

2011 -  
2013

Wexford Local Development  
LCDP Strategic Plan

**wexford**   
local development  
**Forbairt Áitiúil Loch Garman**

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## Section One – Ethos of the Organisation

### 1.1 Vision, mission statement and values

#### Mission Statement

“To help people who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing economic and/or social disadvantage, to improve their lives through united local action.”

In continuing to pursue this mission, WLD now sees itself entering a new, more ambitious phase. This ambition is driven by the confidence that significant progress has been made in:

- Building the capacity of the most excluded to identify their needs and become involved in framing appropriate responses to these needs.
- Establishing solid working relationships amongst relevant agencies and service providers so that responses can more directly impact upon need.

Our strategic objectives will therefore be two-fold :

(a) Firstly, to create significant and verifiable improvements in social and economic circumstances, levels of participation, and equality status of the most excluded groups and communities in our area – through developing a continued understanding of factors maintaining exclusion, and an inclusive approach to combating adverse consequences of it

(b) Secondly, to seize this unprecedented opportunity to address the structural causes of social exclusion, segregation and inequality in the longer term – through developing the capacity of excluded groups and communities for full involvement in the planning and decision making processes that effect their lives.

### 1.2 Practical Information about the Organisation

Trading Name of Organisation  
Contact Details

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Registered Name of Organisation  
Registered Address of Organisation  
Company Registration Number

Wexford Local Development Limited  
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454533

## Section Two – Analysis of Composite Area Profile

### 2.1 Socio-economic profile

Ireland has seen immense change in the past ten years. Since the preparation of the last social inclusion plans in Co. Wexford in the year 2000, the economy grew rapidly and contracted with even greater speed. The impact of this severe downturn began to be felt in Wexford, as in the rest of the country, during 2007 as economic activity slowed down and unemployment began to rise. These changes have transformed the landscape of social inclusion and anti-poverty work. Whereas five years ago the challenge facing local development companies was to address the deep-seated exclusion experienced by the target groups of the LDSIP which remained stubbornly resistant to the so-called “rising tide”, in 2011 we face unemployment on a mass scale, the return of emigration, deepening social problems and fractured communities. The challenge therefore to Wexford Local Development in preparing this plan is all the greater and the need to identify the key issues and develop effective and measurable responses for our beneficiary groups under LCDP is keenly felt.

The South-East region currently has the highest rate of unemployment in the country at 17.2%<sup>1</sup>, 3.1% above the national average of 14.1%. Nationally it is estimated that the number of persons classified as long term unemployed had grown to 55% of the total registered unemployed by the end of March 2011, 74% of whom were male.

Wexford was significantly exposed to building and construction as mainstays of its economy during the boom and has consequently been hit hard by the collapse in this sector with a 300% rise in the numbers on the live register in the county since May 2007. In May 2011, there were a total of 19,366 people on the live register in the County – 4,759 in Enniscorthy, 4,180 in Gorey, 3,483 in New Ross and 6,944 in Wexford. In terms of geographic concentrations of disadvantage, there are three RAPID areas in Co. Wexford. New Ross and certain parts of Wexford town were included in the initial phase of the RAPID programme in 2002 while parts of Enniscorthy received a RAPID designation in late 2009.

In late 2009, arising from a meeting of the Wexford Economic Forum held by Wexford County Council, it was agreed to develop a strategy to position Wexford for an eventual upturn in the economy. The resulting report<sup>2</sup> examines the social and economic context within which Wexford is currently positioned and proposes several key potential growth areas for the future, based on extensive consultation with local stakeholders and a review of relevant policy.

The report examines population and employment trends in the County and benchmarks the Wexford economy against a framework of six factors of competitiveness identified by Forfás to facilitate analysis of the regions in order to establish how and where companies are likely to do business. These factors include: enterprise dynamic, skills and education, innovation, economic infrastructure, quality of life and leadership and strategic capacity. This framework, together with the related analysis contained in the above-mentioned report, provides a useful overview of the socio-economic backdrop against which this LCDP plan has been prepared.

<sup>1</sup> Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1, 2011, CSO, June 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Julie O’Neill, *Positioning Wexford for the Upturn*, Wexford County Council, 2010.

**Enterprise Dynamic and Land Use:** Over the past 25 years the Wexford economy has been heavily dependent on construction, agriculture, manufacturing and services as evidenced in the table below. The growth in employment in construction was particularly pronounced in the South-East region and the recent collapse of this sector has had a severe impact on the region. Manufacturing employment while exhibiting some growth in the life sciences area, remains vulnerable to global pressures. Employment in the public sector grew from 3% of total employment in 1996 to 18.8% by 2006. Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing declined from 25% to just 7.5% in 2006 and the impacts of this decline continue to be felt in coastal and rural communities.

***Employment within each broad industrial group***

Co. Wexford Broad Industrial group	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	24.8%	22.9%	17.7%	10.5%	7.5%
Manufacturing industries	17.7%	18.0%	18.6%	14.5%	13.1%
Building and construction	7.9%	8.1%	8.7%	13.1%	16.7%
Commerce, insurance, finance and business services	17.7%	18.8%	19.0%	23.9%	23.9%
Transport, communication and storage	5.2%	5.5%	5.4%	4.8%	4.6%
Public administration and defence	4.1%	3.9%	3.4%	4.9%	4.5%
Professional services	13.7%	13.4%	15.1%	17.8%	14.9%
Other industries (not stated)	8.7%	9.4%	12.0%	4.5%	14.7%

*(Source: Wexford CDB 'Action for Change', 2009)*

Agricultural activity accounts for 70% of land use in Wexford with a farming pattern that is more diversified than in most counties in Ireland. Historically, Wexford was a major producer of all the main commodities such as milk, beef, sugar and cereals. 30% of the farmland in the County is under tillage, (compared to a national average of 22%), followed by wheat, oil seed rape and grass. Arising from the reform of EU sugar market regime, the sugar beet industry came to an end in Ireland in 2006. At its peak, almost 1,200 farmers in Co. Wexford were involved in growing sugar beet with almost 7,000 hectares of land committed to the crop (CSO, 2002).

**Skills and Regional Innovation Capacity:** At 21.5% of the population Wexford has the lowest rate of third level education of any county, lagging a full 9% behind the national average of 30.5%. The traditional dependence on manufacturing and agriculture and more recently construction has reinforced this pattern of low educational attainment and presents a challenge in terms of upskilling workers and identifying local employment opportunities. Low levels of third level education are matched at the other end of the spectrum by higher than average levels of the population with only primary level education – 22% in Wexford compared to 18% nationally. Of the total number of clients registered with FÁS in Wexford in April 2010<sup>3</sup>, the largest occupational group was recorded as “other production workers and operatives” – unskilled or low-skilled workers.

<sup>3</sup> *Working Wexford – Co-ordinated Plan for Services for the Unemployed*, Wexford County Council, 2010.

**Economic infrastructure: access & connectivity; Quality of Life, Leadership and Strategic Capacity:**

Despite recent upgrades to the N9 and N11, reducing journey times to Dublin, several challenges remain to further enhance inter-regional connectivity, including the New Ross bypass, the completion of the N11 motorway to Rosslare and the level of services on the Dublin to Wexford rail line. Iarnród Éireann recently ceased services on the Rosslare to Waterford rail line. Forfás suggests that the South-East region “needs to work to ensure greater co-ordination in the promotion and preservation of the natural environment and landscape and to further develop cultural and recreational assets”.<sup>4</sup> Forfás also “express concern that the dispersed urban population and a regional Gateway – Waterford – with a limited impact has resulted in diverging and competitive dynamics within the region”.

**Opportunities for future economic development** identified in the “Positioning Wexford for the Upturn” strategy include:

- Revitalising Wexford as a family holiday destination,
- Capitalising on Wexford’s reputation as a centre for cultural excellence (as evidenced by the internationally renowned Wexford Festival Opera, now in its sixtieth season, a world-class opera house and performance venue, a vibrant local arts, theatre and music scene, the presence of well-known writers such as John Banville, Colm Toibín, Eoin Colfer and Billy Roche as well as a strong sporting tradition particularly in GAA and horse-racing),
- Forging better linkages between culture, heritage, tourism and business interests
- Strengthening the brand identity of Wexford food produce
- Getting early mover advantage in the green energy sector
- Attracting additional enterprises into the financial services sector
- Developing downstream activities and encouraging indigenous enterprises in support of the medical and life sciences sector and
- Re-orienting the construction sector to focus on quality and eco-constructions and to retrofitting existing housing and commercial stock to meet higher energy-efficient standards.

