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SOCIAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT: A LONG-TERM PLANNING PERSPECTIVE ON THE EXAMPLE OF A POLISH MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Motives: Long-term planning and its implementation constitute the basis for effective social (municipal) housing management. Hence there is a need to monitor how these plans are drawn up and the degree to which they are implemented in municipalities so that they contribute optimally to meeting local housing needs using the existing municipal housing stock (MHS).

Aim: The research focused on assessing the implementation degree of the long-term municipal housing stock management program (MHSMP) of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021. The trends in social housing management in Europe, in particular regarding the introduction of strategic business planning in the social housing sector, were taken into account.

Results: In the MHS under study, there was a much faster decrease in the number of municipal dwellings than assumed in the plan and high deficits in social dwellings and temporary rooms. Sales of municipal dwellings were lower than planned, although revenues from this exceeded the plan. The operating costs of municipal facilities were determined by an over-planned increase in administrative costs while those for common properties turned out to be lower than planned. The renovation plan for municipal facilities was determined by the limited financial capacities of the municipality and covered a small percentage of the actual renovation needs. It was found that the MHSMP under study did not represent a coherent concept for the MHS management in the long run, was overly formalized, and did not take into account the actual housing needs of the local society. Moreover, it lacked the characteristics of strategic business plans, such as being market-oriented, systematic, comprehensive, and proactive.

Keywords: social housing management, long-term planning, municipal housing stock, Olsztyn

INTRODUCTION

Social housing management is defined in the literature as the set of all activities aimed at producing and allocating housing services from the existing housing stock (Priemus et al., 1999), as well as managing organizations and people to deliver housing

services to clients (Walker, 2000). It covers such specific areas as technical management (e.g. conservation and repairs), social management (allocation of social dwellings, etc.), financial management (rental policy, financing), and tenure management (purchase, sale). Social housing management in this approach encompasses both an operational (day-to-day) management

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level and a strategic management level. In a more recent view, social housing management refers to a system that provides long-term housing to a group of households specified only by their limited financial resources, through a distribution system and subsidies (Hanssen & Lundgren, 2019).

Planning as a primary function of management involves conceptual activities that precede and prepare informationally realistic actions (Krzyżanowski, 1985). The most important content of planning is the formulation of the activity's objectives, the determination of the means of achieving these objectives, and the means necessary to achieve them. In terms of the level of planning arrangements, time horizon, and level of detail in an organization's planning system, a distinction is made between strategic, tactical, and operational planning. Strategic planning originated in the management of private business organizations but was later applied in the management systems of public organizations (e.g. Byrson, 1995). Selected models and procedures of strategic business planning have been transferred to management procedures in the social housing sector, where numerous examples of implementation have been found (Gruis & Niebour, 2004, e.g. Larkin, 2000; Van der Flier & Gruis, 2002).

In Poland, the predominant form of social housing consists of municipally owned rental dwellings, known as the municipal housing stock (MHS). The MHS was established by transferring housing stock from the state sector, and it is the mainstay of local housing policy in meeting the housing needs of low-income households and other vulnerable social groups (homeless, evicted, disabled, etc.). In this housing system, the roles of provider, landlord, and manager of social housing are filled directly or indirectly by municipalities and their organizational units. The basic planning instruments for MHS management in Polish municipalities include the long-term municipal housing stock management programs (MHSMPs). They are multi-annual (strategic) in nature and are mandatorily developed and implemented by municipal authorities.

The main aim of the study was to assess the degree of implementation of the long-term municipal housing stock management program (MHSMP) of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021. The empirical research was preceded by the presentation of development trends in European countries and strategic business planning in the social housing sector as well as the principles and methods for developing the MHSMPs in Poland. The scope of the empirical research included selected components (detailed plans) of the MHSMP in question, covering such elements as the size of the municipal housing stock, sales of municipal dwellings, and operating and renovation costs in municipal and common properties. The research was conducted using the source documentation analysis method and a face-to-face interview with employees of the Municipal Housing Management Entity (MHME) of the city of Olsztyn.

After the Introduction, this article consists of four parts. The first part presents the literature review, which gives an adequate background to the empirical study; the second part outlines the materials and methods applied to achieve the main aim of the study; the third part provides and discusses the empirical results, and the fourth part summarizes the findings and makes recommendations for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social housing management – development trends in European countries

Historically, social housing in Europe has traditionally been provided through bureaucratic mechanisms. It mainly concerned the development of new housing stock (social dwellings), which has been driven to a large extent by government finance and subsidization. The management of the existing social housing stock consisted of the day-to-day maintenance and administration of the stock under these conditions. As a consequence, social landlord organizations have operated mainly in a reactive, task-oriented way, in which the strategic decisions concerning the management of this housing stock

were made mostly by governments, rather than by individual landlord organizations (e.g. Boelhouwer et al., 1997; Gruis & Niebour, 2004). At the same time, there was increasing pressure on social landlords to improve their efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. Walker & Van der Zon, 2000). Furthermore, the role of social housing has become more focused on the management of housing stock as development activity has declined in importance compared to the size of the existing social housing stock.

