

## Venue

The Conference takes place in Jurys Ballsbridge Hotel, Pembroke Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Dinner will be provided on Tuesday evening. Lunch and morning tea/coffee will be provided on Wednesday. The map on this page provides directions.

## Access

The Venue is accessible for people with disabilities. Please indicate on the booking form if you have special needs, require sign language or have dietary requirements.

## Getting There

The Hotel is approximately three miles from Heuston and Connolly stations and Bus Áras. Buses leave from outside Trinity college. Bus numbers are 7,45,63,84. The bus stops outside the hotel. The DART stops at Lansdowne Road.

## Booking

Please complete the booking form and return by the 24th of September. Delegates will need to make their own arrangements for overnight accommodation where required.

There are a limited number of places available and a high demand is anticipated. Early booking is encouraged, as conference places

will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Late bookers will be placed on a waiting list. In the event of a very high demand, the number of participants per organisation may be limited. You will be contacted if a place is unavailable. Otherwise assume your booking is confirmed.

**Please note that bookings must be made on the booking form. Telephone or email bookings will not be accepted.**

Booking forms should be returned by the 24th of September 2004.



PROGRAMME



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

PUTTING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AT THE HEART OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Department of Social and Family Affairs



AN ROINN COMHSHAOIL, OIÐHREACHTA AGUS RIALTAIS ÁITIUIL  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8

Tel: 01 670 6746 Fax: 01 670 6760 Email: info@cpa.ie Website: www.combat.poverty.ie

5TH AND 6TH OCTOBER 2004

JURYS HOTEL, BALLSBRIDGE, DUBLIN

## Conference Programme

### Tuesday 5th October

- 7.00pm Pre Dinner Reception,  
Hosted by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin
- 8.00pm Dinner

### Wednesday 6th October

- 8.30am Registration
- 9.00am Launch of Conference  
Martin Cullen T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- 9.15am Welcome and Overview:  
Cllr. Michael Conaghan, Lord Mayor of Dublin  
*Chair: Orlaigh Quinn, Principal, Office for Social Inclusion, Department of Social and Family Affairs*
- 9.30am Achievements and Challenges of the Local Government Programme  
Helen Johnston, Director, Combat Poverty Agency
- 10.00am The Challenge of Poverty for Local Authorities  
Rita Fagan: Project Co-ordinator, St Michael's Family Resource Centre  
Ronan Tierney: Author, *Community Work in a Rural Setting*
- 10.30am Roundtables and Plenary
- 11.00am Tea/Coffee  
*Chair: Joe Allen, Principal, Local Government Policy Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government*
- 11.30am Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy: The Local Experience  
Joe Gavin, City Manager, Cork City Council  
Anne Mc Guinness, County Manager, Westmeath County Council  
Michael Mc Loone, County Manager, Donegal County Council
- 12.15pm Roundtables and Plenary
- 1.00pm LUNCH
- 2.30pm Local Authorities, Poverty and Social Inclusion: A European Perspective  
Hugh Frazer, Detached National Expert, European Commission
- 3.00pm Building Momentum for the Future  
Gerry Mangan, Director, Office for Social Inclusion
- 3.30pm Panel Discussion
- 4.00pm Closing Comments  
Pearse O'Hanrahan, Chairperson, Local Government Programme Advisory Group
- 4.15pm Close of Conference

## Background

The aim of the Combat Poverty Agency is to promote a just and inclusive society by working for the prevention and elimination of poverty and social exclusion. It pursues this aim through four main functions set out in the Combat Poverty Agency Act 1986: policy advice, project support, research and public education. Combat Poverty has a key role in promoting and supporting anti-poverty initiatives and strategies. In particular, Combat Poverty has supported the NAPS, since its launch, and the EU NAPsIncl process.

In this context, in 1999, Combat Poverty developed a programme of work to assist in strengthening the capacity of local government to tackle poverty as part of the wider process of local government reform. A key mechanism to progress Combat Poverty's work in this area was the development of a Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network, in collaboration with the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI), in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG).

At EU and national level there is increased recognition that local authorities are key stakeholders in progressing local anti-poverty strategies. Through the establishment of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network Combat Poverty has been supporting local authorities to develop anti-poverty/social inclusion strategies, and to focus on the poverty and social inclusion impact in all functional areas and at corporate planning level.

In recent years there have been a number of significant developments that have presented new challenges for local government. The reform of the local government process involved developing new structures and changed roles in local authorities while the focus on social inclusion presented challenges to local government in tackling problems of deprivation.

## This conference marks the end of the current phase of the Local Government Programme and aims to:

- Provide an update on the progress of local anti-poverty strategies in the light of the NAPS
- Acknowledge and showcase the work of local government in tackling poverty
- Develop an understanding of the key challenges for local government in tackling poverty
- Build the momentum towards mainstreaming the local government programme

## Who should be there?

- Senior Management within Local Government
- Chairs of Strategic Policy Committees
- County and City Development Boards
- Social Inclusion Units
- Local Government Organisations
- Regional Authorities and Assemblies
- National Policy Makers
- Learning Network Members
- Anti-poverty Groups

## Queries

### For conference queries please contact

Elaine Houlihan	Liz Harper
01 6026642	086 6480181
houlihane@cpa.ie	lharper@eircom.net

### For booking queries please contact

Ann Moore  
01 6026624  
moorea@cpa.ie

## **St. Michael's Estate - Our Story**

The Family Resource Centre, Community Development Project is based in the flat complex of St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore, Dublin 8, on the edge of the south inner city and within the Canal Communities. It was set up in 1986 by local women who were seriously concerned about children sniffing glue, poverty and violence in their community etc. There was a need for a facility for people to gather and the people sought a space for themselves from Dublin City Council. Eighteen years on it has developed into a strong anti-poverty Organisation that not only serves the people of the Estate, but also those experiencing poverty and marginalisation in the wider area including the Traveller Community.

- People living in poverty need support
- They seldom have choices
- They don't have confidence in themselves.
- In the Celtic Tiger they suffer great hostility
- Those who are in positions of power treat them badly.

On a daily basis the Family Resource Centre works directly with families, lone parents and children providing "local education", "after-school educational programmes", a "service for violence against women", "individual advocacy work" and "support for and with tenants" on the conditions of the Estate. I could talk on the achievements and contributions of the Family Resource Centre C.D.P. through the years, but that's another days work.

Today I am going to focus on a very current piece of work. Work that involves a partnership with Dublin City Council and the St. Michael's Estate Task Force on which, the tenants and we are represented regarding the redevelopment of St. Michael's Estate.

I want to be clear as I begin to tell our story and it is our story, it is not a story of blame.

What I do hope this insight will do is to help us look at the obstacles that can create conflict situations in statutory and community partnerships and maybe provide opportunities for all of us to learn from it together. Who knows?

Dublin City Council and the Family Resource Centre have worked well and developed many projects together over the years.

- **We developed a playground together, which was a very good process.**
- **We built houses together and ensured families and single people got what was rightfully theirs.**
- **We worked together on the transition of the senior citizens which, was a lovely piece of work and also on the transition of the tenants from Towers 1,2,3 which, was tireless.**
- **We have collaborated together on large scale art projects**
- **We have worked together on I.S.P. to enhance the communities infrastructure and facilities**
- **Over two years we developed a plan together, the story I am now going to tell you about.**

Following years of struggle by the tenants of St. Michael's Estate

- For the conditions of their Estate to be improved
- For the refurbishment of the Estate to begin
- For the drugs to be controlled

The people who suffered so much gave up.