## 2.2 Demographic profile: Overview and Profile of Beneficiary Groups

At the time of the last census, the **population** of Co. Wexford stood at 131,749 persons. In the fifteen years to 2006, Ireland’s population as a whole grew by 20.3%. Wexford’s population, by contrast, grew by 29.1% over the same period, with a growth of 13% in the period from 2002 – 2006 alone. The main concentrations of population are around the four urban centres of Wexford town, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross but it is in neighbouring villages and towns that the largest percentage increase in population can be seen, resulting in a situation whereby 34.6% of the population is estimated to live in an ‘urban’ area. The largest section of the population is in the Wexford electoral area at 43,640,

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<sup>4</sup> Julie O’Neill, *Positioning Wexford for the Upturn*, Wexford County Council, 2010.

followed by the Enniscorthy area at 31,790, the Gorey area at 29,274 and the New Ross area at 26,911. It is estimated that 71% of the population growth of 15,019 county-wide between 2002 and 2006 is the result of inward migration<sup>5</sup>. The Gorey area, on the fringes of the Dublin commuter belt, experienced a dramatic rise in population between 2002 and 2006. Villages such as Castlebridge evolved rapidly into towns during the 'Celtic Tiger' building boom. The largest towns in the County now include:

Town	2006 population	% increase since 2002
Wexford town and environs	18,163	5.4%
Enniscorthy town and environs	9,538	6.4%
New Ross town and environs <sup>6</sup>	7,709	17.9%
Gorey town and environs	7,193	36.2%
Castlebridge	1,624	60.3%
Bunclody-Carrickduff (Wexford area only)	1,544	39.1%
Courtown Harbour	1,421	183.1%
Rosslare	1,359	18.7%
Ballygeary (Rosslare Harbour)	1,041	0.3%
Ferns	954	-3.1%
Taghmon	674	7.8%

Source: Census 2006

In 2006 there were a total of 24,548 households with children in the county, of which 15,591 were families with a minimum of one child under the age of 15. The proportion of **lone parents** (as a proportion of all households with children) in 2006 stood at 21.8%, marginally above the national average of 21.3%. However, reflecting a national pattern, these households tend to be concentrated in the urban areas. New Ross Urban (37.8%), Wexford Urban No. 3 (36.7%), Enniscorthy Urban (36.5%) and Wexford Urban No. 2 (36.4%) all have rates which are high by national comparison. The age dependency rate, at 33.8%, remains above the national average of 31.4%.

In the period from 1991 – 2006, Wexford experienced a relative improvement in the levels of **educational attainment** amongst its adult population. Nonetheless, the County continues to underperform in the area of educational attainment as the statistics below illustrate. The proportion of adults with primary level education only, fell from 40.2% in 1991 to 22.7% in 2006. However, this rate is still above the national average of 18.9%. There remain several rural EDs where a high proportion of the adult population has been educated only to primary level. These include Harristown (34.9%), Taghmon (34.6%), Ballymitty (32.0%), Ferns (31.4%) and Wexford Urban No. 2 (30.8%).

At 21.5%, Wexford has the lowest proportion of adults with a third level qualification of any county nationally, 9% below the national average of 30.5%. The average rate of increase in the number of adults with a third level qualification in the period 1991 – 2006 was 17.4%. The corresponding rate in Wexford was only 12.4%. Once again, several EDs exhibit particularly low levels of third level attainment. These include Taghmon (12.4%), Wexford Urban No. 2 (13.7%), the Bunclody area (13.9%) and Enniscorthy Urban (14.3%). Gorey has the highest levels of third level education amongst its adult population at 23.2%.

<sup>5</sup> Action For Change, Wexford County Development Board Strategy - 2009 – 2012, Wexford CDB.

<sup>6</sup> As New Ross sits on the border with Co. Kilkenny a small proportion of this figure technically resides in this county.

In parallel with the national trend towards increased educational attainment in the period to 2006, **social class composition** has also changed. There has been a gradual increase in the number of professionals and a more pronounced decline in the proportion of semi- and unskilled manual workers. At 29.5%, the proportion of professionals in Wexford is below the national average of 32.9% while, at 21.7%, Wexford has a higher proportion of semi- and unskilled manual workers than the national figure of 18.6%. Within the County, significant differences in social class composition mirror those related to educational attainment. Wexford Rural RD has the highest composition (32.7% professionals and 19.5% semi- and unskilled manual classes) while New Ross UD has the lowest (17.3%, 30.1%).

Between 1991 and 2006 the proportion of local authority **housing** declined in Ireland by an average of 2.3% from 9.8% in 1991 to 7.5% in 2006. The corresponding decline in Wexford was 2.8% (10.3% to 7.5%). Within the County, the proportion of local authority housing in New Ross UD (20.4%) is considerably higher than any other area. In March 2008, there were 1,218 households on the social housing waiting list with Wexford Local Authorities. A report published by the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis<sup>7</sup> in October 2010, revealed that at 180, Wexford had the second highest number of so-called “ghost estates” (a development of ten or more houses where 50% of the houses are either vacant or under construction). At 4,034, Wexford has the highest number of recipients of Rent Supplement in the South-East region<sup>8</sup>. There are currently 1247 persons in receipt of Mortgage Supplement which again is the highest figure in the region by a significant margin.

In terms of **geographic concentrations of disadvantage**, the South-East region is the second most disadvantaged region of Ireland and Wexford is the second most disadvantaged local authority area within the region, making it the eleventh most disadvantaged local authority area in the country as a whole. There was a deterioration in the relative position of Wexford in the fifteen years leading to 2006 with a score of -1.4 in 1991 and -2.5 in 2006. In 2006, a total of eight EDs fell into the “disadvantaged” category in 2006: Taghmon (-18.0), Enniscorthy Urban (-18.0), Wexford Urban No 2 (-15.2), New Ross Urban (-14.5), Ferns (-13.3), Bunclody/Newtownbarry (-11.0), Clonroche (-10.9) and Kilmokea (-10.4). Most other EDs were generally in the middle of the spectrum or marginally below the national average.

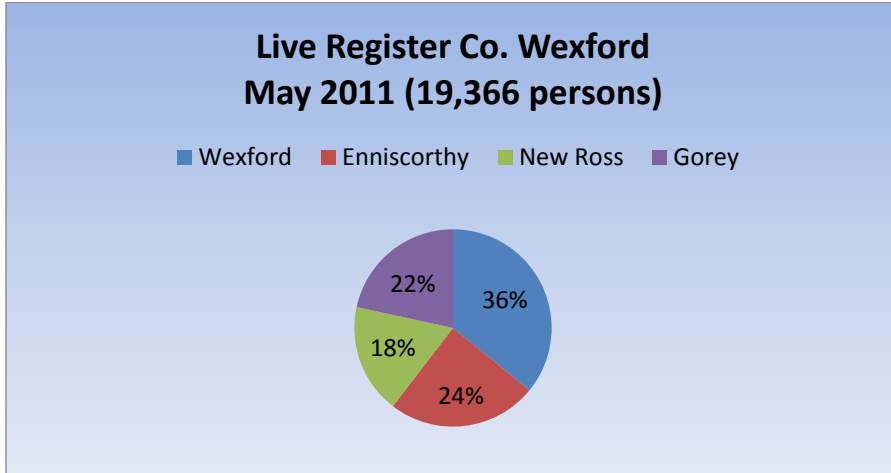
## People who are unemployed

It is in the area of unemployment that one of the most dramatic changes in the situation of LCDP beneficiary groups has taken place. In May 2011, the national standardised unemployment rate was 14.1%. Co. Wexford has been severely affected by this rise in unemployment. In May 2011, there were a total of 19,366 people on the live register in the county – 4,759 in Enniscorthy, 4,180 in Gorey, 3,483 in New Ross and 6,944 in Wexford. The breakdown by area within the County can be seen in percentage terms below.

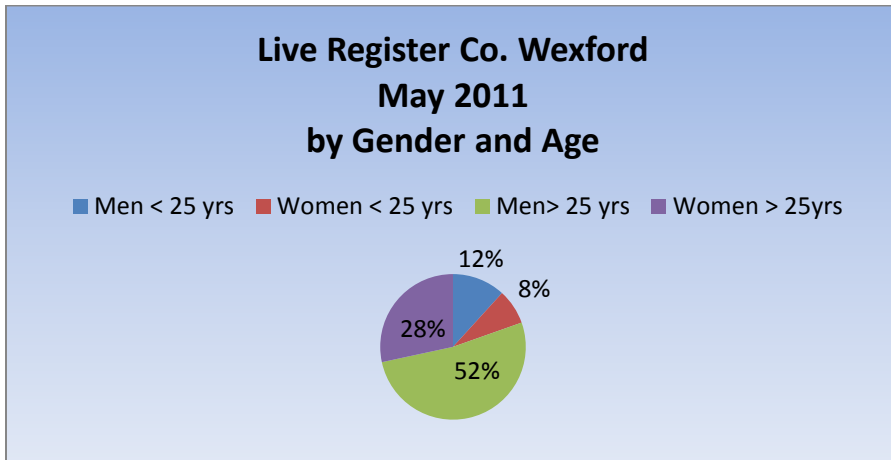
<sup>7</sup> Kitchin et al, *A Haunted Landscape: Housing and Ghost Estates in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland*, NUIM, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Figures provided by Local Office, Department of Social Protection, May 2011.