Influenced by these pressures and in response to changes in the institutional and economic context of social housing in many European countries, housing stock (assets) management in the social rental sector has begun to change (Gruis & Niebour, 2004). The management of social housing has entered a path of transition, influenced by changes in housing policy and housing markets, as well as cultural and demographic changes in many European countries (Czischke, 2009). The widespread reduction of public investment in social housing, the decentralization and deregulation of public services, as well as the privatization of social housing (since the mid-1970s in Western Europe and since the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe) have placed more and more pressure on social landlords to become more “market-oriented” or “business-like” in order to become self-sufficient (Boelhouwer et al., 1997; Gruis et al., 2009; Hegedüs et al. 2013; Scanlon et al., 2015). As social landlords have become more dependent on the capital market they have been forced to modify their management methods and techniques to make them compatible with the principles of public service reform, which stemmed from the concept of New Public Management (NPM) (Laffin, 2019; Mullins et al., 2001). The two most important management trends in the social housing sector that occurred during the implementation of the NPM concept were externalization and managerialization (Azmy et al., 2023; e.g. Walker, 2000; Yan et al., 2021). Some other reconceptualization initiatives proposed to address the challenges of property management in public (social) housing have also been identified (Ahmed et al., 2022; Bockman, 2018; Huisman & Czischke,

2022; Muczyński, 2018; Teo et al., 2024). Following these transformations, housing organizations have been restructured and more rational management methods derived from the private sector have begun to be implemented (Walker, 2000). In addition, business solutions have started to be used in social housing management and the services provided by social housing organizations have been extended (Czischke, 2009; Mullins et al., 2012). Social landlords are increasingly faced with the need to anticipate developments in the housing market and formulate their original strategies for developing their housing stock. Thus, the basic theories and practices of the private sector that began to be implemented into the strategic housing management in the social rented sector included, in particular, theories (models) and practices associated with strategic business planning (Gruis & Niebour, 2004).

Strategic business planning characteristics and models in the social housing sector

Strategic planning is the process of developing and maintaining a viable fit between the organization’s objectives and its resources. Although it originates in the private sector, this concept has also been introduced in the management of public organizations (e.g. Bryson, 1995). Advocates of strategic planning believe the process will enhance and improve systematic information gathering, clarification of organizational direction, establishment of priorities, quality decision-making, communication and understanding of strategic intent, robust organizational responsiveness, effective performance, conscientious framework, useful application of expertise, and attention to organizational learning (Fraser & Stupak, 2002). In short, strategic business planning is expected to contribute to organizational effectiveness and efficiency by following a systematic, rational, and transparent planning process (Muczyński, 2016a). In attempting to implement the principles of strategic business planning as a core component of strategic housing stock (asset) management in the social rented sector, the term of such planning was

initially established (Gruis & Niebour, 2004). It was adopted after Ansoff (1984), that strategic planning is “a systematic procedure for management which anticipates the challenge and prepares its responses in advance, based on examination of novel alternatives”. The characteristics of strategic business planning based on business theory (Aaker, 1998; Bryson, 1995; Kotler, 1997) in the context of the intended implementation of such planning to social housing management were then identified (Gruis & Niebour, 2004). The authors summarized that strategic business planning is to be *market-oriented*, *systematic*, *comprehensive*, and *proactive*. A *market orientation* in social housing management can be expected to emphasize analyzing market demand and opportunities. Important decision factors in strategic planning will be current rentability, future market expectations, financial return, and sale opportunities. A wide range of strategic plans will be considered and applied: diversifying the price and quality of housing in the portfolio according to housing demand will be a central theme in asset management. The specific nature of social housing management does not allow social housing landlords (managers) to behave exactly like commercial enterprises. They are limited to offering decent, affordable housing, so a financial return is not their primary aim. Nevertheless, within these constraints, increased market orientation can help these providers realize a portfolio that is effective in meeting housing demand and tenant preferences and economically efficient through using “cash cows” to finance the core social housing stock (Gruis et al., 2004). Market orientation in social housing management can be contrasted with the traditional, *task-oriented* approach that many social housing landlords (managers) have used – and still use – in which they focus solely on the provision and management of cheap and decent dwellings, with only limited variation in rents, quality, tenure, and target groups, and often without aligning these factors. In turn, a *systematically* operating social housing landlord (manager) will put much effort into rational and transparent decision-making. The process of formulating strategic plans will be well structured (Kotler, 1997; Aaker, 1998). Decision-making factors