In a door to door official research survey in 1998 63% of the people called for their community to be demolished and redeveloped with houses, with gardens and community facilities to replace it. As a result of this research the St. Michael's Estate Task Force was set up to take a plan for the Estate forward. This committee is made up of Dublin City Council, Tenants of St. Michael's Estate, Bulfin Residents, City Councillors, Community and Statutory Organisations with an Independent Chair.

### **Work Begins 2000**

A decision was made at a public meeting organised by Dublin City Council in December 2000 that the redevelopment would take place in three phases.

#### **Phase 1 - would consist of**

- **Purchasing of land on Goldenbridge and the building of 51 units**
- **Purchasing of land on Bulfin Road and the building of 50 units for Senior Citizens**
- **Demolition of Blocks 1,2 and 3 plus Senior Citizens Blocks**

### **Phase 2 - would consist of**

- **The building of two new housing schemes on the site**
- **Sheltered Housing**
- **Demolition of Blocks 4,5,6,7,8,9,10**

### **Phase 3 - would consist of**

- **Two new housing schemes**
- **Civic Community and Health Facilities at front of Estate**

From 2001 - 2003 a lengthy process was set up to get a plan, which would match both Dublin City Council vision, the community needs and that of the surrounding neighbours. The Task Force had the responsibility for overseeing this process. The community drew up their vision document Past, Present and Future.

Two sub-groups were set up to complete the detailed work and worked very hard to arrive at an agreed final master plan for phase 2 of the development, which was eleven acres on the site of St. Michael's. They worked in-depth - a consultation was carried out by Community Action Network with the residents and the wider area. There were meetings with the four sets of Architects and we were resourced by Dublin City Council with an independent architect to help us read the plan. A real good healthy process took place, a process that everyone could stand over.

The signing off of the agreement for 170 Local Authority Houses, 80 First-Time Buyers, 70 Private Apartments and Community Facilities was like signing off the Good Friday Agreement.

A trust had been built between us and the next stage was for the Department of the Environment to pass the plan and free up eighty-three million for the development.

At a meeting in September 2003 to develop a mechanism to deliver the plan, the Dublin City Council informed us the Minister had rejected the plan although we know different now it was to be delivered as a Public Private Partnership. The state had no money - this was in the age of Celtic Tiger but what central government had discovered was that poor people live on very lucrative land in the city. St. Michael's Estate is a very valuable site and it now also has a Luas line.

September 2003, saw Dublin City Council begin the work of the Dept. of the Environment on the policy shift in favour of a Public Private Partnership.

Those of us who had put in hours, days, months and years of work were devastated.

Dublin City Council informed the St. Michael's Task Force they were engaging their own set of architects - that they would produce a Draft Framework Plan without us having any input.

Dublin City Council did this alone from September 2003 to June 2004.

The community stunned and in shock at this new practice began to fight back. We could not be left out of the process. We needed to be taken seriously so we launched a campaign in April 2004 with the aim of getting the agreed plan back on the table.

We collected 3,200 signatures of support from the wider Inchicore area.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004, when Dublin City Council launched their new Draft Framework Plan, which consisted of 850 units, we presented our signatures to the City Manager John Fitzgerald on the same day.

### **The Original Agreed Plan**

#### **➤ 320 Density**

- **Was a good Plan**
- **Good Process**
- **We worked Together**
- **Insured people had a say and information**
- **Social Mix and agreed by all**
- **The regeneration not only dealt with bricks and mortar but the social regeneration of St. Michael's Estate**

**Proposed Draft Framework Plan:**

- **Had density of 850 units**
- **The height were 7, 6 and 5 Storeys**
- **Lay out was anti-family and anti-community**
- **No conventional houses as promised for the people**
- **770 Apartments and 80 Council in the form of Duplexes**
- **The Consultation Process excluded us from the development of the Draft Framework Plan**
- **When put to the area only written comments were accepted by Dublin City Council in an area where there are literacy problems**
- **If there is no input - there is no ownership**

Yes it did include civic and health facilities on front of Emmet Road, but we always understood that - that was part of Phase 3

The residents of St. Michael's Estate rejected this new Draft Framework Plan because they were not getting their houses and it was anti-community.

At a larger meeting in Inchicore on 26<sup>th</sup> July up to 200 people rejected the Master Plan.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2004, one of the local area councillor's called on the fifty-two City Councillors to reject the Plan.

The council unanimously rejected it, democracy spoke.

## **What went wrong?**

In the last ten years the model been promoted is that the State and the community have a relationship with and work together in partnership. We did this in good faith in St. Michael's Estate. Local families stayed in chronic conditions, they played their part in crafting a plan, they took part, they compromised, they waited in hope, they dreamed of possibilities. They produced a Plan and demonstrated their ability to work together -

## So what is partnership all about?

The breach of trust did not begin with the rejection of the Draft Framework Plan it actually began back in 2001 with the issuing of a circular from the Department of the Environment on Public Private Partnership. It makes sense now that Dublin City Council did not trust us to be able to handle the bad news and work together to craft a solution. We did not have this information until August 2003. Nor again did they trust us to swiftly deliver with them the new Framework Plan, that's why we were excluded from the design.

The consequence of the breach of trust between us led to a haemorrhage of people out of the community, people who wanted to stay but could no longer bear the conditions.

For Dublin City Council the community campaign and its pressure obviously hurt them, which will make it difficult to get a derailed process back on track which, is our future challenge together

- **The Department of the Environment undermined a whole process, relationships, trust, delivering outcomes together, state democracy undermined local democracy. This can only serve to alienate people from the political process**

There is another view that from the beginning it went wrong because the St. Michael's Estate Task Force was never a decision making body, it had nothing binding which, made the community vulnerable. At a high level of the system there was an ideological shift by central government to Public Private Partnership. As has already been said, this information was not available to us until the rejection of the Plan in 2003.

There was no debate on this policy as an option and a way forward

**What lessons have we learned from this experience?**

- 1. We have learned that the State is not really committed to what they say in relation to community participation and local democracy. It means two very different things. We believe its not just about information, its about making the decisions together**
  - 2. We have learned that sitting at the table in partnerships - verbal agreements are not enough. There need to be legally binding contracts, so that decisions cannot be over turned.**
  - 3. We have learned that a national debate on housing and the use of the land is urgent. Why have one set of people the right to decide and not all of us?**
  - 4. We were forced outside the system, which excluded us in order to be heard and taken seriously again.**
  - 5. We have learned that local representative democracy can work when the community puts the pressure on to deliver.**
  - 6. We have learned in this economic climate the concerns of the poor are not the concerns of the rich and powerful**
- We have learned a great deal from this experience.**

**What have you learned from our story so far?**

Our work at the moment that is Dublin City Council and the St. Michael's Estate Task Force is to take the risk, to have a working

relationship, one of truth, honesty, sincerity openness and transparency.

The challenge is a joint attempt to reach a mutual understanding about a way forward and to do it urgently.

Our experience has left us firmly with the sense of been pushed to the margins as onlookers and spectators in a production designed for us but not with us.

### **What do we expect and want?**

We the community don't want to be onlookers or spectators, we want to be the architects of our own future, to be informed, consulted and to make decisions regarding development in our areas and our lives and our cultures i.e. the Traveller community

There are all those documents the White Paper on Community and Voluntary Activity, Agenda 21, Dublin City Council's Mission Statement, Dublin City Development Board in a City of Possibilities and I am sure throughout Ireland in the different councils and departments there are many that talk about "inclusion".