Of the total number on the Live Register in May 2011, 12,355 were male and 7,011 were female. 3,793 of this number were aged under 25, of whom 2,277 were men and 1,516 were female.



Clients of WLD’s Local Employment Service who are long-term unemployed often present with a number of issues relating to unemployment and require intensive one-to-one support from a trained guidance mediator, often over a lengthy period. The issues presenting as barriers to employment include low-confidence/self-esteem, family issues, literacy, fear of classroom training due to past experiences at school, alcohol/drug issues, depression, the “welfare trap”, lack of personal transport and relatively low levels of education. The so-called ‘scarring’ effects of long-term unemployment can extend beyond the individual resulting in negative impacts on the educational attainment of their children, negative effects on their health status and intra-family conflict.<sup>9</sup> LTU clients require a high level of motivational support and a number of interventions in a series of small steps to progress successfully into the labour market. The model of intervention used by LESN mediators combines one-to-one guidance sessions with referrals to specialist agencies and the provision of small steps towards preparing a career path plan, re-training and employment.

<sup>9</sup> Ray and Maurice Kinsella, *The rise and rise of long term and youth unemployment in Ireland: the scarring of a generation*, Studies, Volume 100, No. 397, Spring 2011.

Prevention of long-term unemployment is an essential strategy as it becomes more challenging to assist individuals who, over time, are losing motivation and confidence to take up training/education or employment options. Individuals who are 6 -12 months unemployed need a specific focus and need to be provided with local training/education and employment programme options to prevent rising long-term unemployment and the social, family and mental health issues that it brings. Some of the measures introduced in the recent Government Jobs Initiative may be of significance to long-term unemployed clients of WLD, particularly vat changes focused on the tourism sector, reductions in employer PRSI and the provision of additional training and education places targeted in particular at those who were working in construction.<sup>10</sup>

### **The underemployed**

A key indicator of the number of persons considered to be underemployed is the level of payment of the Farm and Fish Assist payment. These payments are designed to ensure that those involved in farming and fishing who have experienced a big drop in income can continue to farm or fish and maintain the viability of their business. Presently there are 10,989 recipients nationally, the majority of whom are located in the West and North-West Regions. There are 1840 recipients in Mayo, 1481 in Donegal and high numbers in Galway and Cork also. An article in a recent edition of the Irish Farmers Journal<sup>11</sup> reported that Wexford has the fifth lowest level of recipients of Farm Assist in the country, with lower numbers still in Wicklow, Waterford, Kildare and Dublin.

Statistics provided by the Department of Social Protection in May 2011 reveal that there are currently 272 persons in receipt of the Farm Assist payment and 16 persons in receipt of Fish Assist in Co. Wexford. There are 69 recipients of Farm Assist and 12 recipients of Fish Assist in the Wexford area, 68 recipients of Farm Assist and 4 of Fish Assist in the New Ross area. There are 88 recipients of Farm Assist in Enniscorthy and a further 47 in the Gorey area. The allocation of places under the Rural Social Scheme (which targets low income farm and fishing households) reflects this pattern. Of the national total of 2400 places, Co. Wexford has an allocation of 39.

### **Low income families**

A recent OECD report<sup>12</sup> indicates that families with children are the group at greatest risk of poverty today compared to previous decades when pensioners were the poorest in society. According to this report, Ireland ranks 9<sup>th</sup> of 36 countries surveyed in terms of the proportion of children living in poor households in the mid-late 2000s at 16.3% an increase of nearly 3% since the previous survey in the mid-1990s. The average OECD figure is 12.7%. The highest incidence of poverty occurs in families with children where there are no adults in paid employment. In 2009 there were 1152 families in receipt of Family Income Supplement in Co. Wexford. Other related indicators for this group include levels of payment of rent supplement and mortgage supplement. In both cases Wexford has significantly

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<sup>10</sup> Statement by Michael Noonan, Minister for Finance, May 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Article by Ciara O'Kelly, Irish Farmers Journal, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

<sup>12</sup> OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families*

increased levels of these payments vis-à-vis other counties in the South-East, pointing to the severity of the economic downturn in the county. There was a 31% increase in the number of recipients of mortgage supplement in Wexford from 2009 to 2010 while numbers in receipt of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear payment rose by 14% from 17,588 in 2009 to 20,074 in 2010. Local DSP officials report that in 2010 the supplementary welfare bill for Co. Wexford was approximately €50 million, an increase of 100% on figures for the period before the economic crisis hit.

<b>Figures at end 2010</b>	<b>Supplementary Welfare Allowance pending Jobseekers Allowance</b>	<b>Rent Supplement</b>	<b>Mortgage Supplement</b>
Carlow/Kilkenny	313	2830	782
South Tipperary	153	1403	338
Waterford	394	2457	536
Wexford	636	4034	1247

*Department of Social Protection, Local Office, Wexford, May 2011.*

## Disadvantaged women

CSO figures from 2008<sup>13</sup> indicate that even before the full impact of the recession was felt, women were at greater risk of poverty than men. Households headed by women experienced greater poverty, with almost 17% having incomes below the poverty line and suffered twice the rate of consistent poverty as those headed by men. Girls, working age women and those over 75 had higher poverty rates than males in the same age groups. 36% of one parent families, which are predominantly female, lived below the poverty line.

Although the initial wave of unemployment was dominated by men, in 2010, more women than men joined the live register. The EU has noted that “women still work part-time more than men; they predominate in less valued jobs and sectors; they are on average paid less than men and they occupy fewer positions of responsibility”<sup>14</sup>. A report recently published by the CSO indicates that women continue to earn less on average than men and that this difference increases with age. Men also continue to outnumber women in all national and regional decision-making structures in Ireland in 2010.

At local level in Wexford several organisations, including WLD, are involved in work with disadvantaged women. Access 2000 CDP is part of the new locally-based women’s networks collective, which is delivering LCDP support to disadvantaged women in the Wexford area. Access is one of two organisations in the county delivering support under the Equality for Women measure. Wexford Women’s Refuge is located in Wexford town and has a capacity of 22 beds. In 2010 the Refuge admitted 68 women and 97 children. In the period from January 1<sup>st</sup> to February 4<sup>th</sup> 2011 the total number of admissions was 23 demonstrating a sharply increased demand for this already heavily-subscribed service.

<sup>13</sup> CSO (2009) *Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2008*.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission (2009) *Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Equality between women and men – 2010*.

## Disadvantaged men

The employment rate for men in Ireland stood at about 75% over recent years, but in 2009 it fell to 67.3%, dropping again in 2010 to 64.5%. The unemployment rate for men in Ireland was about 5% in recent years but in 2009 it increased sharply to 15.1% and rose again in 2010 to 16.7%. The downturn in the Irish economy in 2008 has led to extensive job losses particularly in the construction industry and this has impacted heavily on low skilled workers in Co. Wexford, many of whom are men.

With the relative decline in the construction sector and related work the profile of unemployed men in Co. Wexford has changed to include highly qualified men in engineering, construction and related fields who require up-skilling and training in other fields. Many of those involved in construction in Wexford worked as self-employed contractors and face additional difficulties in accessing welfare, training and other supports. It has been recognised that men affected by disadvantage are significantly less likely to become involved in second-chance education as adults. Evidence gathered by the Engage Programme which works with disadvantaged men in Co. Wexford endorses this claim.

Since 2004 service providers in Co. Wexford have been working innovatively to address this imbalance and in recent years Men's Shed projects in New Ross and Gorey have been successful in recruiting and engaging disadvantaged men. Consultations with communities and agencies have also pointed to high levels of stress and depression amongst men affected by unemployment, exacerbated by high levels of personal debt. The client group which engages with the Cornmarket Project in Wexford includes a high proportion of offenders, ex-offenders, drug and alcohol users who are predominantly disadvantaged males (75%). This group of disadvantaged men have had limited access to educational opportunities and require intensive support to re-engage with mainstream education and training.