will be marked and how decisions are reached will be reported. This rational planning strategy can be contrasted with an incremental, *unstructured* approach involving a more fragmented, small-scale series of changes (Gruis & Niebour, 2004). A major characteristic of strategic business planning is that it deals with the organization’s objectives as a whole, at the top management level. *Comprehensive* social housing management will therefore not only focus on individual dwellings, properties, or estates but also reflect the composition of the entire housing stock. Furthermore, different aspects of social housing stock management will be considered, for example: technical and social activities, long-term and short-term objectives, and activities at a strategic and operational level. This comprehensive (portfolio) approach helps to identify, from a wider perspective, which part of the stock should be prioritized for intensive management and investment. In opposition to comprehensive social housing management, a *partial* or ad hoc operating landlord (manager) will focus mainly on problematic properties or estates, will not formulate objectives for the development of the entire housing stock, and will not consider the synthesis of different parts of the total management approach (Gruis et al., 2004). The final characteristic of strategic business planning is a *proactive* approach (Aaker, 1998; Ansoff et al., 1984). In this approach, managers of a social housing stock will actively identify problems and opportunities stemming from developments in the housing market, housing policy, and market position of this housing stock. In addition, they will anticipate these developments in their housing stock (asset) management strategies (for example: initiating neighborhood renewal even before it has deteriorated). In contrast, *reactive* social housing managers will act after potential problems have become a reality (Gruis et al., 2004).

Most planning models in the social housing sector can be seen as a translation of general models for strategic business planning, specified for housing management. There are many different models in the literature on strategic planning. Some models comprise similar steps, but some can be considered essentially different. For example, Mintzberg (1994) distinguishes

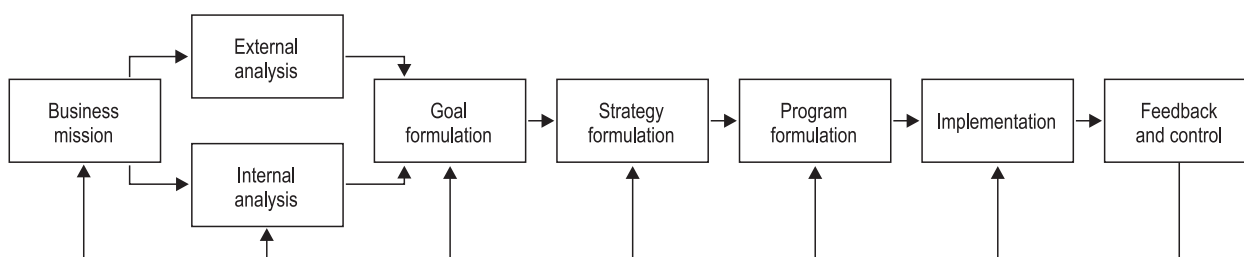


Fig. 1. The strategic business planning process

Source: Kotler (1997).

between the design school and the planning school model. While the design school model “*is built on the belief that strategy formulation is a process of conception – the use of a few basic ideas to design a strategy*” and consequently consists of only a few general steps, the planning school model places great emphasis on the formalizing the planning process and consequently leads to a detailed description. Gruis and Niebour (2004), in their search for a theoretical basis for strategic housing management, used Kotler’s general representation of the strategic business planning process (Fig. 1) to describe how housing landlords (managers) can develop their social housing stock management plans in a strategic way.

The authors confined their explanation to the first four stages of this model (from business mission to strategy formulation), considered the central activities of strategic social housing management. In conclusion, they stated that Kotler’s model proved useful in developing strategic plans for social housing management. However, to make the model more suitable for social housing management planning, it is necessary to extend it by adding a strategy appraisal stage.

Municipal housing stock management program (MHSMP) as a planning document

Long-term municipal housing stock management programs (MHSMPs) are the primary instrument for creating and implementing development policies in the social housing sector in Polish municipalities. According to the act (2001), the MHSMPs are planning documents developed mandatorily for at least five

consecutive years, and therefore refer to the medium-term or strategic time horizon. Their content should include in particular eight components, such as:

- the forecast of the size and technical condition of the municipal housing stock (MHS) by year,
- the analysis of needs, renovation, and modernization plan resulting from the technical condition of buildings and premises in the MHS, divided into subsequent years,
- planned sales of municipal premises (dwellings) from the MHS in subsequent years,
- the principles of rent policy and the conditions for reduction of rent rates,
- the way and principles for MHS management as well as the anticipated changes in subsequent years,
- financing sources of MHS management in subsequent years,
- the amount of expenditure in subsequent years, with division into operating, repairs, and modernization costs of premises and buildings constituting the MHS, management costs of common properties in which the municipality is one of the co-owners, as well as investment expenditure, and
- the description of other activities aimed at improving the use and rationalizing the management of the MHS, including in particular, the necessary scope of exchanges of premises related to repairs of buildings and premises and the planned sale of premises.