The challenge for us all is how do we make them real and meaningful?

How do we move ahead with people in poverty and on the margins?

How do we walk the talk?

**Rita Fagan  
October 2004**

## Addressing Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion: the Challenge for Local Authorities

Ronan Tierney

## Local Authorities, Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion

- The context
  - National Anti Poverty Strategy (NAPS)
  - Local government reform process

## Revised National Anti-poverty Strategy (2002)

### Themes

- Income adequacy
- Housing and accommodation
- Health
- Education
- Employment and unemployment
- Urban and rural poverty

### Target groups

- Children and young people
- Women
- Older people
- Travellers
- People with disabilities
- Migrants and members of ethnic minority groups

## Qualitative Research in West Wicklow

- Deepens our understanding of how social exclusion impacts on social groups
- Recognises that social exclusion is multi-dimensional
- Highlights the potential role that local authorities can play

## The context for working with rural communities

- Settlement
- Access
- Economy
- Services
- Local Attitudes and Interpersonal Relationships

## Spatial planning and target group needs

- How 'community' is defined
- Carrying out effective consultation
- Profiling people rather than profiling space
- Investing in qualitative research

## A 'whole organisation' approach

- At policy/ planning level
  - Providing leadership
  - Developing a local anti poverty strategy
  - Setting corporate objectives for rural and urban social inclusion
  - Identifying programmes, targets and review mechanisms to address rural social exclusion
  - Setting local social inclusion performance indicators
  - Linking the work of SPCs to the advancement of social inclusion objectives

## A 'whole organisation' approach

- At an operational level
  - Developing the internal structural capacity of local authorities to respond to cross cutting themes
  - Developing clear and practical rural and equality proofing processes
  - Ensuring tangible outcomes for target groups in rural areas

## Facilitating Representation from Rural Anti-poverty/ Social Inclusion Groups

- The community and voluntary sector is not homogenous
- Supporting rural anti-poverty voices within community and voluntary fora
- The cohesion agenda

## Moving Forward.....

- There are no quick fixes!
- Engage in real consultation
- Seize the opportunity to embed social inclusion as a corporate objective of local authorities
- Ensure that social inclusion objectives are translated into meaningful programmes and outcomes for target groups in rural areas

**Speech by Mr Joe Gavin, Cork City Council Manager**

**October 6<sup>th</sup>**

**'Making a Difference' Conference, Jurys Hotel, Dublin**

Ladies and Gentlemen -----

I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak to you about how Cork City Council is developing a local anti poverty strategy. Enhancing our social inclusion focus has become a driving principle, which is now underpinning the delivery of all services. This commitment goes back to the publication of our current Corporate Plan in 2000. Cork City Council was one of a small number of local authorities to have included social inclusion as a core objective in its Corporate Plan. This was an important step. The reference to social inclusion as a core objective provided an important impetus for all Departments and Directorates to review the provision of services. As I will show later, significant progress has been made in enhancing the social inclusion focus of the delivery of services.

The City Council welcomed the opportunity to apply to the Combat Poverty Agency in March 2003 for a grant to assist in the further development of its anti poverty focus. The application clearly stated that the funding would be used to ensure that the new Corporate Plan would have a very strong social inclusion ethos. We have followed this approach. The funding has not been used to develop a separate Anti Poverty Strategy. Rather, the funding has been used for the purposes of awareness raising and research, with the objective of ensuring that the social inclusion focus of the new Corporate Plan is as strong as possible. In essence, it is the City Councils objective, that the Corporate Plan will become its anti poverty strategy.

This policy of mainstreaming social inclusion into the Corporate Plan is linked to a number of other mainstreaming measures that have been underway since 2002. These measures are directly linked to the work of the City Council's Social Inclusion Unit. Cork City Council is one of eight local authorities to have established a dedicated Social Inclusion Unit. The Units are funded by the Dept

of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and have been place since 2002. The Cork City Council Social Inclusion Unit is staffed by a Social Inclusion Officer and a Social Inclusion Analyst and is based in the Directorate of Community and Enterprise. Since 2002, the Unit has engaged in a wide variety of awareness raising, research and policy analysis initiatives for all of the Departments and Directorates of the City Council.

Of key importance has been the work done by the Unit in completing the Social Inclusion Audit and Action Plan. Both these projects have been crucial in the mainstreaming of social inclusion in the City Council. The Audit has been a two year process of analysing the social inclusion impact of all of the work done by each section of the City Council. It also contains recommendations on steps that could be undertaken to deepen the social inclusion focus of the relevant section. The Cork City Council Social Inclusion Action Plan contains a set of short term and long-term actions identified by each Directorate and Department. All of the actions are based on the recommendations of the Social Inclusion Audit. Short term actions will be undertaken in the immediate to medium term future. Long term actions will need additional resources to be completed. Both the Audit and Action Plan were adopted by the City Council in December, 2003.

The Audit and Action Plan, together with the organisational resources funded by the Combat Poverty Agency, have provided a very solid basis for ensuring that the new Corporate Plan will fulfil its role as an anti poverty strategy. The process to date has also brought a wide variety of benefits to the customers, staff and the organisation. I would like to draw your attention to two examples of these benefits

The Audit and Action Plan provided an opportunity for all sections to engage in a process of reflection on what social inclusion could mean in the context of the day-to-day work of the City Council. Staff have had the opportunity to consider the implications of enhancing the social inclusion focus of their work. The Audit has also given recognition to the social inclusion work carried out by the City Council over many years.

A number of specific actions have occurred. The City Council's Human Resources Department have already rolled out disability awareness training to all frontline staff and there is a commitment that all remaining staff will receive this training. The Action Plan and Audit have reinforced the commitment of the City Council to a user lead focus in the delivery of services. For example, the on-going roll out of Area Based Housing Offices. Furthermore, both the Audit and Action Plan have set in train a process that will continually review the effectiveness of the City Council in dealing with social inclusion. This process is known by its technical term of 'Social Auditing'. Simply put, the City Council is committed to reviewing the Audit on a regular basis. The purpose of the review will be to find out whether real progress has been made in improving the effectiveness of the City Council in tackling social exclusion. Revised actions will be developed on the basis of the findings of the Audit.

The specific projects funded by the Combat Poverty Agency grant have also generated considerable benefits for City Council staff and users. A Steering Group comprising City Council staff, the Combat Poverty Agency and Cork City Partnership, have met regularly since January of this year. The Project has funded awareness raising seminars for staff on such issues as: needs of the Travelling Community, needs of Non-Nationals and how to carry out poverty and equality proofing. These seminars were organised with the specific intention of preparing ideas for the Corporate Plan. A seminar also dealt with the question of how would we know what a Corporate Plan with a strong social inclusion focus would look like. Subsequently, the key findings from all of the seminars were collated into a Toolkit for staff. The seminars also complemented the extensive

IPA training that staff have received on customer care and organisational development.

