

*Director's Report to
the City Development Board
July 2009*



I wish to bring the following matters to the attention of the Board:

1. Update on the Cork City RAPID Programme

Community Safety

- **Community Safety Forums** and Community Safety Units continue to meet locally in each RAPID area. The safety forums allow the public to raise key issues of concern with both the Gardai and the City Council. Issues raised range from local operational issues to serious issues of a more strategic nature. Recently, two strategic issues have arisen in the safety forums which are to be considered by the Joint Policing Committee. First, is the increase in heroin abuse which is evident in the RAPID areas. Second, is the proliferation of horses in public spaces across the RAPID areas, but particularly on the northside.

- **Graffiti Removal** – funding of €30,000 per RAPID area was secured for Graffiti removal in 2008/9. The scheme has been managed by the Community Wardens and has had a very positive impact on the local environment.

Education:

- Each RAPID area has now submitted a strategic plan under the Education Strategic Theme. The themes were led by the VEC and focus on the need to maintain support in the RAPID for projects which seek to address educational disadvantage and the continued high rate of early school leaving.

Health:

- The Health Sector Co-Fund is managed by the HSE and in January approvals were announced; approving projects in the region of €100,000 per RAPID area in Cork. However in February, following a Department of Finance instruction, the HSE requested sanction from the Department of Finance to proceed with projects under this scheme. Currently only expenditure incurred after the initial approval and prior to the instruction not to proceed can be processed by the HSE. This has resulted in some groups locally being approved to drawdown funds and others not. Further guidance is awaited from the HSE.

Physical Environment:

- Under the Physical Environment Improvement Scheme 2009 each RAPID area was allocated a sum of between €170,000 – 290,000, subject to match funding from the Local Authority. A range of projects were submitted and approval of all schemes is still awaited. Projects were due to start by April 2009.

RAPID National update

The AIT Chairpersons and the RAPID Co-ordinators met with Minister Ó Cuív; Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, with responsibility for the RAPID programme on 12 June 2009. The Minister spoke about the following issues: -

- **Available Funding**
- The RAPID Area Implementation Teams expressed some concerns regarding the future of funding for RAPID programmes and the Minister stressed that, while funding under specific schemes and programmes including the Leverage Schemes might be less than in previous years.

- **Government Decision on RAPID**
- Minister Ó Cuív spoke about the recent Government decision with regard to RAPID. On 26th May 2009 the Government formally committed to the RAPID principle of prioritising resources and the provision of integrated services in designated RAPID areas. Furthermore, the Government renewed the commitment by Ministers of their Departments to the integrated delivery of services through, in the first place, committed and dynamic membership by their Departments and agencies of RAPID Area Implementation Teams, even where other Departments take the lead role.
- **Employment & Training Theme**
- Minister Ó Cuív also launched the Employment & Training Theme of the RAPID Programme. Some work has already progressed in the Cork RAPID area in this regard with each RAPID area having already established an employment and training task group as part of the Citywide Youth Jobs Commitment – Project Re-Focus. These groups will identify and target a small number of young unemployed people in each area and will offer a three-year commitment to supporting them into education, employment or training. The scheme is based on a successful pilot project in Knocknaheeny.

2. CORK CITY LEARNING FORUM

1. The Cork City Learning Forum is planning its 5th Discovery Science exhibition for November this year. Although funding support is difficult to secure this year, particularly due to the suspension of the Forfás Discover Science and Engineering Programme sponsorship scheme, adjustments are being made to ensure the event goes ahead.

These include:

- Fewer exhibits brought in from abroad;
- An international touring exhibition on Cold Fusion (no cost);
- A small increase in entry fees (from €2.50 to €3pp) and
- The extension of public opening hours.

The event has now been elevated to Partnership status by Science Week Ireland, which will increase publicity and add content at no cost to the group.

Discovery 2009 will run from the 9th-18th November, with a programme of activities and outreach to schools. The City Hall show will run from the 14th-18th, launched by the current BT young Scientist winners: John O'Callaghan and Liam McCarthy from Kinsale Community School.