These content components of MHSMPs are regarded as the necessary minimum which means that an individual municipality – as a planning entity – can introduce additional elements depending on local needs. Some researchers emphasize that the

above statutory guidelines are necessary to provide the elementary basis for proper MHS management of a typical municipality, however, they do not constitute an internally coherent whole and do not exhaust the problems to be solved (Bończak-Kucharczyk, 2008; Nowak, 2021; Salamon & Muzioł-Węclawowicz, 2015). Further, the statutory guidelines pay too little attention to the actual needs and rationality of planned activities in MHSMPs, and too much to formal issues and the need to secure the claims of persons entitled to municipal dwellings (Majchrzak, 2005).

From the point of view of comprehensive housing development in the municipality, it is necessary to ensure the coherence of the MHSMP primarily with the local housing strategy. This will allow for linkages between the municipal sector and other sectors of the local housing market (Muczyński, 2011) as well as consistency with the general development strategy of the municipality. In addition, the MHSMP should be consistent with the principles for renting and selling municipal dwellings, long-term investment plans of the municipality, housing revitalization programs, as well as spatial development studies, land use plans, and plans for the use of the municipal real estate stock. Taking into account the limitations and guidelines resulting from these documents will avoid many errors and contradictions in the MHSMP as well as the use of ad hoc or ineffective solutions. The MHSMP should be long-term, up-to-date, and efficient. It is therefore particularly important to adopt appropriate methods for its development and implementation mechanisms. In general, there are two methodological approaches for creating such types of programs, namely (Muczyński, 2016b):

- a) *a classic approach* whereby the municipality board determines, in the first stage, the strategic goals and directions of the MHSMP, and then cyclically builds on them annual operational plans, the material and financial implementation of which is determined each time in the budgetary resolutions;
- b) *a rolling approach* in which the originally developed program is updated and supplemented yearly (new information and tasks) at least one year ahead of time when there is a need for updating it (such

as changes in housing policy or laws, change in municipal dwelling sales, increase of rents or housing maintenance costs, etc.).

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the MHSMP presents a well-considered concept of action, the implementation of which will ensure that the municipality can effectively fulfill its public tasks in the field of local housing, especially in the management of the municipal housing stock.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subject of the conducted empirical research was the municipal housing stock (MHS) of the Olsztyn city in Poland. By the end of 2021, the MHS of Olsztyn consisted of 747 buildings with 3,805 municipal housing units (dwellings) and a total usable floor area of 161,756 m². The MHS in question was divided into two segments. The first one (S1) included municipal dwellings located in buildings that were the exclusive property of local authority. It consisted of 113 buildings with 1,305 municipal dwellings. The second segment of MHS (S2) covered municipal dwellings located in buildings in public-private ownership that were independently managed by Homeowners Associations (HOAs). It consisted in Olsztyn of 634 residential buildings with 2,500 municipal dwellings. The age structure of the buildings in the MHS is defective and its technical condition is unsatisfactory, which is due to the negligible scale of the housing investment of the municipality and the successive build-up of the repair gap in the past (Muczyński, 2008). When reaching the assumed standards of municipal buildings and dwellings, about 70% of the stock requires renovations of varying material scope. The MHS is also characterized by the existence of around 1,700 sub-standard dwellings.

The research material enclosed the long-term municipal housing stock management program (MHSMP) of the city of Olsztyn for the years 2017–2021 adopted by the resolution of the City Council (Resolution, 2017) and the financial and substantive reports of its performance developed by

the Municipal Housing Management Unit (MHMU) of the city of Olsztyn. The main aim of the study, which was to assess the implementation degree of this program in the aforementioned years in terms of its selected components, was achieved using the source documentation analysis method and a direct interview with competent employees of the Municipal Housing Management Entity (MHME) of the city of Olsztyn. The assessment of the implementation degree of individual detailed plans was carried out in relative terms by comparing actual quantities with corresponding quantities planned in subsequent years. The indicators obtained from the comparison were given a quotient form and their values were expressed on a percentage scale and shown in the respective charts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first stage of the research of the MHSMP in question assessed the extent to which the plan concerning the size of the municipal housing stock (MHS) of the city of Olsztyn was implemented. It should be emphasized that planning the size of the MHS is a complex issue, as it results from several different factors relating to the management of the stock, its condition, and the level of actual demand for

municipal and social dwellings in the municipality. The empirically determined implementation degree (percentage) of the size plan of the examined MHS is presented in Chart 1.