The feedback on the seminars and Toolkit has been very positive. I believe that such seminars and publications make a valuable contribution to upskilling organisations such as the City Council. They contribute enormously to raising the confidence of staff in dealing with difficult problems and dealing with the requirements of national policies. They are also important springboards for the trying out of new ideas and innovative practices. The immediate test of the benefits of the seminars will be seen in the inputs by each Department and Directorate for the Corporate Plan. It is also important to mention at that this point that Combat Poverty Agency grant has also been used to fund a Poverty Profile of Cork City. The findings of the Profile are also being used in the preparation of the Corporate Plan. Additional funding was also secured from the Combat Poverty Agency to fund a photographic exhibition on the reality of social exclusion and the steps being taken by the City Council to combat it. Again, this Exhibition has been well received by staff and the general public.

I am confident that the forthcoming Corporate Plan will meet all of the requirements of a social inclusion strategy. The Plan will certainly comply with the guidelines supplied by the Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the preparation of Corporate Plans. The Council is committed to ensuring the Plan will reflect the needs of local people and neighbourhoods. Part of the grant from the Combat Poverty Agency was used to fund independent qualitative research on the needs of disadvantaged communities. The findings of the research have also been fed into the preparation of the Plan. The cross departmental approach also underpins the embedding of social inclusion in the Plan. The City Councils Social Inclusion Committee have prepared a draft corporate objective on what social inclusion means for Cork City Council. Finally, discussions are on-going on how best the long term actions of the Social Inclusion Action Plan can be addressed in the draft Corporate Plan.

Cork City Council is committed to meeting the spirit of the Local Government Act, 2001, which identifies social inclusion as a core subject for local authorities. Not just by focusing on internal change, but also by providing the 'civic leadership' that the Act speaks of. The City Council remains committed to building and sustaining the external partnerships it has with other agencies and the community and voluntary sector. Social exclusion can only be solved by everybody working together. The City Council has responded to the challenge of RAPID. The City Council is actively working with the four Cork City Area Implementation Teams to maximise the impact of the RAPID process. The City Council is also playing a leading role in the implementation of the social inclusion elements of *Imagine our Future*, the Cork City Development Board Integrated Strategy.

The forthcoming Corporate Plan will serve as the driving strategy for further embedding social inclusion in the day-to-day work of the Cork City Council. This will be achieved through the development of Yearly Operational Plans, which will contain actions with a strong social inclusion focus. I am confident this objective will be achieved. However, there are a number of broader challenges that need to be addressed.

It is crucial that the linkage between national policies, such as the National Anti Poverty Strategy, and local authorities is strengthened. Clear direction is needed on what is exactly meant by the requirement that "local authorities have to roll out NAPS". Clarification is needed on whether there are targets to be met and how are they to be measured. The support of agencies such as the Office for Social Inclusion and the Combat Poverty Agency will remain crucial.

It is also becoming increasingly important that the implementation of performance measurement is referenced to its impact on social inclusion. It is to be welcomed that Corporate Plan guidelines supplied by the Dept of the Environment, Heritage


and Local Government support the development of local indicators. There is also the possibility of expanding the use of the existing 42 indicators to include a specific social inclusion dimension. More explicit direction is needed from the Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on how the social inclusion dimension will be captured in a Performance Measurement Delivery System.

Finally the issue of resources has to be addressed. There is a limit to what can be achieved within current budgetary constraints. Local authorities with a large urban hinterland need the financial support to make the necessary interventions in areas of high disadvantage. Many of these necessary interventions have already been identified in the RAPID programme. It may be worth exploring how can the current Needs and Resources Model can be adapted to give more recognition to funding of services that are essential in tackling social exclusion in these areas, for example, housing maintenance and estate management. The Needs and Resources Model does not refer at all to Parks or Playgrounds, which are intensively used social amenities in disadvantaged urban areas. Urban local authorities also have to provide a range of intensively used services such as roads and footpaths. The intensive use of these facilities by a wide variety of users requires them to be maintained to a very high standard. The Needs and Resources Model needs to respond to the concentration issues of an urban area versus a county.

Finally, I would like thank the Combat Poverty Agency for the financial support they have given the City Council over the past year. I would also like to thank the Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for their financial support of the City Councils Social Inclusion Unit. The support we have received has made a difference. The forthcoming Corporate Plan will provide the strategic direction for the mainstreaming of social inclusion in the City Council. The Plan will deliver the services the people of Cork City require and make Cork City Council an organisation that is inclusive of its staff and the users of its services.

Thank You.


WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAIC NA h-ASRÁIN



## *Westmeath Local Authorities*

### *Local Social Inclusion Strategy 2005 - 2009*

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAIC NA h-ASRÁIN



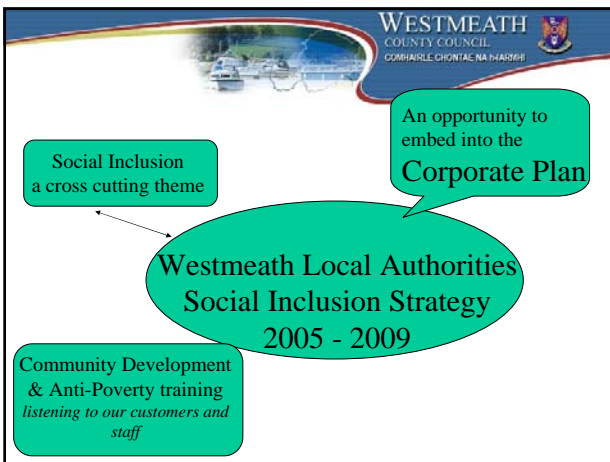
### *Why a Social Inclusion Strategy for Westmeath Local Authorities?*

**Legislative**


- Section 69 of the Local Government Act 2001 states that the LA in performing its functions must have regard to (g) *the need to promote social inclusion.*

**Policy**

- NAPs - role for CDBs
- Revised NAPS - *“over time, Local Authorities will develop appropriate social inclusion strategies at local level which will underpin and strengthen the national actions”.*



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAIC NA h-ASRÁIN



### *Benefits of project*

- Staff** - *new approach to service delivery, referrals .*
- Customers** - *Consultation, improved services - customer satisfaction*
- LA** - *Focused approach ie a road map ..... cont*

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAIC NA h-ASRÁIN



### *Benefits cont....*

- Poverty Profile**  
*Baseline data on poverty within the county  
One County, one document, uniform approach to data*
- Training & Awareness**  
*Social Inclusion - shared understanding, tools for engagement, proactive in improving Quality of Life for all*

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAIC NA h-ASRÁIN



### *Next Steps*

- Embedding Social Inclusion Strategy**  
*Corporate Plan  
Operational Plans*
- Consultation**  
*staff members - Community & Voluntary Sector - Management Team*
- Advisory and Monitoring**  
*Establish Committee, ongoing role.*



### *Round Up*

- **Learning** - what has this got to do with us?
- **Internalising** - “it’s the logical extension of what we do”
- **Committing** - “it’s important that we do it”
- **Doing** - “we have the mandate and the skills”



*Thank you  
for your attention*



## Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy: The Local Experience

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – A NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
PUTTING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AT THE HEART OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2004  
by  
*Mr. M. McLoone,*  
*County Manager*  
*Donegal County Council*



## AGENDA

1. The importance of developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy
2. Benefits of developing the Strategy
3. Where to now ? Next stage of the Strategy



## Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy

•It helps to establish an accurate profile of County indicators of:

- Poverty
- Social Exclusion
- Relative Levels of Deprivations

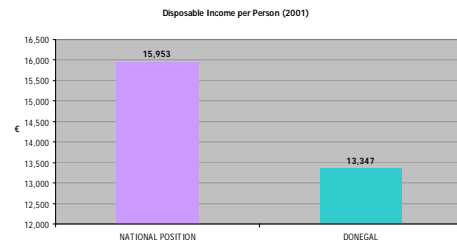
•It helps to create an awareness of the problems amongst the public and policy makers