## Lone Parents

In 2009 just over 90,000 lone parents received the One-Parent Family Payment nationally<sup>15</sup>. 98% of recipients were women. 1.7% were under 20 years of age, 35% were between 20-29 years old and 37% were between 30-39. Approximately 60% were employed. 16,042 lone parents dependent on Social Welfare also relied on Rent Supplement to meet their rental costs, representing almost a fifth (17%) of all Rent Supplement claimants. Statistics provided by DSP officials in May 2011 indicate that there are currently 2,464 households in receipt of One Parent Family Payment in Co. Wexford, of which 39% (961) are in Wexford, 24% (581) are in Enniscorthy, 23% (565) are in Gorey and 14% (357) are in New Ross.

Census 2006 revealed that the proportion of households with at least one dependent child aged 15 or less headed by a single parent stood at 21.8% in Co. Wexford, marginally above the national average of 21.4%. However this figure rises significantly in certain areas of the county, most notably the urban areas around Wexford (35% or 274 households), New Ross (37.8% or 157 households) and Enniscorthy (36.5% or 76 households). Other areas in the county with high populations of one parent households include Wexford rural (386), Enniscorthy rural (356), Gorey rural and urban (245), New Ross Rural (124) and Courtown/Ardamine (115).

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<sup>15</sup> *Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2009* Dublin: Department of Social Protection, 2010.

According to research by Open, the national network of one parent families,<sup>16</sup> nearly one in five people in lone parent households (17.8%) were in consistent poverty in 2008, the highest rate recorded among household types. Lone parent households continued to be the household type with the highest 'at risk of poverty' rate with a rate of 36.4% being recorded for individuals in these households. Lone parent households reported the highest deprivation levels of any household type with nearly one quarter (24.2%) of individuals in these households experiencing three or more of the eleven deprivation items in 2008. According to EU-SILC in 2004, of all the children in poverty, 51 per cent were from one parent families while in 2006 this figure rose to 65 per cent.

### **People with disabilities**

Statistics provided by the DSP Local Office in May 2011 indicate that there are currently 3524 persons in receipt of the Disability Allowance payment in Co. Wexford. 1532 of these (43%) are in the Wexford area, 958 persons (27%) are in the Enniscorthy area, 597 (17%) are in the Gorey area and 437 (12%) are in the New Ross area. Census figures from 2006 show that there were 12,681 people with a disability living in Co. Wexford at this time. Of this number, 11.5% reside in rural Wexford with an almost 50/50 split between males and females with a disability in the work force. WLD has worked extensively with people with disabilities in the past with funding from LDSIP and Inter-reg and continues to support the networking of groups and access to other initiatives. The challenges faced by this group include difficulties in accessing relevant, mainstream training to enable progression, national cut backs in service provision such as carers and home help and access issues generally.

### **Travellers**

According to the Wexford Traveller Strategic Plan (2010 – 2013), Wexford has a significant Traveller population with a total of 569 Traveller families residing in the County at the time of the plan's publication in September 2010, the fifth highest population of Travellers by county nationally.<sup>17</sup> Since 2010, that figure has increased further to 620 families according to figures provided by the HSE Public Health Nurse for Travellers in early 2011. The South East Traveller Health Unit estimates that approximately 50% of the total Traveller population in the South-East region resides in Co. Wexford. The main concentrations of the Traveller population are in Enniscorthy, Gorey, Bunclody, Ferns, Wexford, New Ross, Clonroche and Taghmon. The 2006 census revealed that 63% of Traveller children under the age of 15 had left school as compared to 13% nationally. Participation of Travellers in higher education was 0.8% compared to 30.5% nationally.

Economic exclusion is high with Travellers favouring self-employment as a result of poor educational attainment and discrimination. In the latest County Strategic Plan (published in 2010), Wexford Traveller Inter-agency Group has prioritised the key themes of education, training and employment, health,

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<sup>16</sup><http://oneparent.ie/facts-figures/statistics/eu-survey-on-income-and-living-conditions-eu-silc-2006-central-statistics-office>

<sup>17</sup> *Wexford Traveller Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013*, Wexford CDB, 2010.

accommodation and Traveller community and culture for action by a variety of agencies, including WLD, in the timeframe to 2013. The HSE South-East Traveller Health Unit has also identified and developed responses to a number of specific issues across the region including mental health and domestic violence. WLD is involved in a number of initiatives with the Traveller community including the employment of and provision of support to Community Health Workers throughout the county and the development of Men's Health Projects.

### **Disadvantaged young people**

Wexford has a higher than average proportion of people aged nineteen or under at 28.8% compared to the national figure of 27%. In rural areas this figure is 30%. The 2006 census indicates that countywide 38,059 (29%) are 19 or under and 46,767 (35.5%) are under 25. Factors such as early school leaving, lone parent families, limited educational attainment, alcohol and substance use, youth unemployment, anti-social behaviour and criminality present a challenge in terms of ensuring the best outcomes for young people. 71% of referrals to the Cornmarket project (which works with people involved in substance misuse and/or criminality) are 26 years or younger, (25% 15-18yrs, 46% 18-26 years). Many are early school leavers. Census data recorded 1136 Travellers in Co. Wexford. Nationally 63% of the Traveller population is under 25 equating to 715 young Travellers in the County. Communities throughout the county have identified the needs of young people as a priority issue. A sub-group of the RAPID AIT in Wexford town, meeting in March 2011, highlighted a number of issues of concern including mental health and wellbeing (16 – 18 years olds in particular), early school leavers, substance and alcohol misuse amongst 20 – 24 year olds, the need for pre-development for this group and linkages within and beyond the RAPID area.

Co. Wexford VEC is currently finalising a county-wide survey of needs and issues as part of its development of a Youth Strategy for the county. Key issues identified in this research included youth unemployment, poor mental health, a perception on the part of young people that certain services were 'only for adults', access to transport, supporting young parents (<25 years), the need for advice and guidance to make informed decisions about education and training options, sexual health, bullying, anti-social behavior and aggression and the needs of particular groups such as young Travellers, young LGBT people and young people with a disability. The research also pointed to the need for better coordination between service providers to ensure better outcomes for young people.

### **Early school leavers**

In 2006, early school leavers represented 12.3% of the 18-24 age group in Ireland. The unemployment rate for this age group was 19% in 2006 compared with an unemployment rate of 8.2% for all persons aged 18-24. The unemployment rate for persons in Ireland aged 18-24 with, at most, lower secondary education was 50.9% in 2009 compared with 25.2% for that age group overall. The proportion of persons aged 18-24 who left school with, at most, lower secondary education in Ireland, was 11.3% in 2008. The EU 27 average rate was 14.9% (Measuring Ireland's progress, 2009, CSO). The following table shows the retention rates for the 2001 – 2004 entry cohorts in Co. Wexford. Average (unadjusted)

national Leaving Certificate retention rate in DEIS schools increased by 5 percentage points from 68.2% to 73.2% between the 2001 to 2004 entry cohorts while the (unadjusted) retention rate in non-DEIS schools increased from 85.0% to 87.4% for the same entry cohorts. There was a marked increase in the retention rate for the 2001 to 2004 entry cohorts for males in DEIS schools at nearly 8 percentage points. The following table represents both DEIS and non-DEIS schools in Co. Wexford.

No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	Junior Certificate Retention 2002	Leaving Certificate Retention 2002	Junior Certificate Retention 2003	Leaving Certificate Retention 2003	Junior Certificate Retention 2004	Leaving Certificate Retention 2004
20	2,020	94.8%	80.0%	94.6%	81.7%	94.8%	85.5%

(Source: DES, May 2011)

The challenges faced by this group include the fact that a significant number of male early school leavers were employed on building sites and construction projects during the boom. Many of these young people are now unemployed and without formal qualifications. This group requires training opportunities aimed at preventing long-term unemployment through maintaining a pathway to the labour market via work placement or experience opportunities. There is also a need to engage with potential early school leavers to encourage them to remain in education and achieve Leaving Certificate qualification.

## Homeless people

The latest available data on homelessness in Wexford is provided by the Wexford Homeless Action Team (a local inter-agency group). 334 cases of homelessness have been recorded since August 2007 while 303 people reported as homeless in total since that date. The age profile of those presenting to the services is relatively young: 20.2% are under 25 years with 34.9% of those presenting under the ages of 30 years. The most commonly cited reason for homelessness is domestic violence (33% of cases), followed by family disputes (11%) and relationship/marital breakdown. Eviction, alcohol abuse and mental and emotional abuse are also common factors. Research conducted by Gorey Youth Needs on the issue of youth homelessness in 2010<sup>18</sup> highlighted the absence of a 24 hour service or hostel for vulnerable young people who have left or been forced to leave home leading to a phenomenon known as “couch surfing”. All of these issues give rise to many challenges in particular the sourcing of long-term accommodation and the processes and support services which follow a stay in emergency accommodation.