It can be seen from the chart that all three variables describing the actual size of the surveyed housing stock were below their planned level with a tendency for these discrepancies to widen over time. The relatively highest implementation degree of the plan was recorded for municipal (standard) dwellings, as the actual number of these dwellings ranged from 94.7% (in 2017) to 87.4% (in 2021) of the planned volumes. This was due to the slightly faster rate of loss of municipal dwellings from the studied stock (following privatization and decommissioning) compared to the rate of acquisition of new dwellings to the stock (through adaptation, construction, or purchase on the market). A much lower implementation degree of the plan was found for social (intervention, sub-standard) dwellings in the stock, as it ranged from 69.1% (in 2017) to 57.7% (in 2021). By far the smallest degree of implementation of the plan (from 20.0% at the beginning to 10.8% at the end of the period) was recorded in the case of temporary rooms, which are necessary for the execution of court judgments pronouncing eviction from occupied premises without the right to conclude a social tenancy agreement. The faster-than-planned

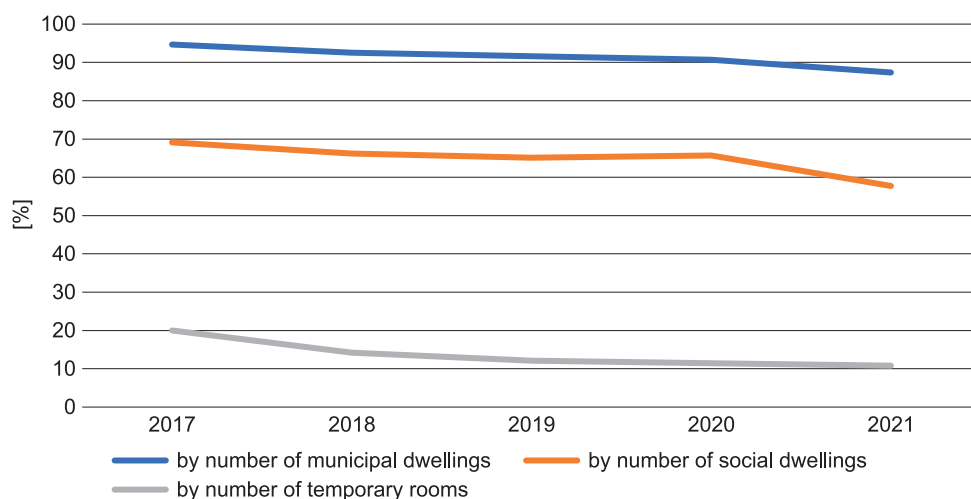


Chart 1. Implementation percentage of the plan concerning the size of the MHS of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021

Source: own preparation.

rate of decline in the size of the MHS occurred during a period of acute failure to meet the actual (legitimate) needs of the local population for municipal and social dwellings and temporary rooms. The coverage rate of actual needs for municipal dwellings ranged from 20 to 30%, while for social dwellings and temporary rooms, it ranged from only 5 to 10%. In the pandemic year 2020, there was a further decrease in the coverage rate, followed by a significant increase in 2021 for municipal dwellings, which raised significantly (to 45.9%) as a result of the completion of the housing project involving the redevelopment of the building at 52/58 Niepodległości Street in Olsztyn. From the above, it can be seen that both the planned and actual volumes of the MHS surveyed deviate significantly from the level that meets the actual housing needs of the local society.

The second stage of the study assessed the implementation degree of the sales plan of municipal dwellings from the MHS in question. The assessment was made by comparing obtained and planned volumes describing the number and the floor area of the dwellings sold and the revenue the municipality received from this activity. The results are shown in Chart 2.

The Chart shows that the selling process of municipal dwellings in the period under study was

marked by variable dynamics. In 2018, there was a sharp increase in the number and area of municipal dwellings sold, with the implementation rate of the sales plan of 118.6% and 111.7% respectively, while the municipality revenue from the sale of the dwellings rose to 170.9% of planned revenue. The main reason for this increase in sales was the fear that the municipality would introduce further restrictions in the sale of dwellings to tenants, including a reduction in the price discounts applied, and that the price of dwellings on the market would continue to rise. In the next few years, the number and floor area of municipal dwellings sold declined sharply, reaching only 78.6% and 72.6% of the planned volumes respectively at the end of 2021. After 2018, the level of municipal revenue from the sale of dwellings also declined, but as a result of the increase in dwelling prices in the local market, the level continued to be well above the planned revenue, reaching 140.6% of the plan in 2021. The decline in the number and floor area of municipal dwellings sold below 80.0% of the planned volumes may indicate that, on the one hand, there is beginning to be a shorttar attractive dwellings for sale in the MHS and, on the other hand, a growing shortage of willing tenants who could afford to buy these dwellings.