2. The School Completion brochure pack is still in the editing phase.
3. EU and local industry collaborations on science initiatives for young people continue to be explored, specifically focusing on ICT and Maths.
4. It was decided by the group not to proceed with the planned consultation with state agencies and educators on education and training responses to the current economic situation, as several of the Forum's members are already participating in this type of initiative on a regional level. Progress of this group is being fed back to the CCLF. The Forum has, however offered to work with the Cork Adult Education Board to expand activities during the City Hall Adult Education fair in September, to include a seminar series and 1-1 guidance on education options and Social Welfare implications for those attending this annual event.

3. Integrated Target Group Plan for Travellers

Youth

The traveller youth work project has come to an end. The sub group is finalising a report on the learning gleaned from the project. Next steps for the youth work sub group is to implement the learnings.

Education and Childcare

Funding has been allocated by Pobal for the employment of a youth worker to travellers to try and increase the numbers of traveller young people staying on in school. An education worker has been recruited and it is expected that this person will start in August.

Enterprise/Training and Employment

Following completion of the FÁS Construction Skills course, 5 of the original 12 participants are employed by Cork City Council as part of the Pilot Traveller Employment Project. The majority are now employed as General Operatives under 18 month contracts in a number of City Council Directorates. It is proposed that an external evaluation of this project will be carried over the coming months. FAS has approved a grant of €186,700 under the Special Initiative for Travellers Fund 2009. The former TESI Project (Traveller Employment Support Initiative) is now reporting to the Working Group and this grant will allow the project to continue to supply training supports to Travellers in 2009.

Accommodation/Health

Work on Health Impact Assessment is expected to start following agreement on a specific proposal in relation to a city halting site. A Final Report, prepared by AW Trotman Associates, on mapping and co-ordination of services to the Hollyhill halting site, has been received. The Report has been referred to the Working Group for further consideration. A Consultation Day on developing a best practice model for service delivery at the site has been held on 9th July in the Ambassador Hotel.

<h2>4. Service Needs of New Communities</h2>

The City's integration strategy "Connecting Communities" has been endorsed by the City Development Board. The Strategy Implementation Group will continue to meet to monitor progress.

A notification of a grant of €40,000 to support integration of new communities was received from the Minister for Integration, Mr. Conor Lenihan. It was decided to target actions in the City's Integration Strategy for this funding. Work is substantially completed on the 6 projects which have been approved by the Office of the Minister for Integration.

The Cork Networking Committee (CNC) held a series of facilitated meetings to clarify its strategies, goals, objectives and working methods. Two consultation days regarding a proposed new Cork City Integration Forum were held. This process culminated on 20th June with the acceptance of the Forum's Terms of Reference and election of an executive committee. 21 immigrant, statutory and voluntary groups attended and registered for the new Forum. Planning for the first full Forum meeting is ongoing.

An event to mark World Refugee Day was held on the same day in the Central Library, Grand Parade, following the Forum meeting. It consisted of a display of photographs and a presentation about the work of the UNHCR. The Lord Mayor, Councillor Dara Murphy addressed a gathering of 60 people which was followed by music and dancing from Afghanistan, Chechnya and Africa.

5. Cork City Marathon 1st June 2009

Cork City Marathon 2009 was organised by a partnership of Cork City Council, the Athletics Association of Ireland (Cork County branch), the Cork Business Houses Athletics Association, an Garda Síochána and the Health Services Executive with the assistance of several other statutory and voluntary groups and over 300 individual volunteers.

The ongoing support of the Business community and the Cork public was vital in ensuring the increasing success and enjoyment of the day.

The Team Relay, in which up to 5 people can share the marathon course, is now a major feature of the event. Allowing people of most abilities to participate, the Team Relay promotes health and fitness, through moderate exercise, and encourages social inclusion and team participation for all involved. For the 2008 marathon, the organisers put several measures in place to promote social inclusion. These measures were again supported and extended, through co-operation with the appropriate groups, for the 2009 Marathon.

The number of individual participants has stayed at 1600 while the number of teams has increased from 600 in 2007 to 1193 in 2009. Overall participation has increased substantially. The support of Bord

Gáis as title sponsor has helped ensure the viability and success of the Race and the inclusion of the Irish Cancer Society as the designated Charity has boosted fund raising for the Society and many other worthwhile causes. The Bord Gáis Energy Cork City Marathon is now a well established part of the sporting, social and community life of the City.