•It enables work to start on sharing an agreed analysis of the underlying causes of problems and the actions required to deal with them



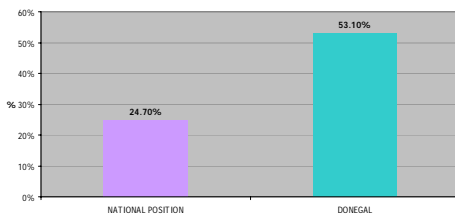
## Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd

Co. Donegal : The Facts



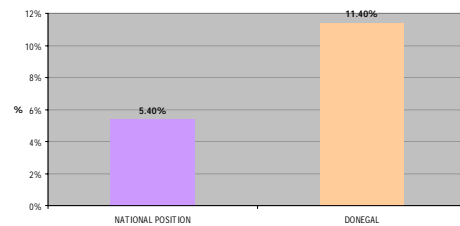
## Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd

% of Population receiving Social Welfare Payments (2002)



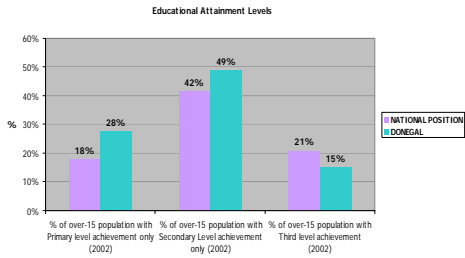
## Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd

People on Live Register as % of total over-15 year old population (Oct 2003)





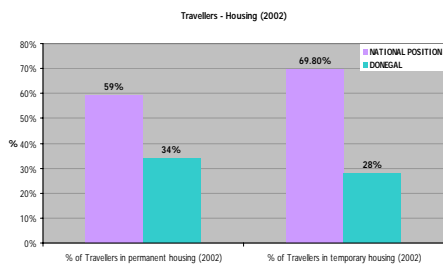
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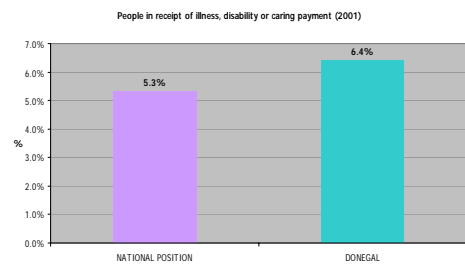
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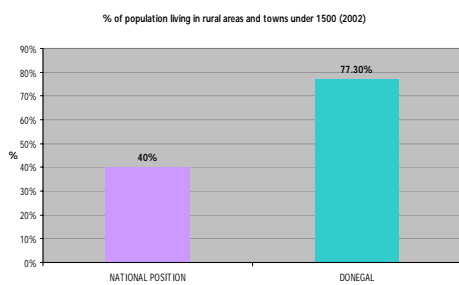
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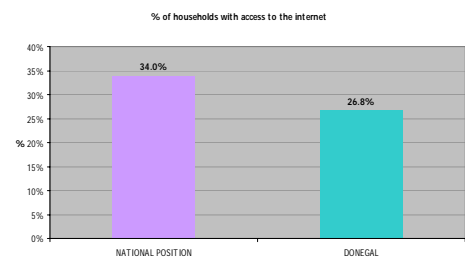
### Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd



### Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd



### Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd





### Importance of Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd

- Creating an awareness of the facts; Role of Donegal County Council
  - The Council is committed to taking the lead in a joined up approach to this task. (e.g; SIM group, CDB)
  - Positioning anti-poverty work and social inclusion at the forefront of its services
  - Ensuring that policies to tackle poverty remain central to the strategic objectives of the various Directorates in the Council
  - Decentralisation of Council Services
  - Providing a focus onto the standard and quality of Customer Services
  - Evaluating how services are provided



### Benefits of developing the Local Anti Poverty Strategy A foundation for Action

- Enables Donegal County Council to discuss/debate the underlying causes of the problems
  - Economic/Social
  - Geographical
  - Historical
  - Infrastructural
  - Educational
- Requires a disproportionate effort to remedy



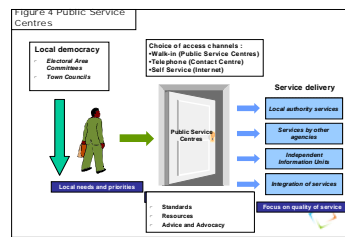
### Benefits of developing the Local Anti Poverty Strategy A foundation for Action

- Highlights the scale of the investment challenge across all sectors i.e. Productive, Social and Physical Infrastructure, Human Resources
- The Strategy recognises the importance of promoting greater inter-agency collaboration and networking on anti-poverty initiatives
- Inter-departmental partnership within the Council (across Directorate approach, Internal Working Group, Frontline focus groups)
- Inter-agency partnership with agencies outside the Council (CDB, SIM, CIC's, ISD Project)
- Training and supports to assist in promoting social inclusion policies across all functional areas of the Council
- Collation of relevant baseline data (Poverty Profile)



### Benefits of developing the Local Anti Poverty Strategy – Cont'd

- Rent Supplements- Case Management
- Donegal Integrated Services Project (DISP)

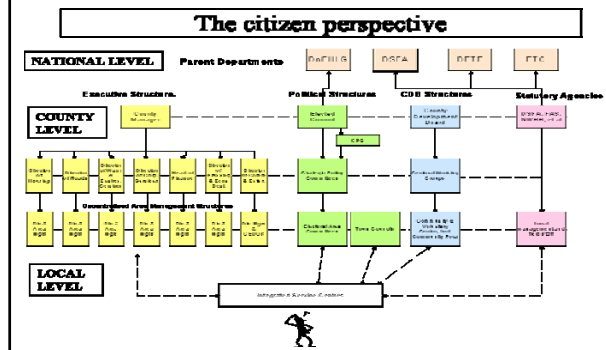


### Next Stage of the LAPS

- Strong National Leadership for joined up Anti Poverty Strategy is needed
- Accountability for inter departmental and interagency management of priority policy actions at national level needs to be established
- Local Corporate Plan of Department / Agencies / Local development need to be set within National Policy Framework and synchronise locally
- CDB needs a stronger mandate to co-ordinate local actions
- Implementation strategies need to focus on the individual citizen with the removal of a silo approach to case management



### Next Stage of the LAPS





## **Developing a Local Anti Poverty Strategy: The Local Experience**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE – A NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
PUTTING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AT THE HEART OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2004**

**by**

***Mr. M. McLoone,  
County Manager  
Donegal County Council***



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DG Employment and Social Affairs

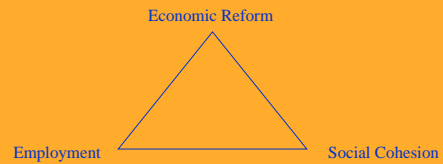
Hugh Frazer,  
Social protection and inclusion policies

## Putting Poverty and Social Exclusion at the Heart of Local Government

### A European Perspective

1

## Context 1 - The Lisbon European Council



*“The Union shall become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”*

2

## Context 2 - Open Method of Coordination

*“to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010”*

- Common Objectives
- National Action Plans
- Commonly agreed indicators
- Reporting and Monitoring - *Joint Reports on Social Inclusion*
- Exchange of Learning - Community action programme