In the third stage, the implementation degree of the plan concerning operating (maintenance) costs

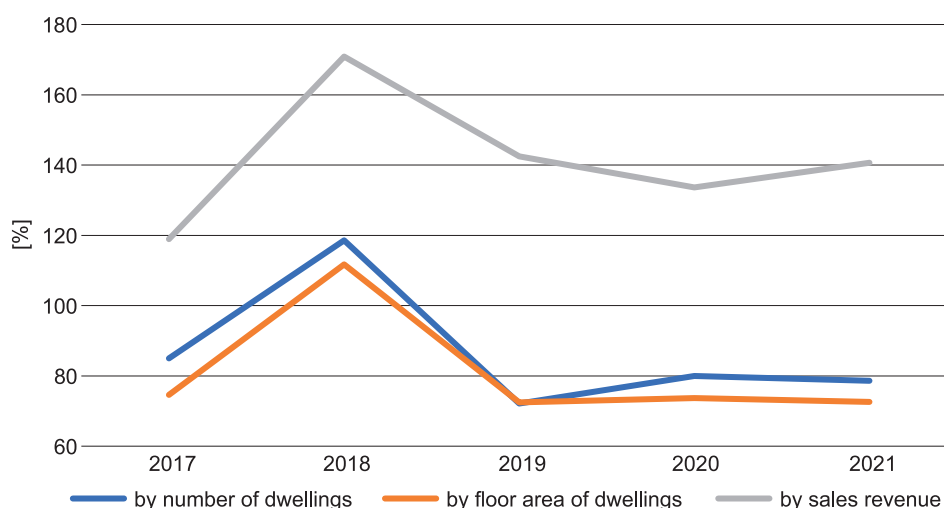


Chart 2. Implementation percentage of the sales plan of municipal dwellings from the MHS of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021 (by different indicators)

Source: own preparation.

of municipal buildings and premises in the MHS under study was assessed. These costs were divided into administration, exploitation, and conservation (technical maintenance) costs. It should be noted that the total operating costs, as the sum of these three cost components, were planned quite precisely, as they ranged from 101.1% and 105.6% of the plan in the years under study. However, the implementation degree of the plan for individual component costs varied considerably, as shown in Chart 3.

The chart shows that the actual administration costs of the municipal buildings and premises, despite the faster (than planned) decline rate of the MHS, clearly exceeded the planned volumes in the following years, amounting to 109.1% in 2017 and 113.7% in 2021, respectively. The analyzed exploitation costs of municipal buildings and premises remained broadly at the planned level in 2017–2018, before declining significantly to 89.7% of the planned level in 2019 before increasing in the last years to reach 98.3% of the plan in 2021. The implementation degree of the plan for these costs was mainly influenced by the prices for services set in contracts with external providers. In contrast, the implementation degree of the conservation costs plan for municipal buildings and premises was relatively the lowest. It stood at 90.7% in 2017, rising to 93.1% in 2019 before declining to 85.1% of

the plan in 2021. The degree was based on the actual conservation needs of municipal facilities, including the need for emergency maintenance in connection with emergency events and contracts with service providers securing the most urgent needs. It should be noted that the implementation degree of the plan for total operating costs of municipal buildings and dwellings was determined by the strong increase in administration costs.

In the fourth stage, the implementation degree of the plan concerning operating costs of common properties with a share of the municipality of Olsztyn in the MHS studied was analyzed. The review of the total operating costs of these common properties, which were charged to the municipality showed that they were on a declining tendency, ranging from 98.7% in 2017 to 85.4% of the plan in 2021. The results for the individual components of the operating costs analyzed are shown in Chart 4. The chart shows that the implementation degree of the plan for the exploitation costs of the common properties fluctuated around the planned level indicating a slight decline from 101.1% in 2017 to 98.6% in 2021.

In contrast, the actual administration and conservation costs of common properties under study showed a steady declining tendency over the examined period, as a result of which the implementation degree