<sup>18</sup> M. Kirwan, *I need a duvet and a place to call home – A Study of Youth Homelessness*, Gorey Youth Needs, 2011.

## **Drug/alcohol misusers**

A report commissioned by the South-East Regional Drugs Task Force in 2010<sup>19</sup> revealed that in the five counties covered by the task force area, Wexford had the highest number of users of illegal drugs at 11,500, compared to 9,500 in Waterford, 7,700 in Kilkenny, 7,266 in South Tipperary and 4,551 in Carlow. Wexford was also highlighted as having the highest incidence of heroin use amongst the five counties in the South-East Regional Drugs Task Force area with 253 in Wexford, 210 in Waterford, 170 in Kilkenny, 160 in South Tipperary and 100 in Carlow. A report issued by the Health Research Board in January 2011<sup>20</sup> indicates that the South East has the highest incidence of drug and alcohol related fatalities outside the Dublin area.

WLD works directly with substance misusers through the Cornmarket project. There is a need for a concerted inter-agency response to substance abuse in Wexford to prevent further escalation of this problem in the county and mitigate its impact on families and communities. Greatly increased treatment and rehabilitation facilities are required as well as other supports for individuals and their families. Supports are also required for at-risk groups including young unemployed males, members of the Traveller community and LGBT people. The delivery of effective supports in training, education and employment as well as community supports and other opportunities will require close interaction between service providers located both within the treatment and rehabilitation sector and also in mainstream provision. Community perceptions of this issue and those involved in substance misuse will also present a challenge in terms of community development responses locally.

## **Offenders/Ex-Offenders**

In Garda statistics released for the Wexford sub district for the year 2010, overall offences were up by 10% on the previous year. The largest single increase in offences was recorded in relation to the heading under possession of drugs which rose by just over 100%. In addition, the statistics reveal that public order offences in Wexford also rose by 85% on the previous year. Offenders and ex-offenders now make up 72% of the clients on the counselling and day programmes of the Cornmarket Project in Wexford, a service for those with substance misuse and criminality issues. Of the total number 20% of clients are ex-prisoners, having already served previous jail sentences for drug related and/or other criminal activities. Wexford Town accounts for 73% of the total with another 21% from the other major urban centres of Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross and the balance of 6% from other areas of Wexford. In addition, of the 33 Probation Service teams throughout the country, the Wexford team ranks ninth in terms of numbers of offenders and ex-offenders dealt with.

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<sup>19</sup> Comiskey et al. (2010) *A Review of SERDTF funded projects in the South-East and a road map for the future*, TCD.

<sup>20</sup> Health Research Board, *Drug-related deaths and Drug-related deaths and deaths among drug users in Ireland: 2008 figures from the National Drug-Related Deaths Index January 2011*.



## Older People

In 2006, the proportion of people aged 65+ and living alone in Wexford was 8.4%, with the highest concentrations in Enniscorthy Urban – 16.4%; Wexford Urban No1 – 21.9% and Harristown – 16.8%. The overall population aged 65+ was slightly higher than national average of 11% at 11.6%, however 13 DEAs, mainly in southern half of the county, have a considerably higher proportion (+15%). According to statistics provided by the DSP Local Office in May 2011, there are currently 3883 individuals in receipt of the non-contributory State Pension in Co. Wexford, 1673 in the Wexford area, 1053 in the Enniscorthy area, 589 in the Gorey area and 569 in the New Ross area.

A local consultation with older people in Wexford in May/June 2010 identified the following issues affecting quality of life: health, transport, pension, home supports, information needs, learning & technology and safety/security (117 members of 29 groups in survey).

Wexford Local Development has carried out extensive work with older people both at a local level in terms of developing new groups to engage the most isolated of this group and a county and national level in terms of developing a strong network of groups focused on policy issues – Co. Wexford Age Equality Network. WLD employs a worker to support this network with funding from Age and Opportunity under the Get Vocal programme. WLD has also supported the training of local facilitators in the Ageing with Confidence programme which has been rolled out to a number of groups around the County.

## Family Carers

A report published by the Carers Association in 2009, drawing on information from the last census indicated that the proportion of the population in Wexford involved in caring in 2006 stood at 4.7% (Carers aged 15+ years as percentage of population aged 15+ years) or 4825 persons.<sup>21</sup> Nationally on average 62% of carers are female and 38% male. At the end of November 2010 there were 2076 people in receipt of Carers Allowance in Co. Wexford, of whom approximately 80% were women.

EuroCarers notes the growth in the older population of the EU, the predicted decline in the working age group, the growth in the numbers of people with support needs and the reduction in hospital support services, resulting in a growth in the numbers of people requiring homecare supports, including high level care, provided by Family Carers. Carers are themselves at increased risk of physical and mental ill-health as a result of the burden of their responsibilities and report feelings of social isolation, stress and emotional pressure as well as limited access to paid employment, leisure and recreational activities.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Carers in Ireland: A Statistical and Geographical Overview*, The Carers Association, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.eurocarers.org/userfiles/file/Factsheet2009.pdf>

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

In recent years there have been some improvements for LGBT people in Ireland, demonstrated by progress in equality legislation and the introduction of the Civil Partnership Bill. However, the lived experience of many LGBT people still remains one of fear, exclusion and disparate treatment before the law with social, legal and religious reasons being given for the continuation of unequal treatment. For those living outside the major cities, these are increased. With a county-wide population of almost 132,000 and the general belief that between 5% and 7% of the population is Lesbian or Gay, there are significant numbers of LGBT people in Co. Wexford.

In addition, a significant proportion of the respondents to the latest piece of research carried out by the LGBT community declare themselves to be “Other”. That implies that at least 9,000 people in Co. Wexford - a conservative 7% of the population—identify as something other than heterosexual. BelongTo, the national LGBT Youth Development Organisation, estimate that 7.5% of 14-23 year olds, or 1,324 young people in Wexford, identify as LGBT and have identified Co. Wexford as a priority area for development of a youth project in their current strategic plan. There is a strong correlation between increased levels of self-harm and suicide ideation and LGBT identify amongst young people in particular and these factors are strongly associated with increased levels of early school leaving and educational disadvantage. A recent national study, in which over 1000 LGBT people participated, indicated that 80% had experienced verbal abuse and 25% had experienced physical abuse as a result of their sexual identity<sup>23</sup>.

## Non-Irish nationals

Census 2006 revealed that there were 3,944 non-Irish nationals living in the Wexford area, 2,389 in the Enniscorthy area, 2,454 in the New Ross area and 2,391 in the Gorey area. In the publication “Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland”, which analyses data from the 2006 census and was published in 2008<sup>24</sup>, Bunclody and New Ross were amongst the five towns with the highest proportion of Polish people in the country. Nationally, the non-Irish population is dominated by people in their twenties and thirties with significantly more men than women. Almost 80% of households headed by persons from the accession states are in rented accommodation. The fall-off in employment has affected many workers from outside Ireland which would indicate that the total population of non-Irish nationals has dropped since the last census. Wexford CDB established the Migrants Research Steering Group which produced a report in 2008 outlining the current situation of migrants to the county and the challenges faced in terms of integration.<sup>25</sup> In the year to 2006, 2,843 people moved to Co. Wexford from other countries and 11.6% of the total population of the county were born outside Ireland. 42.5% of those surveyed for the report indicated that they would like to remain in Ireland permanently which points to the relevance of integration as a continuing challenge for Wexford despite the downturn in employment.

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<sup>23</sup> Maycock et al (2008) *Supporting LGBT Lives: A study of mental health and wellbeing*, Commissioned by GLEN and BelongTo and funded by the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention,

<sup>24</sup> Census 2006: Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland, CSO, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> *Merging Cultures in the Model County - Immigration and Integration in County Wexford*, Wexford County Council, 2008.

## **Refugees and asylum-seekers**

Many of the issues faced by non-Irish nationals relate equally to the situation of those in the asylum process in Ireland however there are additional specific challenges for this group. The only RIA Reception and Accommodation Centre in Co. Wexford is located in New Ross town and has the capacity to house 58 people. In April 2011<sup>26</sup> the occupancy rate was 55. All residents in the New Ross RIA Centre are male and their countries of origin include Nigeria, Congo, Somalia, Ghana, Cameroon, Sudan and Afghanistan. Access to education, training and employment is contingent on acquiring refugee status – many asylum seekers in the accommodation centre report feelings of boredom and a lack of motivation while they await determination of their status and experience depression as a result.

