be obtained through organisations like Cooperative Alternatives in Belfast, and Solid Networks, a network of cooperatives that provide informal advice. Apart from the initial team who start the cooperative, additional workers might be hired through unemployment schemes such as those mentioned in the retrofitting chapter. The Tus initiative is another community work placement scheme run by the Department of Social Protection that provides short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. This might be appropriate to a cycle cooperative since the investment in training workers is not as significant. At the same time, having long term staff that are invested emotionally in the enterprise will have benefits for the atmosphere and overall success of the cooperative.

4.3.6 Advocacy

Cycling can be a far more social experience than using any other type of vehicle, allowing workers to engage more with members of the community, making cycling and its benefits more visible. This will contribute to a process of encouraging more cycling infrastructure whilst reducing motor traffic in Phibsborough, issues that were raised by the community in the listening phase. In addition, cargo bikes are big enough to display advertisements, logos and messages that promote healthier and environmentally-aware means of living. As well as regular bicycles, the promotion of cargo bikes might lead to a greater uptake in their use. In Copenhagen 26% of families with two or more children own a cargo bike, and 30% of cargo bikes act as a substitute for cars (CycleLogistics 2019).

5. Conclusion

The model described in The People's Transition: Community-led Development for Climate Justice aims to systematically include people and communities in the design, implementation and ownership of climate action such that communities would begin to see the benefits of sustainable development in their lives and thus would support a rapid deep decarbonisation push towards zero emission societies. It also recognises that the public investment in climate action, if directed towards community-led initiatives, could provide an enormous boost for local development across Ireland and could address issues of inequality that exist on the island.

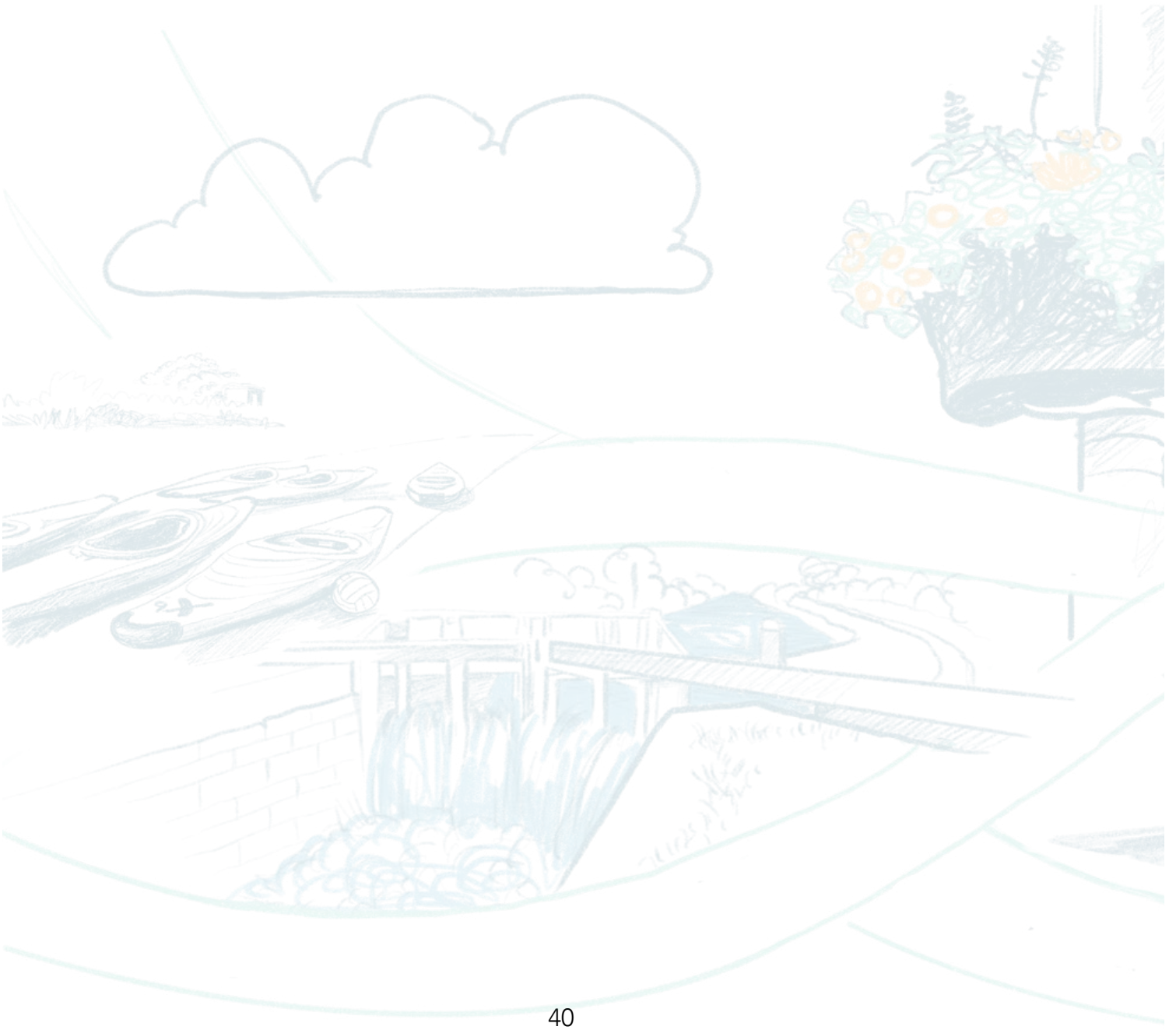
But theory is one thing and practice is another. Thanks to the support of AIB, TASC has been able to work with the community of Phibsborough to see if the model could be applied effectively. There were significant challenges that needed to be overcome, including the limitations in gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the adaptations required to apply a model primarily designed for rural settings to an urban context. However, the communities around Phibsborough have many engaged and dedicated actors, many of whom are already working on environmental issues or issues of inequality, and this helped the People's Transition project find roots.