6. Cork Common Ground Project

The Board is continuing efforts to progress this initiative. It is considering a number of possible locations in which to set up. A new Chair has joined the Board, Mr. Seamus Scally. Inspections and site visits are underway.

7. Marketing of the Cork Region

Staff are participating in the various projects of the Cork Marketing Partnership including the Convention Bureau and Cork City Cares.

An Economic Marketing Plan for the region has been prepared and is being presented to the various stakeholders for consideration.

9. Connect Cork

The mobile learning bus was a popular inclusion in the lifelong festival. It was situated in the Glen CDP and in Mahon CDP.

The recently completed introductory computer courses in the libraries will be continued over the next term.

Participants in the recent courses were presented with their certificates at a recent ceremony at the Tory Top Road Branch Library.

10. Report on Work of the Gay & Lesbian Steering Group

The L.G.B. steering group is coordinating a two pronged awareness campaign. The first will include the development of a brochure highlighting the resources available from the Cork Gay Mens Project and LinC. This campaign will also include a poster campaign.

The second will involve the development of a document to be distributed to staff, with responsibility for putting annual reports together, to guide them in how to specifically highlight where services are being accessed by the gay and lesbian communities. It is intended that this document will be made available to the agencies before the end of September.

11. Local Sports Partnership

The Local Sports Partnership's work is ongoing. Since the last meeting of the CDB, the Strategic Plan has been approved and launched. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will now proceed.

12. Project ReFocus

Under the chairmanship of Mr. Athony Dinan. The City wide Steering Group has met on several occasions to clarify the work programme and support the implementation of the workplan. A revised budget and funding arrangement are being considered. Partner agencies have committed to supporting the programme as far as possible. The six local task groups have been meeting and clarifying their target groups and identifying participants to start the programme in September.

The Knocknaheeny Employment and Training group is continuing to meet. A process of assessment and documentation of the experience to date in Knocknaheeny has been carried out by Uoner (Donagh

MacArtain) to inform the further work. The assessment has been widely circulated for information and discussion.

A special meeting of the Knocknaheeny Task Group was held in Thomas Crosbie Holdings which was attended by members of other other task groups to outline the overall process and inform the new members.

13. Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg recently carried out research on bullying in four secondary schools in Cork. This report will be made available to the schools after the summer.

A steering group comprising the relevant agencies is to be established in August to steer and oversee Comhairle na nÓg. Con O'Donnell is liaising with the relevant bodies to establish the steering group.

14. The Conversation on Democracy in Ireland

The Conversation on Democracy in Ireland Project is

- an initiative of... **the Jesuits in Ireland**
- to promote..... **a more reflective and effective democracy**
- by inviting...
 - **citizens**
 - **politicians**
 - **public servants**

- to reflect together..... **on public life**
- with a view to..... **creating insights**
- to be made accessible... **for wider discussion and debate**

Local Juries have been set up in Cork, Dublin, Louth and Galway.

The twelve members of each Jury include 4 elected representatives, 4 appointed public officials and 4 leaders in the community and voluntary sector.

Each Local Jury has met on three occasions.

A national Review Day was held at Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park in Dublin on 29th June 2009 where the four Local Juries came together, along with the Council for the Conversation on Democracy, to discuss their experience of the Project to date and to share insights.

15. Cork City Joint Policing Committee

The Cork City Joint Policing Committee will be reconstituted following the local Elections. In view of a serious Heroin abuse crisis emerging in the city, a special meeting of the JPC was held on 7th July 2009.

A presentation on the work of the Gardai was given by Chief Superintendent Liam Hayes followed by a presentation on the work of Arbour House on the treatment of recovering addicts.

There was a general discussion on the issue including contributions by Dr Chris Luke A and E Consultant and members of the public with direct experience of the problem. It was agreed that the meeting was extremely useful in informing the various parties about the issues.

The Lord Mayor Cllr. Dara Murphy undertook to ensure follow up on the issues raised with a smaller group from the relevant agencies.

Jim O'Donovan

***Director
City Development Board***

15th July 2009