## **2.3 Statutory and Community Sector Service Provision Profile**

### **2.3.1 Outline and Analysis of Statutory, Community and Voluntary-provided Services and Specialist Programmes**

This analysis focuses on services and programmes under key themes in order firstly to draw a complete picture of service provision in particular areas and then to identify gaps and potential for development (Section 2.4). A full and detailed description of services under each theme is provided in Appendix 1.

#### ***Welfare, Advocacy and Information Provision***

The **Department of Social Protection** is the main provider of services in this area with local offices overseeing the disbursement of a range of income supports. DSP offices are located in the four main county towns with the main local office in Wexford town and branch offices in Enniscorthy (covering the Bunclody area), New Ross and Gorey. During 2010, Community Welfare Officers, formerly employed through the HSE, transferred into the DSP resulting in a situation whereby virtually all income support and supplementary welfare payments are now channelled through a single agency. The future shape of this service is likely to shift further with the Government proposal to introduce a National Employment and Entitlements service.

The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** is an advisory service for people in debt or at risk of getting into debt. Head office for the county is located in Wexford town, with weekly outreach clinics in Enniscorthy and New Ross. The Gorey area is serviced from the MABS office in Arklow. The **Citizens Information Board** is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services, with centres in Wexford town, Enniscorthy and Gorey and an outreach clinic in New Ross. The **Society of St. Vincent de Paul** delivers vital income and

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<sup>26</sup> Reception and Integration Agency - Monthly Report April 2011.

in-kind supports through visitations to households experiencing poverty across the county. The **Simon Community** initiated a food distribution and advocacy service in New Ross in 2010. **Co. Wexford Public Library Services** has branches in Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey, Bunclody and New Ross with a mobile service covering the North and South of the county.

### ***Supports for Employment and Self-Employment***

There are two strands to Ireland's **National Employment Service**, both of which provide a placement service to people who have been unemployed for three months or longer under the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) - **FÁS Employment Services** (offices located in Wexford and Enniscorthy with clinics in New Ross and Gorey) and the **Local Employment Service Network**. Wexford Local Development manages the LES in Co. Wexford which operates in the four main county towns of Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey. The LES also operates a weekly clinic in Bunclody. FAS and the LESN share a database and work closely together. Employment guidance is also provided by Jobs Facilitators within the Department of Social Protection – in Wexford there are 2.5 full-time equivalent posts covering the Wexford and the Enniscorthy/New Ross areas. The Gorey area is covered from the Arklow office. Changes envisaged by the new Programme for Government may see the merging of the placement and benefits functions currently separately managed by FAS and the DSP under the proposed National Employment and Entitlements Service.

In terms of active labour market programmes, programme delivery is spread across a number of agencies and departments: **FÁS** is the biggest provider of services, including training of employed and unemployed workers, job creation programmes and “local training initiatives”. There is one dedicated FÁS training centre in Wexford town with additional training available in Waterford. Youth Train Community Training Centre in Wexford town provides 40 training places to young early school leavers. There are 820 places on Community Employment Schemes in Wexford, distributed across 44 schemes. FÁS also manages the Work Placement Scheme which allows people on the live register to work for nine months while retaining their social welfare payment.

**Wexford Local Development**, under LCDP, provides FETAC accredited training and group supports to unemployed people in Wexford, linking closely with the LES and other agencies. WLD also administers the Back to Work Enterprise and Short Term Enterprise schemes on behalf of the DSP and provides pre- and post-enterprise supports to individuals and groups. WLD also offers a weekly Network for Employment in Wexford and Enniscorthy under LCDP – a semi-structured group support which covers specific themes over a six week cycle.

Wexford Local Development has recently been given responsibility for the roll-out of the Tús Community Work Placement Initiative which will see 9 supervisors appointed to manage schemes with a total of 180 places across the county. Eligibility for employment on the programme is restricted to those who have been on the live register for 12 months or longer. WLD also manages the Rural Social Scheme which provides community-based employment to recipients of Farm and Fish Assist and currently has 39 places while 9 people are currently employed on the Jobs Initiative programme (funded by FÁS). The WARM project is another project managed by WLD with funding from SEAI which also provides training and work experience in home insulation via a FÁS-funded CE scheme. The National Rural Development Programme offers support to small businesses and start-ups in rural areas.

**Co. Wexford VEC** provides the following supports to unemployed people: Adult Education Guidance Service (located in Wexford town), the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) which operates in Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Bunclody, Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (Adamstown, Bridgetown, Bunclody, New Ross, Enniscorthy, Gorey and Wexford), the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) – part-time accredited courses and the Adult Literacy Service.

Supports for **self-employment** are available from WLD (as outlined above) under the BTWE scheme and the NRDP, the County Enterprise Board which provides training and mentoring, informal networks and financial assistance, the Enniscorthy Enterprise and Technology Centre, the South East Business and Innovation Centre and the South-East Enterprise Platform Programme in Waterford and the Chambers of Commerce in the four main towns.

Training and employment support for **people with disabilities** is available from the National Learning Network in Wexford town, the Wexford Consortium for Supported Employment in Enniscorthy and Co. Wexford Community Workshops (located in Enniscorthy and New Ross). Employability Wexford (based in Enniscorthy) supports people with a disability to secure and maintain employment. **Wexford County Development Board** convened an inter-agency group in 2010 to examine the needs of unemployed people in the County and service responses available locally. One of the initiatives arising from the subsequent report and action plan was the production of a brochure detailing all of the services and supports for this group in the county which was launched in April 2011.

The landscape of employment supports and training is evolving and changing rapidly. Some of the changes to come include the introduction of a National Employment and Entitlements Service whereby the employment services functions of FÁS will be integrated with DSP benefits and job seeker support initiatives resulting in a 'one stop shop', the reallocation of FÁS training activities to the Department of Education and Skills and the merging of Co. Wexford and Co. Wicklow VECs. The impact of the Government Jobs Initiative will also be felt in Wexford.

WLD as a local development company with an in-house LES and a track record of providing training and enterprise supports to unemployed people on a range of programmes is well-positioned to respond flexibly and effectively to these changes. WLD's links with communities in the most disadvantaged areas will also be an advantage in increasing awareness, knowledge and uptake of employment related services and training.

### ***Education and Lifelong Learning***

The area of education, both formal and informal, is of critical importance to the work of the LCDP in addressing social exclusion in Wexford. The process of lifelong learning encompasses education from early childhood and youth, through the working years and into older life. This analysis relates to the school system and attendant support programmes, further and third level education, 'alternative' provision and community education. The provision of early childhood care and education will be examined in a later section.

The **DEIS** scheme (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) encompasses a range of supports and services which address social exclusion including the Home/School Community Liaison Service and the School Completion Programme (of which there are 5 in Wexford in Wexford, Bridgetown, Gorey, Enniscorthy/Bunclody and South-West Wexford). 28 schools are included in the DEIS scheme in Wexford. The elimination of the Visiting Teacher for Travellers posts has been highlighted as a serious setback for this community depriving them as it does of a vital information and advocacy support and removing the intensive focus with families on sustaining participation in education from pre-school right through to second level and beyond.

The **National Educational Welfare Board** (NEWB) has a key role in following up on children who are not attending school regularly. The Wexford service is part of the South-East regional team and is based in Wexford town. There are 13 Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs), 2 Senior ENOs and 1 Regional Manager in the region, of which 2 EWOs are deployed locally in Co. Wexford. Youthreach (Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross) and Youth Train (Wexford town) provide accredited training and education for young people who have left school early.

Third level education is available in Wexford town through the **Wexford Campus of Carlow IT** which caters to large numbers of returning adult learners. **Waterford IT** also outreaches modules of certain courses to Enniscorthy and other locations within the County. **Co. Wexford VEC** delivers many services to adult learners, most of which have been described in the previous section (Employment Supports). The VEC also deliver a community education programme throughout the county. Adult Learning Centres are located in Bunclody, Gorey and New Ross offering an integrated menu of VEC services while in Wexford and Enniscorthy these services are delivered from various locations.

**Wexford Local Development** delivers a range of educational initiatives focused on preventing early school leaving and the transition from primary to post-primary including the Magic and the Meitheal programmes. WLD has also developed and maintained after-schools initiatives in areas of high educational disadvantage including Taghmon, Castlebridge and Rosslare where close working partnerships have been developed with local schools. Wexford Education Network is a network of providers and communities involved in education which addresses issues of educational disadvantage such as bullying, parental support and early childhood education through collaboration and networking.

**CDPs, FRCs and other community groups** are also involved in community education some targeting specific groups such as the Men's Shed projects in South End (Wexford town) and Gorey and Access 2000's work with women in Wexford. A range of other private and voluntary providers are also involved in training and education in the county and are described in more detail in Appendix 1.