The proposed solutions met with a generally positive response. There was a real recognition of the importance of community ownership of climate solutions and the potential benefits that could be delivered through the coupling of individual interest with collective agency to deliver climate action based local development. Community members saw the value in accessible solutions in which costs and benefits would be shared by, for example, by making warmer homes and lower heating bills a more realistic possibility or by providing safer and more secure employment for bicycle couriers.

Community members did express concerns about accessibility of resources and seed capital for project development, existing levels of trust in cooperative practice and the need for engagement of international members of the community. These are challenges that are not possible to overcome in a nine-month pilot project but should, it is hoped, be addressed at least in part by the emergence of a greater focus on resourcing climate action across Ireland. It is our hope that the projects outlined in this research serve as a blueprint or a catalyst should members of the community wish to engage in community-led climate action and seek to build community wealth through responses to climate change.

It is also hoped that the experience of engaging with the project will have been a valuable one for participants. Seeking to realise a participative process in a community where some members have significantly developed capacity for active citizenship and others do not feel part of a community at all poses significant challenges. This was no doubt exacerbated by coupled with a degree of consultation fatigue and the personal challenges brought about by the pandemic. Despite all this, TASC met with a very warm reception and a willingness in all quarters to participate in the process. It is hoped that the learnings from the process will contribute to the development of local climate action in Phibsborough that has social, as well

as environmental, benefit.



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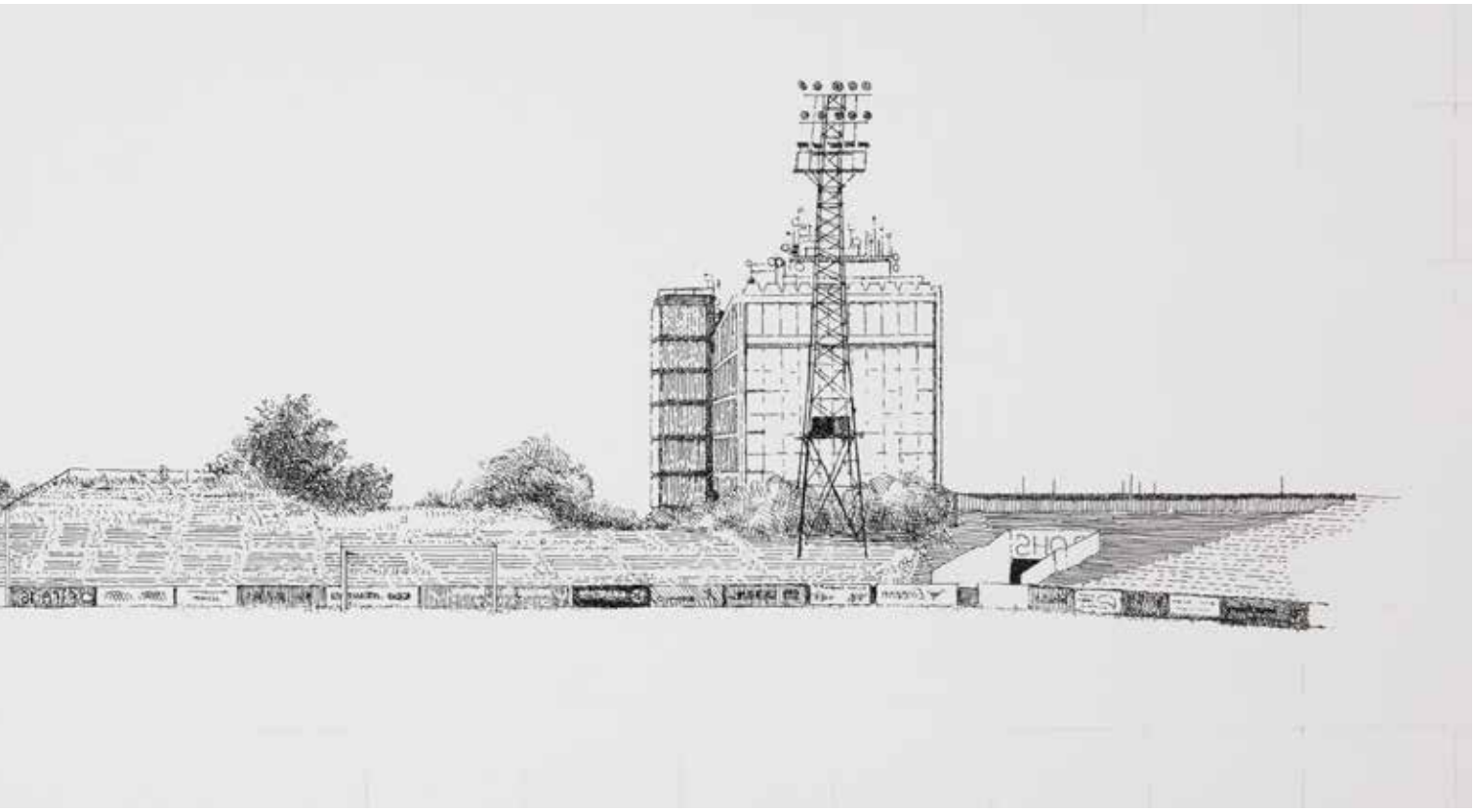

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