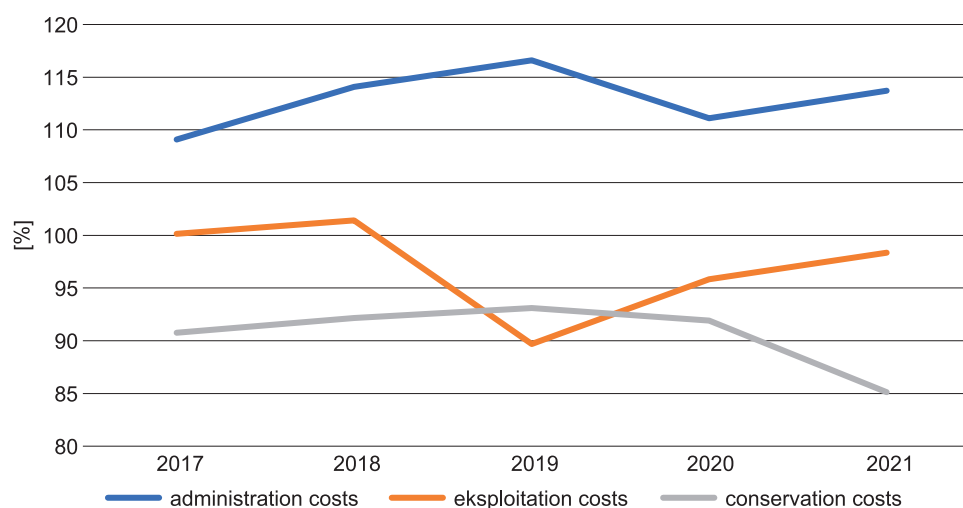


Chart 3. Implementation percentage of the plan concerning operating costs of municipal buildings and premises in the MHS of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021

Source: own preparation.

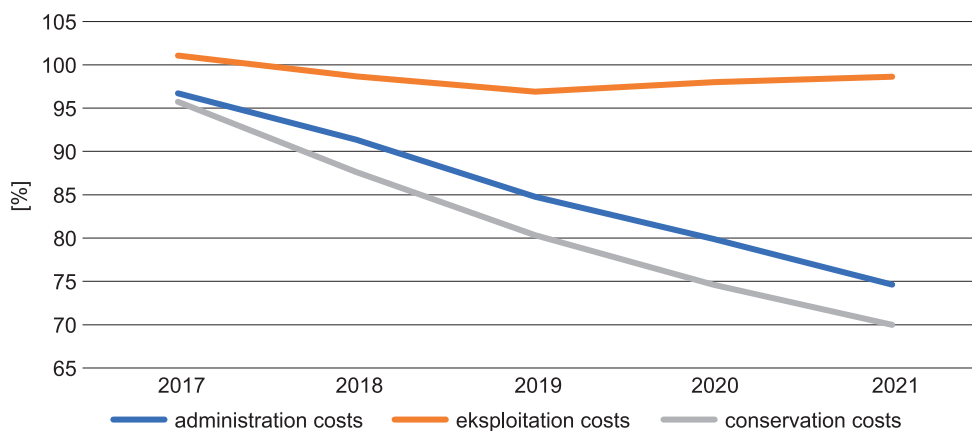


Chart 4. Implementation percentage of the plan concerning operating costs of common properties (with a share of the municipality) in the MHS of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021
Source: own preparation.

of the plan for these costs declined from 96.7% and 95.7% in 2017 to 74.6% and 70.0% in 2021, respectively. It should be noted that the actual implementation degree of the plan for these costs resulted from the autonomous resolutions of many public-private Homeowners Associations (HOAs). It was also a consequence of the reduction of municipal shares in common properties owned by these HOAs due to the sale of municipal dwellings to tenants.

The final stage of the study assessed the implementation degree of the renovation plan in the MHS under study. The assessment was made by

comparing the actual and planned renovation costs in the three components of the MHS such as municipal buildings, municipal premises, and common buildings owned by HOAs with a share of the municipality. The obtained results of the relative (percentage) assessment are shown in Chart 5. The study shows that the renovation costs for municipal buildings in the first three years were close to the planned level reaching 97.9% of the plan in 2019. Then, in the pandemic year 2020, these costs declined drastically to around 50% of the plan and remained at this low level in 2021. In contrast, the actual renovation costs

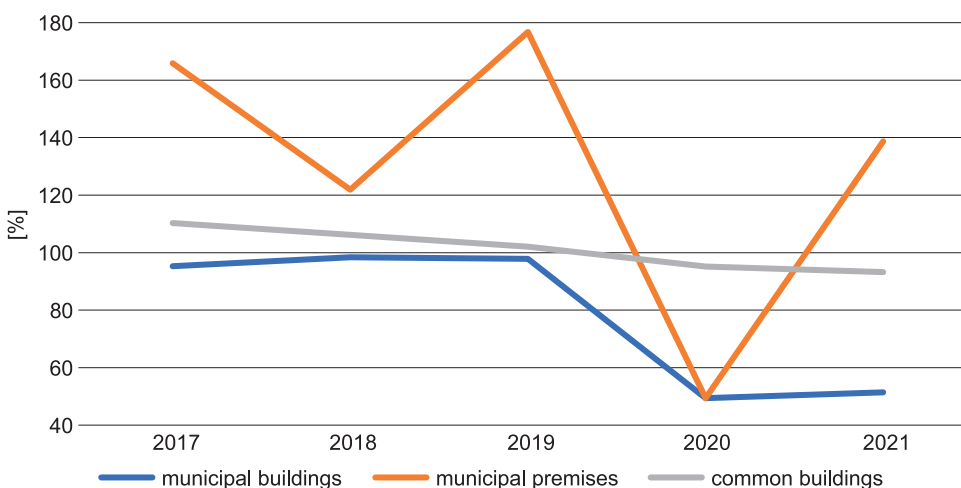


Chart 5. Implementation percentage of the plan concerning renovation costs in the MHS of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021
Source: own preparation.

of municipal premises showed a variable dynamic, significantly exceeding the planned level by 21.9% in 2018 and by 76.8% in 2019. In the critical year 2020, these costs declined to 49.4% of the plan, before recovering to 138.7% of the plan in 2021.