Recent cut-backs have resulted in the removal of specialist Visiting Teacher for Traveller posts, a reduction in the allocation of resource hours to children with learning disabilities and a rise in the pupil-teacher ratio, all of which to a greater or lesser extent, have an impact on the educational attainment of children within LCDP target groups. The pattern of retrenchment in mainstream education begs the question to what extent programmes such as LCDP can successfully address the needs of the most educationally disadvantaged within ancillary support programmes.

## ***Health and Wellbeing***

The **HSE** is the main provider of health services in Wexford and a full analysis of services available and their location is contained in the detailed area profile (Appendix 1). **Wexford General Hospital** is an acute hospital with a range of services including obstetrics. The development of **Primary Care Teams** has been slow with seven in place in the county. There are three teams in the Gorey area, one in Ballycullane, one in Taghmon and two in New Ross. **Health Centres** are located throughout the county with a greater range of services on offer in the main county towns.

**Public Health Nurses** provide services in the community to parents and children, older people and those coming out of hospital. There are opportunities for WLD to link with the Primary Care teams and Public Health Nurses in particular in relation to the needs of LCDP target groups and clients.

**Mental Health Services** are provided at dedicated centres in New Ross, Wexford town and Enniscorthy as well as through the urban health centres (child and adolescent psychiatric services and psychological and counselling services). The **Wexford Self-Harm Intervention Programme** is based in Wexford town and the pilot project **SCAN (Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse)** aims to assist GPs and Primary Care Teams in carrying out rapid clinical assessments of patients presenting with deliberate self-harm/suicide crisis. Other supports include the accident and emergency department at Wexford General Hospital, access to helplines and after-hours GP care.

Under its social inclusion remit, the HSE also provides support in the area of **substance misuse** (a dedicated team is based in Enniscorthy), **community development support** and **youth and family supports**. The HSE also provides services to meet the health needs of **older people** and people with a **disability** both directly and by means of funding to voluntary bodies, including Wexford Community Services, daycare and day centres, the Community Car Scheme (administered by WLD), the Irish Wheelchair Association and others.

The **Health Promotion** section of the HSE works closely with community organisations (including WLD), schools and other groups to promote healthy living and provide information. **WLD** is also funded by the HSE to co-ordinate and manage the **Traveller Community Health Programme** (which employs seven Peer Workers) and **Traveller Men's Health Programme**. The **Cornmarket** Project provides counselling and rehabilitation support to people involved in substance misuse and their families with funding from Probation and Welfare, the SERDTF and LCDP.

**FDYS** manages the **Community Based Drugs Initiative** which works throughout the county to educate communities on the dangers of substance misuse. **Co. Wexford Local Drugs Task Force** is a sub-structure of the **South East Regional Drugs Task Force** and provides a forum for local groups and agencies to discuss and take action on this issue. A variety of community and voluntary groups are involved in the provision of vital community-based supports in the area of mental health and wellbeing. These include **Grow, Aware**, the **Carers Association** and the **Hope Cancer Support Centre** amongst others.

### **Children, Young People and Family Support**

Services under this theme fall into a number of key areas: child health and protection and family support, early years care and education and youth work and informal supports. The **HSE** has primary responsibility for the protection and welfare of children which it exercises through the provision of a range of services including family support, residential care and child welfare and protection services. It also provides a range of child and adolescent health services in communities and schools through public health nursing, local health centres and area medical teams. Family Support Services include therapeutic work, parent education programmes, home-based support, child development and education interventions, youth work and community development.

The **Family Support Agency** supports a number of local organisations and centres. The **South-East Family Support Network** has been developed with the support of the SE Regional Drugs Task Force and includes groups in Wexford supported by the **Community Based Drugs Initiative** and the **Cornmarket Project/WLD**. **Barnardos** run a teen parent support programme in Gorey and WLD is working with Bridgetown School Completion Programme on a project targeting vulnerable teenage parents. **Youth New Ross** hosts a **Springboard** Project which provides supports to families and young people and has been instrumental in working with other agencies through the local AIT to develop a strategy for Family Support in the town. **FDYS** run a Young Women's project while **CDPs** have all been active in working with vulnerable families and young people.

There has been an increase in the number of **childcare centres and pre-schools** in the County thanks to recent Government and EU investment programmes. There are currently 50 community-based providers in the County, of which 18 provide full day-care or morning and afternoon sessions.

WLD has worked closely with communities in disadvantaged areas to develop and maintain community-based childcare and examples include the recently established Teach Spraoi in Taghmon. Uptake of these places has been made easier by the introduction of the ECCE and subvention however barriers remain for some children to access the free pre-school year including transport and lack of awareness and/or understanding on the part of some parents. Research conducted in 2007 indicates that the urban areas of the county as well as Bunclody, Castlebridge and Ferns-Ballycanew areas are amongst those most likely to experience increased demand for childcare based on population projections.<sup>27</sup>

Statutory responsibility for the co-ordination of **youth work** rests with the **VEC** who employ a designated Youth Officer and are currently finalising an extensive piece of research on needs within the county. The main providers of youth services include the **FDYS** (Ferns Diocesan Youth Service) – affiliated to Youth Work Ireland and providing extensive services directly and through local voluntary clubs throughout the county, **Youth New Ross**, **Gorey Youth Needs** and **Foróige**.

**WLD** is involved in the provision of youth work in partnership with local groups in disadvantaged areas and has developed projects in areas where the absence of services has been identified as an issue directly by communities. WLD also manages the **connecting.u** project, a detached youth work initiative which arose from research conducted by Wexford Area Partnership under LDSIP and is currently housed within the Cornmarket Project. The three **Garda Youth Diversion Projects** in the County are also important providers of youth services to disadvantaged young people who fall within the remit of LCDP.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Assessment of Childcare Need in Co. Wexford' Wexford CDB/Wexford County Childcare Committee, 2008.



The **Young People's Services and Facilities fund** was expanded to cover four additional towns including Wexford in March 2008 and a local working group convened by the VEC is developing proposals aimed at diverting 10-21 year olds away from substance misuse under this funding stream.

### ***Housing, Planning and Environment***

**Wexford Local Authorities** are the main provider of social housing in the county with social housing organisations including **Respond** and **Clúid** also having a presence. There are four Area Housing Officers within Wexford County Council, one based in each of the four main towns. A designated unit in the Housing Department handles incidences of anti-social behaviour and Tenant Participation and Estate Management Initiatives aim to promote greater involvement by residents of the 93 local authority housing developments in the county in the management and maintenance of their own estate.

Wexford County Council, along with the HSE, the Gardaí and other voluntary groups, are involved in the provision of services to homeless people and all are represented on **Wexford Homeless Action Team (HAT)** which was established in June 2007. Wexford Women's Refuge and Ozanam House Men's Hostel, both located in Wexford town, are the main providers of emergency accommodation in the county and both are heavily subscribed. The HSE has a dedicated Community Welfare Officer for homelessness.

In the area of planning, the preparation of **development plans** represents an important opportunity for local communities to become involved in influencing the changing shape of their area and is the responsibility of Wexford County Council.

### ***Justice and Policing***

Wexford has five **Joint Policing Committees** (with multi-sectoral representation), one in each of the four main county towns as well as a committee with a county-wide remit. There are **Community Policing Units** in each of the three RAPID towns with a Sergeant, 8 Gardaí and one liaison officer in Wexford, 2 Gardaí in Enniscorthy and 1 Garda in New Ross. WLD and other community organisations have engaged with members of these units since their inception and have built alliances at local level which provide a platform for further work on this area with local communities over the coming years.

**Garda Youth Diversion Projects**, working side by side with **Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers**, represent another significant intervention in the area of justice. These projects based in Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross work intensively with families, local organisations and young people themselves to divert young offenders away from criminality and create opportunities for more positive engagement in society. The **Probation Service** provides supervision, community service, offending behaviour programmes and specialist support services to young and adult offenders.

One of the projects supported by the Probation service in Wexford is the **Cornmarket Project**, a WLD project which addresses anti-social attitudes and behaviours and substance misuse through intervention and support programmes, counselling, group work and a structured day programme. This work has been extended beyond Wexford town to the other three main towns with the resources of LCDP and

represents an opportunity for WLD under LCDP to develop further opportunities to engage this target group in training, education and community activity. There is one **accommodation centre for asylum seekers** in Co. Wexford, based in New Ross and administered by the Reception and Integration Agency. The capacity of the centre is 58 and it has a current occupancy rate of 54. Opportunities exist to build on existing links by integrating residents in broader community activity in the town.