3

## Context 3 - The Common Objectives

- To promote participation in employment and access of all to goods, services, resources and rights
- To prevent social exclusion
- To support the most vulnerable
- To mobilise and involve all stakeholders

*NB Multi-dimensional  
Prevention and alleviation*

4

## An Expanding Process

- **July 2003** – 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP/inclusion EU-15
- **Dec 2003** - Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion
- **March 2004** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Joint Report on Social Inclusion
- **July 2004** – 1<sup>st</sup> NAPs/inclusion for EU-10
- **2005-2006** - Review of Social Protection/Social Inclusion Processes & Lisbon Agenda
- **July 2005** - Implementation Reports on 2003 NAPs
- **2006** – 3 year NAPs for EU-25
- **New EU Constitution** – mainstreams social inclusion

5

## Local Authority Involvement - 1

- To mainstream the fight against exclusion into overall policy, in particular by mobilising the public authorities at national, regional and **local** level, according to their respective competence (Common Objectives)
- reinforced in Common Outline

6

## Local Authority Involvement - 2

### 3 key roles

- Contribute to development of NAPs
- Promote mainstreaming and coordination at of social inclusion policies at local level
- Foster local integrated partnerships promoting integrated and multidimensional action on the ground

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## 2003-2005 NAPs/inclusion (EU15) – regional level

- Increased focus on decentralisation:
  - **Austria**: lander plans highlighted
  - **Belgium**: link regional plans like Flemish plan
  - **Spain**: 13 regional anti poverty plans
  - **Germany**: dialogue with lander
  - **Italy**: decentralisation to regions and local authorities
  - **UK**: N.I., Scotland and Wales highlighted

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## 2003-2005 NAPs/inclusion (EU15) – local level

- **Sweden**: municipalities and local development agreements
- **UK**: local authority community strategies
- **France**: constitutional law on decentralisation
- **Denmark**: local authorities role in plan
- **Greece**: key role of prefectural level
- **Germany**: federal structure and role of local
- **Finland**: autonomous local councils and municipalities
- **Luxembourg**: role of local authorities in elaborating plan
- **Portugal**: partnerships for local social development
- **Spain**: regional plans underpinned by city plans
- **Ireland**: local government anti-poverty network

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## 2004-2006 NAPs/inclusion (EU10)

- local/regional authorities involved in NAPs planning (CZ, LV, LT, SK, SL)
- great concern about regional and local differences
- links between local and national need further strengthening
- no regional/local plans yet, but:
  - Czech municipalities have started elaborating community plans
  - Poland: law requires local plans by 2010

10

## Delivering Inclusive Services and Policies – 10 key principles

- *Subsidiarity*
- *Holistic approach*
- *Transparency and accountability*
- *User-friendly*
- *Efficiency*
- *Solidarity and partnership*
- *Human dignity and rights*
- *Participation*
- *Empowerment and personal development*
- *Continuous improvement and sustainability*

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## Opportunities for Exchange of Learning 1

- Transnational exchange projects
  - **31 projects**: high level of local authority involvement
    - local partnerships, local anti-poverty strategies, indicators, homelessness and housing, poor health, integration of immigrants and asylum seekers, increasing employability, health inequalities, disabilities, rural poverty, access to local services etc.
  - **Local Government and Social Inclusion Project**
    - important issue – good mix of countries
    - look forward to findings: toolkit & good practice advice
  - **New Call for Proposals**
    - end October – closing date end January 2005
    - 15-20 projects: €200,000-300,000 p.a. each for two years

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## Opportunities for Exchange of Learning - 2

- Peer Reviews
  - local development agreements in Sweden
  - citizens social support networks in Finland
- Awareness Raising
- Studies
  - child poverty; access to culture; decent housing for migrants and immigrants; regional indicators; micro credit; the Roma; disadvantaged youth; ICT
- Conferences – Round Table Conference
- Networks
  - RETIS
  - EPSP

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## Your Future Involvement

- Exchange and learning of best practice
  - especially in context of enlargement
- Implementation and Monitoring of Irish NAPs/inclusion
- Mid Term Review of social inclusion process
- Preparation of 2006 NAPs/inclusion
- Developing local action plans
- Increasing awareness of the process

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## Further Information

- DG Employment and Social Affairs web site on social inclusion:
  - [http://esnet.cec/comm/employment\\_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index\\_en.htm](http://esnet.cec/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm)

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**Speech by**

**Mr. Gerry Mangan**

**Director, Office for Social Inclusion**

**At a National Conference**

**“Putting Poverty and Social Exclusion at the Heart of Local  
Government”**

**Jury’s Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin**

**Wednesday, 6 October, 2004**

Firstly I'd like to congratulate the Combat Poverty Agency for organising this very important and timely conference. I would also add my voice to the tributes for the outstanding work of the Agency in the Local Government arena over the last number of years. As evidenced by the growth and consolidation of the Anti-Poverty Learning Network, the staff of the Agency have demonstrated huge commitment to providing Local Authorities with the necessary tools to incorporate a strong anti-poverty focus across all areas of their work.

A key objective of the Office for Social Inclusion and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is to move policy developments at National and EU level to the local arena quickly and with practical effect. I am sure that the forthcoming Evaluation of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network, by Fitzpatrick Associates, will show that the Network has already paid dividends in achieving this objective. Through the provision of training, technical support, grant aid, research and information sharing mechanisms the Agency has tapped into the long existing ethos of Local Authorities to improve the circumstances of all sections of their populations. Through this work stronger linkages are being created between our national goals in relation to poverty and social inclusion and the work of those at the coal-face of service delivery.

At this point I think it would be useful to briefly outline some of those national goals and the role of the Office for Social Inclusion in working towards them. Primarily, the Office is a coordination vehicle which aims to unify the efforts of all Government Departments under the banner of alleviating social exclusion, in keeping with the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Office monitors, evaluates and seeks to develop the type of national response required to deal with the multi-faceted and complex nature of poverty and social inclusion in our society. The “development of appropriate social inclusion strategies at local level which will underpin and strengthen the national actions being taken”, has been specifically identified as a priority. Other areas of our work include developing a more effective poverty proofing process. This will be rolled out to Local Authorities and Health Boards following introduction at central level. Other aspects include the development of a formal data strategy which will address the thorny issue of providing data relevant to local areas, and a pro-active communication strategy.

The communication strategy, aimed at increasing awareness in the both the public arena and the general public service, will be an important new development. We have had considerable success in changing mindsets

and securing commitment at national level; now we will be adopting a greater focus on spreading the message throughout all State bodies.

Along the way there will be lessons for central Government and even, I believe, our European partners. Our next National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion will be due in 2006 – by then I would hope that we would be well on the way to having a comprehensive social inclusion focus across all areas of Local Government. To achieve this we must all become partners in the drive to understand, listen to, and ultimately, empower the customer.

Central to the embedding of social inclusion within Local Government will be the Corporate Plans, due out later this year. These plans, which, as the Minister mentioned this morning, are required to fully embrace social inclusion will set the foundations for greater synergies between national policy and local and regional actions. Key to achieving these synergies will be our continuing efforts to educate, share best practice, and build capacity at local level in terms of data and research. The central challenge which we now face is to move forward the work done to date through initiatives such as the Network by shortening and strengthening the linkages between the National, Regional and Local arenas. To achieve this, the Network must, in my view, be firmly embedded in the central architecture of the Local Government system. Achieving this will lead to

greater interaction between National and Local decision making structures, which will facilitate greater consistency of approach and better communication of issues from the ground to central Government.