The lack of sufficient funds for renovations and the difficult situation in the contracting market made the safety of tenants a priority for renovations in municipal buildings and premises, so priority was given to work to remove emergency conditions that threatened people's lives or health as well as the safety of property and the environment. The biggest renovation needs resulting from the periodic inspections concerned works such as repairs to installations and roads, insulation of buildings and repair of facades, repairs of roofs and chimneys, as well as repairs of staircases and replacement of window and door frames and floors in premises. It should be emphasized that, despite the relatively high implementation level of the renovation plan for municipal buildings and premises (especially at the beginning of the period), the renovations carried out covered only about 30% of the most urgent and only about 10% of the total renovation needs in these facilities. On the other hand, the costs incurred by the municipality for the renovation of common buildings owned by HOAs fluctuated around the planned level showing a constant declining tendency. Thus, the implementation degree of this plan ranged from 110.3% in the first to 93.2% in the last year of the period under study. This was due to the independent renovation decisions made by the HOAs and the decline of municipal shares in common properties owned by them.

CONCLUSIONS

In many European countries, the management of social housing has been changing from a traditional to a more market-based approach in response to the decentralization and deregulation of public services, the reduction of public funding, and the privatization of housing. These changes are particularly related to introducing planning models and instruments from the private sector into strategic social housing

management. In Poland, the main planning instruments in social (municipal) housing management are municipal housing stock management programs (MHSMs), which, as compulsory documents to be drawn up in municipalities, set out the directions, objectives, and activities of MHS management in the medium-term perspective with a comprehensive view. The empirical research on the implementation degree of the MHSMP of the city of Olsztyn allowed the following specific conclusions to be drawn.

1. The research revealed a much faster rate of decline in the number of municipal dwellings in the MHS than anticipated in the plan due to the sale and withdrawal of housing units from this stock and the lack of significant housing investments by the municipality. Much higher relative deficits against the plan occurred for social dwellings, and dramatically high for temporary rooms. The comparison of planned volumes with actual needs in each housing category shows that the plan for the size of the MHS was eminently reactive (if not purely formal) in that it was not aimed at fully meeting the housing needs of those eligible for housing assistance from the municipality.

2. Higher than planned municipal revenue from the sale of municipal dwellings has not stemmed the decline in the number of dwellings in the MHS. Sales of municipal dwellings from the MHS appear to have exceeded reasonable limits as there is beginning to be a shortage of attractive housing units for sale and tenants who can afford to buy them. In addition, the sale of municipal dwellings was conducted disregarding the actual needs for municipal and social dwellings in the MHS under study.

3. The implementation degree of the plan for operating costs of municipal buildings and premises confirmed the relatively high administration costs charged by the relevant municipal unit (MHMU) despite the declining number of these facilities in the MHS. In addition, there was a trend towards under-performance of the plan for conservation costs of municipal buildings and premises in the MHS, which may have reduced the utility values of these facilities and created greater risks for their users.

4. The non-full and continuously declining implementation degree of the plan for administration and conservation costs in common properties may indicate more efficient property management services provided to HOAs by private property management entities than by municipal ones. In contrast, the plan for exploitation costs in common properties was almost fully realized.

5. The renovation plan for municipal buildings and premises was determined by the limited capacity of the municipality to finance them, covering only a small percentage of the actual renovation needs in these facilities and focusing on the most urgent ones. Hence, even the high implementation degree of this plan (especially in the pre-pandemic period) did not hinder the deterioration of municipal buildings and premises, which means that the long-term goal of the MHSMP, which was to improve the technical condition of the MHS, was only marginally achieved.

The results obtained from the own research and the empirical conclusions formulated lead to a rather critical assessment of the MHSMP of the city of Olsztyn in 2017–2021. This program was not a fully coherent concept of the MHS management in the long run, it did not take into account the actual housing needs of local society, and only to a small extent contributed to fulfilling the mandatory tasks of the municipality in the area of housing. Moreover, it did not meet the analyzed criteria for strategic business planning, such as being market-oriented, systematic, comprehensive, and proactive. Hence, further research should be aimed at a broader adaptation of the principles, methods, and models of strategic business planning in municipal (social) housing stock management.

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