

7. Implementation and Action Plan 2002 - 2003

The Cork City Development Board's Strategy seeks to integrate the goals and objectives identified in section 6 into a cohesive whole in order to realise the vision for the city:

'Cork, a beautiful and friendly city by the Lee, is globally competitive and has a rich quality of life that embraces diversity of culture, provides equality of opportunity for all, and represents an ethos of dynamism, excellence and high quality'

Implementation is the accomplishment of strategic intent and is the stage where the strategy becomes real. It is through actions that implementation occurs. Thus, the focus of implementation must be on the actions identified under each objective.

The implementation of the Board's Integrated Strategy is complex because of the large number of issues addressed, the number of organisations involved and the need to involve stakeholders in the process. Guidelines issued by the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development view implementation as tiered. Implementation actions will generally have different timings and can be broadly characterised as:

- 1) policies which the member agencies would have implemented with or without the Strategy, but which can now be legitimately 'housed' within the Strategy;
- 2) agencies being prepared to tweak/stretch their existing policies to dovetail with the agreed Strategy;
- 3) 'bending the spend' within the organisations' existing budgets as appropriate, to favour policy directions agreed by the CDB;
- 4) pursuit by the Board of a limited number of some priority and 'gap filling' initiatives within the county/city;
- 5) an action framework for the more integrated delivery of public and local development services;
- 6) a more fundamental shift in policies including those in a regional context which could have an influence on the reprioritising of funding by agencies.

Clearly, implementation of the Strategy begins to make a difference in relation to 2 and 3 above. The

likelihood is that the short to medium term actions will flow from 2 to 4. The more fundamental change within organisations in response to the Board's Strategy, described under 6, will require a further process of engagement that builds on the work of the past two years.

Leadership in this process must be provided by the Board itself and by individual Board members, acting as 'champions' of the Strategy, both within the organisation/sectors they represent and at all other available opportunities. It must also be recognised that other forces will infringe on the implementation of the Strategy namely:

- Power and how it is used
- Cultures of participating organisations
- People within the organisations implementing the actions
- Organisational structures of the bodies implementing the strategy
- Resources available.

Each of the above can be assets or obstacles to the implementation of the Strategy. A key challenge is to ensure that they are aligned with the thrust of the Strategy rather than working against it. These issues are addressed particularly in Theme 4 – Integrated Service Provision.

National Policy

The City Development Board operates within the parameters of national policy (and also European Union regulations). National policy can also have a regional dimension – an example being the forthcoming Regional Guidelines being prepared by the South West Regional Authority.

It is recognised that national policy may change thus influencing the organisations/stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Integrated Strategy.

In these instances, the Board will adapt its Strategy or individual actions in order to realign with the national policy concerned. In these circumstances it may request individual organisations to modify their actions also.

The City Development Board's Strategy also represents an opportunity to influence national policy in a 'bottom up' way. A number of actions involve the Board in a lobbying role that seeks to effect

change. The Board will seek the views of other development boards on these topics in order to establish a 'critical mass' in representation to government on the issues concerned.

Proofing

There are two types of proofing involved:

1. All public service bodies will be expected to 'proof' their operational plans against the strategy. This requirement is set out in Section 129 of the Local Government Act 2001 and is applicable to public services in Cork city and the agencies that provide the public funding for these activities.
2. The Integrated Strategy must be proofed against national policies (see provisions sections).

Key dimensions of proofing identified in 'A Shared Vision' are:

- Ensuring that key topics and themes are sufficiently taken into account
- Involving an element of formality in terms of both process and record of its having occurred

The preparation of the Board's Strategy has used national policies to frame actions where applicable. In addition, the Strategy has been:

- Equality proofed in accordance with a template developed by the Equality Authority
- Proofed in line with the guidelines set out in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Proofed for environmental sustainability by ERM Ltd.
- Economically proofed by consultant economist, Brendan Lynch.

The onus is now on individual organisations to proof their actions against the Strategy. The Board will provide advice on this topic if requested.

Implementation Structures

The Strategy has been developed around seven themes:

- Cork and its external role
- Cork's image
- Identity of the community of Cork
- Integrated service provision
- Quality of life in the city
- Equality within the community
- Cork as a city of learning

Each theme has had a working group associated with it, with the exception of Identity of the Community of Cork.

The implementation of the Strategy will be based around these seven themes. It is intended to establish implementation working groups to progress the realisation of the actions. Certain actions will also involve the creation of their own implementation structures.

The City Monitoring Group established for the RAPID programme will oversee Theme 4 – Integrated Service Provision. For the present, Theme 3 – Identity of the Community of Cork will continue to be dealt with by the Board itself.

Action Plan to End of 2003

A number of actions in the Strategy are due to be implemented by the end of 2003. These actions represent the Board's short-term action plan. It is recognised that the commencement of implementation will result in changed circumstances that will in turn impact on the actions themselves. Adjustments to actions will be notified to the Board for approval from the implementation working groups.



8. Monitoring

The implementation of the Strategy will be measured by monitoring the outcomes of the actions set out in chapter 6. Monitoring involves:

- a) checking progress on the implementation of the action plan to the end of 2003
- b) noting changes in the Board's operating environment
- c) making adjustments to the Strategy based on a and b above.

The primary responsibility for monitoring rests with the Board. The effectiveness of the monitoring process, and the quality of the decisions taken on the basis of this process, will depend on the quality and timeliness of the information the Board receives.

At a basic level progress will be recorded on each of the actions outlined in the Strategy. Some of the actions envisage the establishment of their own implementation mechanisms –task groups or forums. Others are the responsibility of individual agencies or organisations. A third set are co-operation projects between groups of agencies and organisations. Each of these three implementation instruments will generate the basic information for monitoring.

A first task is to identify a responsible person for each action who will report on progress and feed information to the next level – Strategic Theme Implementation Groups. This person will also identify obstacles to progress within individual actions or opportunities to increase the effectiveness of an action.

Chapter 7 indicated that implementation working groups based on the seven strategic themes would commence the implementation process. These working groups will be the vehicle through which information is collated and issues that need to be considered at Board level identified. These groups will make reports to the City Development Board on progress being made in the action plan and the formation of subsequent action plans for the period after 2003.

Information on changes in the economic, social or cultural situation will also be given to these working groups. They will then recommend changes in the Integrated Strategy to the Board.

The Board will consider the progress made in implementing the Integrated Strategy at each Board Meeting.