This interaction offers the prospect of significant gains being made in one of the critical areas where progress against social exclusion can and must be made – service delivery. Achieving a significant and on-going improvement in the quality of services delivered to the public is a key objective of the current public service modernisation programme or SMI at local government level. One of the cornerstones of this approach has been the requirement for local authorities to publish customer action plans setting out the action they intend to take to achieve tangible improvements in the quality of public services they deliver. The general aim is to encourage the more widespread and effective use of customer action plans and performance indicators in relation to quality of service delivery issues and thereby to promote a more systematic and structured approach to quality of service issues, particularly in the light of strategies and targets set out in corporate and operational plans.

Through modernisation Local Authorities have made great strides over the last number of years. Through the efforts of Network members, social inclusion has successfully piggybacked on this process: but now is the

time to move it to the centre of local governance. Our goal over the coming years must be to both consolidate and push forward, so that social inclusion becomes integral to everyday work and real gains are delivered in the quality of life of Local Authority customers.

The Office for Social Inclusion will be happy to assist all of you gathered here today in achieving this goal.

END

# Summary Report

of the

## National Conference

# Making A Difference

Jury's Hotel, Dublin  
6 October 2004



Department of Social and Family Affairs

## Introduction

The aim of the Combat Poverty Agency is to promote a just and inclusive society by working for the prevention and elimination of poverty and social exclusion. It pursues this aim through four main functions set out in the Combat Poverty Act 1986:

- Policy advice
- Project support
- Research
- Public education

Combat Poverty has a key role in promoting and supporting anti poverty initiatives and strategies. In particular, Combat Poverty has supported the National Anti Poverty Strategy since its launch in 1997 and the EU NAP/inclusion process.

In recent years there have been a number of significant developments that have presented new challenges for local government. The reform of the local government process involved developing new structures and changed roles in local authorities while the focus on social inclusion presented challenges to local government in tackling problems of deprivation.

In this context, in 1999, Combat Poverty developed a Local Government Programme to assist in strengthening the capacity of local government to tackle poverty as part of the wider process of local government reform. A key mechanism to progress Combat Poverty's work in this area was the development of a pilot Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network (LGAPLN). This was developed in collaboration with the Office for Social Inclusion, in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Through the LGAPLN, Combat Poverty has been supporting local authorities to develop anti poverty and social inclusion strategies and to focus on the poverty and social inclusion impact in all functional areas and at corporate planning level. This has been achieved through a number of activities including training, supporting the participation of excluded groups and information on sharing on how to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

This conference marked the end of the current phase of the Local Government Programme and aimed to:

- Provide an update on the progress of local anti-poverty strategies in the light of the NAPS
- Acknowledge and showcase the work of local government in tackling poverty
- Develop an understanding of the key challenges for local government in tackling poverty
- Build the momentum towards mainstreaming the Combat Poverty local government programme.

## Summary of morning presentations

Orlaigh Quinn, Principal, Office for Social Inclusion, chaired the first session and began by introducing Dick Roche TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, who formally opened the conference. In his opening remarks the Minister spoke of the commitment at top level, which augers well for change. He noted that it is a challenging and important topic, which should command the full attention of all who are involved in local government. He noted that it is at the local level that social inclusion policies and programmes must be translated into action. He spoke of the importance of the Local Government Anti Poverty Learning Network in raising the level of awareness of social inclusion issues among local authority elected members and staff, and that, while he appreciated that developments are still in the early stage, he would like to see this good work continuing.

Helen Johnston then outlined the achievements and challenges of the CPA local government programme including:

- A brief history of the programme,
- The main activities it has undertaken
- Achievements – the products and the impacts
- Challenges – linking the national and the local
- Challenges – for local authorities in developing local anti poverty strategies

Finally Helen finished by looking into the future of the programme. She outlined the commitment to mainstream the programme which would include a transition period in 2005.

Councillor Michael Conaghan, Lord Mayor of Dublin, began by noting the importance of these gatherings. He outlined the changes that have taken place since the 80's especially in regard to social exclusion and unemployment. He spoke of the need for local authorities and local communities to activate energies to work together to tackle problems in local communities. He finished by acknowledging that the work of the Learning Network.

Rita Fagan, Project Co-ordinator, St Michaels Family Resource Centre then made a presentation which focused on a piece of work that involved a partnership with Dublin City Council and the St Michael's Estate Taskforce, on which the tenants and Resource Centre are represented, regarding the development of the St Michael's Estate. She outlined the work of the Taskforce and spoke of the impact that the introduction of the Private Public Partnership by Dublin City Council had to the proposed development of the Estate. She posed the question of 'what is partnership about' and concluded the presentation with drawing on the lessons from the experience with the questions:

- How do we move ahead **with** people in poverty and on the margins?
- How do we walk the talk?

Ronan Tierney, Author, Community Work in a Rural Setting, made a presentation which looked at addressing rural poverty and social exclusion, and the challenges for local authorities. He presented the findings of a qualitative research project in West Wicklow. He discussed the role of spatial planning and identifying target group needs and the advantages of a whole organisation approach. He finished with looking at good practice in facilitating representation from rural groups experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

The next session was chaired by Joe Allen, Principal Officer, Local Government Policy Unit, in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government who began by acknowledging that the dialogue between the three partners involved in the development of the LGAPLN had been extremely productive and that this would continue. He commented on the importance of having the three county managers present to promote the findings of the three projects developing local anti poverty strategies. He also welcomed seeing so many senior personnel from local authorities within the audience.

The next three presentations looked at the experience of developing local anti poverty strategies. The three pieces of work were undertaken in Cork City Council, Donegal County Council and Westmeath County Council.

Joe Gavin, City Manager, Cork City Council spoke on how Cork City Council is developing a local anti poverty strategy. He said that enhancing a social inclusion focus has become a driving principle, which is now underpinning the delivery of all services within Cork City. The commitment goes back to the publication of the current Corporate Plan in 2000. The grant funding from Combat Poverty was used to ensure that the new Corporate Plan would have a strong social inclusion ethos and specifically was used for the purposes of awareness raising and research, with the objective of ensuring that the social inclusion focus of Plan is as strong as possible. In essence, it is the City Councils objective that the Corporate Plan will become its anti poverty strategy.

Anne McGuinness, County Manager, Westmeath County Council outlined the process for the development of the Local Social Inclusion Strategy 2005 – 2009. She noted the benefits of the project such as; staff developing a new approach to service delivery, and consultations with customers leading to improved services and customer satisfaction. She noted the benefit of developing the poverty profile, which provided baseline data on poverty within the County and the benefit of providing training and awareness of social inclusion which leads to shared understandings. The next steps include the embedding of the social inclusion strategy in the Corporate Plan and Operational Plans.

Michael McCloone, County Manager, Donegal County Council discussed the importance of developing a local anti poverty strategy; how it helps to establish an accurate profile of County indicators of poverty, social exclusion and relative levels of deprivations. By developing the indicators it helps to create an awareness of the problems amongst the public and policy makers. He presented a number of slides showing the differences between Donegal and national

figures. The benefits of developing the strategy enables Donegal County Council to discuss and debate the underlying causes of the problems in an economic and social context. The next stages include linking with the Corporate Plan and with the Corporate Plans of other agencies through the County Development Board.

### **Roundtable discussion feedback and conclusions**

The participants were asked to consider what needs to happen in the future to make a difference to embed social inclusion within local authorities, taking into consideration the development of the new Corporate Plans.

The following are the key points as recorded by the facilitators of the roundtables. For the purpose of this report they have been clustered under eight headings:

#### Training

- There is increased awareness of social inclusion but the process is very slow
- Define social inclusion and support its operationalisation
- Training and awareness raising is key to change and needs resources and support

#### Resources

- There is a need to or 'bend the spend' to target social inclusion -within other agencies as well as local authorities
- There is a need for resources such as 'how to' guides
- Some Strategic Planning committees will not be set up until after December
- Work is daunting and much of it superficial
- Social inclusion projects need to continue
- There is a need for social inclusion units in all local authorities otherwise it is very difficult to develop a poverty profile
- There is a need to move forward to ensure better outcomes for people in poverty
- Elected Representatives are not homogeneous
- Appropriate timeframes are needed for the development of the Corporate Plan – December is inappropriate
- Local authorities need resources to carry out social research
- Structural deficits present major blocks to the development of local anti poverty strategies
- Corporate Plan – reviews needed during implementation
- Lack of data at local level is a major issue

#### Partnership and working with others

- For real partnership – there is a need to facilitate and support voice of anti poverty groups to provide an independent voice
- Community development principles need to be incorporated into operations of local authorities
- Councils have a role to address social disadvantage issues i.e. disadvantaged youth issues need tackling at an early stage.

- Voluntary sector involvement not considered effective
- Youth issues and intervention need tackling at early stage
- It is imperative that Public Private Partnership approaches value community interests
- Other have had similar experiences to that outlined by Rita Fagan
- The social exclusion “experts” are those who “live it”: Councils need to work with those experiencing poverty and social exclusion
- Impact of interagency work of the CDB’s needs to be monitored and evaluated to see what, benefits there are socially excluded groups and communities.
- Link education as part of a local social inclusion approach
- The Role of the CDB’s must be highlighted and reinforced especially in relation to social inclusion
- The Importance of estate management planning and involvement of communities in participative planning process is essential
- There is a need to reinforce the joined-up system of local service delivery and move away from the ‘silo’ approach
- More interagency joined –up working which can lead to simplifying processes and cutting our overlaps
- A strategy for addressing the increasing divide between rich and poor particularly in rural areas will have to be included in Corporate Plans
- The issues of communities in decline but who are not financially poor need to be strategically addressed

### Leadership

- Lack of political will and top down drive is a problem
- A shift is required in thinking at management level with local authorities. The key issues that come up for elected members relate to social inclusion, it is difficult to advance issues not seen as core services.
- Local authorities need greater clarity regarding what is expected of them regarding social inclusion
- The DEHLG is not providing strong leadership at executive level
- Good leadership across all local authorities is needed, a good and committed City/County Manager is critical here

### Joined up Government

- Too many public agencies still put up barriers to real, proper joined-up working - central government needs to grasp this nettle!
- Structures are still obstacles as identified in the chart from Michael McCloones presentation
- Role of the SIM, and CDB needs more effective engagement from Health boards, Social and Family Affairs, FAS etc
- Expectation of ISP being delivered needs to be understood by national departments
- Cross-agency co-operation requires flexibility
- Are local authorities the right organisation to lead on the integrated local action plans?

- There are concerns about delivering joined – up working – need more guidance and sharing of good practice is needed.

### National to local to national

- Too often national policy operates in contradictory ways, e.g. (a) the current PPP imperative can be very difficult to reconcile with a Social Inclusion imperative and (b) despite the consensus that small social housing developments is where it's "at", the pressures applied re lowering unit costs "force" Councils to build large estates
- Putting Social Inclusion into Corporate Plans is welcomed ... but the six month "planning window" for the Plans is very/too tight
- Central government needs to make its agents "in-the-field" to engage in real inter-agency/joined up working: it's not happening at the moment
- Learn the lessons and follow through with policy
- The impact of policies needs to be monitored in a loop i.e. national regional-local- national
- Language of the corporate planning guidelines needs to be changed - extremely inaccessible and inappropriate terminology

### Reform Process

- The importance of targeting middle managers and professional staff as well as induction for new staff needs to be addressed
- A commitment is needed in Corporate Plans that officials i.e. planners etc will attend public consultations instead of the elected members always dealing with the negative reaction at public meetings
- Cultural change – there is a long way to go within local authorities, silo approach is still strong therefore work on internal communication is essential

### **Summary of afternoon presentations**

The afternoon session began with a presentation from Hugh Frazer, Detached National Expert, European Commission who outlined for local authorities a European perspective on poverty and social exclusion. He began with an overview of the Lisbon process and how this linked directly to the role of local authorities through the common objectives which state:

*To mainstream the fight against exclusion into overall policy, in particular by mobilising the public authorities at national, regional and local level. According to their respective competence.*

He discussed four key roles for local authorities firstly to contribute; to the development of the NAP/inclusion; secondly to promote mainstreaming and coordination of social inclusion policies at local level, thirdly to foster local integrated partnerships to promote integrated and multidimensional action on the ground; and fourthly the emerging role of contributing to the monitoring of the NAP/inclusion.

He spoke about the opportunities afforded by the involvement of the LGAPLN in the transnational project '*Local Authorities and Social Inclusion*' to exchange learning at a transnational level with a variety of local authorities. He finished with outlining the future involvement of local authorities in the NAP/inclusion including exchange of learning and best practice, preparation of 2006 NAP/inclusion, developing local action plans and increasing awareness of the process.

The next presentation was from Gerry Mangan, Director, Office for Social Inclusion who spoke of the growth and consolidation of the LGAPLN and acknowledged the staff of the local government programme including the expertise and tools they have helped to devise. He spoke of the role of the Office for Social Inclusion including seeking to develop the type of national response required to deal with the multi-faceted and complex nature of poverty and social inclusion in our society. Other areas of work include the development of a formal data strategy which will address the issue of providing data relevant to local areas. He concluded with the central challenge of moving forward with the work to date and centrally embedding the Network in the local government system to.

Closing comments were from Connie Haniffy who looked at five years on from the beginning of the programme and what has changed, she noted that;

- There is increased recognition at all levels that local authorities are key to the development of local anti poverty strategies
- Local authorities are charged by government to deliver cost effective services to as many people as they can
- Local authorities have little time or resources to focus on why people are excluded
- Training in awareness to staff as to why and how people are excluded is crucial
- Need for partnership working is now acknowledged and embraced
- There is a move to eliminate 'fire brigade' responses to problems
- Sharing of information on best practice
- Established trust in systems
- Local authorities are trying to 'proof' schemes
- Role of the CDB and SPC's in joint policy development
- Need targeted resources
- Devolution of power and budgets is
- Policy formation should be through revitalised SPC's and that all players should see outcomes in policy development
- Partnership must be continued to be built upon
- The Corporate Plans are crucial to identifying social inclusion actions
- role of County Development Boards can not be embedded until they get their own budget that can be used to develop targeted responses to poverty and social exclusion.

Pearse O'Hanrahan, Chairperson of the Local Government Programme Advisory Committee closed the conference by thanking the Steering Committee and

Advisory Committee of the local government programme and acknowledging the high standard of work delivered by Combat Poverty Agency staff.