### ***Culture and Recreation***

Wexford has a variety of cultural and recreational assets including **Wexford Opera House, Wexford Arts Centre, St. Michael's Theatre** in New Ross, **Buí Bolg** Street Theatre Company and other community-based arts organisations. **Sports Active Wexford** is based in Wexford County Council and aims to encourage participation in physical activity thereby promoting physical and mental health. **WLD** delivers a comprehensive range of summer fun and community based activities to young people in particular which have the added benefit of building community confidence and engagement locally.

**Wexford CDB** has completed a draft Recreation Strategy for the county which will be finalised shortly and Wexford County Council is currently carrying out a review of its arts activities. There are many other examples of community and voluntary sector-provided activities in Co. Wexford, representing an important avenue for those experiencing social exclusion to increase their participation, improve their health and wellbeing and contribute to their local community. The economic regeneration strategy ("Positioning Wexford for the Upturn") for Co. Wexford has also prioritised the area of culture and recreation as a potential source of future employment.

### ***Agriculture, Rural Development and Transport***

**Wexford Local Development** administers the **National Rural Development Programme** and is engaged with small businesses and community groups throughout the County in building the rural economy and developing local infrastructure. There are significant opportunities for socially excluded groups in rural areas to benefit from this programme. It should be noted that the Wexford urban area is excluded from the NRDP programme due to its 'hub' status under the National Spatial Strategy.

WLD also works with **smallholders** under LCDP delivering both individual and group-based supports. WLD administers the **Rural Social Scheme** which currently has an allocation of 39 places in Wexford. There are two projects funded under the **Rural Transport Programme** in Co. Wexford, one administered by WLD and the other by South-West Wexford CDP. Nonetheless the issue of transport remains problematic for rural dwellers in particular and the challenge of connecting people on low incomes without personal transport to opportunities for education, training and employment remains.

### 2.3.2 Outline of Community Development Infrastructure/Activity

**Wexford Local Development** has been tasked with the delivery of Community Development supports under the LCDP and has recently seen the transfer of four **CDPs** – FAB and Wolfe Tone (Wexford), Templeshannon (Enniscorthy) and New Ross. South West Wexford CDP is in the process of developing a service level agreement with WLD for delivery of services under LCDP while Access 2000 CDP is funded via the National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks.

There are a number of **Family Resource Centres** in Co. Wexford which operate from Community Development principles and work with many LCDP target groups. These include South End FRC (Wexford town), Taghmon FRC, Gorey FRC and Raheen FRC (located near Clonroche/Enniscorthy).

Over the years, **Wexford Local Development** has developed effective working relationships with many of the most disadvantaged geographic communities in the County as a result of the particular focus that has been maintained on 'the community' as the central organisational concept for all LDC actions and programmes. Local **Community Teams**, focused on social inclusion and anti-poverty work, have been established in Taghmon, the three RAPID areas in Enniscorthy (Templeshannon, Bellefield and Ross Road), Coolcotts/Clonard, South End and West Wexford (Wexford town RAPID areas) and Kilmore Quay/Bridgetown. A strong working relationship based on social inclusion has also been established with Castlebridge Community Development Co-op and the Yola Hedge School group in Rosslare/Tagoat. WLD is also working with Clonroche Development Association to develop a team in that area.

**Wexford Area Community Team (WACT)** is a network of groups within the Wexford electoral area which are currently (or have been) supported by WLD to engage in social inclusion work locally. WACT encompasses the RAPID Community Team (the community participation mechanism for the RAPID programme in Wexford town) as well as communities of interest such as the Co. Wexford Age Equality Network and the Wexford Disability Working Group.

**Communities of interest** are organised to varying levels within the county, with some LCDP beneficiary groups having no formal structure. There are strong levels of organisation within the **disability** sector with a range of national actors having a local presence in Wexford. The **Wexford Disability Working Group** is a network involving many of these groups which was involved in the delivery of LDSIP locally. **Older people** have received consistent developmental support under the LCDP and its predecessors the LDSIP and Community Development Programme resulting in a strong county-wide network - the Co. Wexford Age Equality Network - made up of thirty active, self-directed groups. The network secured funding from Age and Opportunity in 2009 to set up the Get Vocal project which seeks to strengthen the voice of older people in the County.

**Wexford Traveller Network** was established with the support of Wexford Traveller Inter-Agency Group but is currently experiencing challenges in maintaining and developing its work while **Gay Wexford** is a representative group for the LGBT community which is also endeavouring to expand its membership and reach at present with the support of WLD. The **South-East Men's Network** works to increase the participation and social inclusion of men throughout the region while **Access 2000 CDP** works with disadvantaged women. There is a range of groups representing various nationalities from amongst the non-Irish national community.

The **County Wexford Community Forum**, with almost 600 member groups, provides a platform for community and voluntary groups to network, build linkages and become involved in decision making on

issues relating to the economic, social and cultural development of the County. The groups and Community Teams supported by WLD in the area of social inclusion are, by and large, registered with the Community Forum.

Although not strictly a programme based on Community Development principles, the **Community Services Programme** is a valuable support for many community based projects and social enterprises around the county. There are 18 projects in total, 5 in or close to Wexford town, 3 in Enniscorthy, 3 in New Ross with the remaining projects in Gorey, Fethard, the Hook, Kilmore Quay, Ramsgrange, Rosslare Strand and Kilmuckridge.

### **2.3.3 Description and Comment on Key Co-ordinating Structures**

#### **Wexford Local Development**

Wexford Local Development was formed in late 2008 as a result of a Government decision to amalgamate local development companies (Partnership Companies and Leader Companies) across the state. In Co. Wexford, three companies came together - County Wexford Partnership, Wexford Area Partnership and Wexford Organisation for Rural Development. Wexford Local Development (WLD) began trading on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009. The Board of Directors of WLD mirrors the Social Partnership structures at national level and comprises representatives of the following sectors: Local Government (5 representatives), Statutory Agencies (6 representatives - Department of Social Protection, FÁS, County Enterprise Board, Teagasc and Probation and Welfare and one current vacancy), Community and Voluntary Sector (8 representatives), Social Partners (4 representatives – ICTU, Employer/Business, ICMSA and IFA) and the Environmental Pillar (1 representative). The programmes and services of WLD fall into two major categories - Social Inclusion Programmes and Rural Development Programmes and are described in more detail in Appendix 1. WLD has offices in the four main county towns with the main office in Wexford town.

**Wexford County Development Board (CDB)** has 34 members drawn from local government, the state sector, local development agencies and the community and voluntary sector. The Community and Enterprise Department of Wexford County Council provides support to the CDB. WLD is represented on the Board of the CDB by the CEO and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The County Development Strategy includes an action plan based on Co. Wexford's priority needs with each action assigned to a 'lead' agency. The Board also monitors the work of the Economic Development Sub-Committee, Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, RAPID, the Traveller Inter-agency Group, Sports Active Wexford, Comhairle Na nÓg and Wexford County Childcare Committee.

The **Social Inclusion Measures Working Group** brings together the key agencies with a social inclusion brief across the County. The SIM Group advises the CDB on the prioritisation of social inclusion matters within the County and has a strong focus in the work of the CDB with regular reports at each meeting. WLD is represented on the SIM Group by the CEO.

The **RAPID** Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) is a Government initiative, which targets 51 of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. The Programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to the 51 designated areas by focusing State resources available

under the National Development Plan. In Co. Wexford there are two established RAPID areas, Wexford Town and New Ross Town. In 2009, parts of Enniscorthy town were also included in the RAPID programme. Wexford Local Development manages the RAPID community participation programme in Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross. The model of community engagement developed by Wexford Area Partnership in Wexford town has been recognised as a model of best practice for the programme nationally. A similar process, involving the establishment of local teams and a joint structure based on local consultation and involvement, has been underway in Enniscorthy since the town was included in the programme in 2009. WLD is represented on the three Area Implementation Teams.

The **South-East Regional Drugs Task Force (SERDTF)** is based in Waterford and covers the counties of Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary SR and Waterford. **Wexford Local Drugs Task Force** is a sub-group of the SERDTF. The original terms of reference of the Drugs Task Forces required them to assess the extent and nature of the drug problem in their areas and to develop and monitor the implementation of action plans to respond to the problem as identified. The Drugs Task Force's role is, to focus on the delivery of these objectives within a local/regional context. WLD has participated in a recent meeting convened by the SERDTF to review the representation of LDCs on this structure and also to consider the most effective means of securing community participation within the region.

**Wexford County Childcare Committee**, based in Enniscorthy, oversees the co-ordination, development and provision of childcare services within Co. Wexford including the administration of funding schemes which support the provision of childcare to parents who are on low incomes. Membership of the Board reflects key stakeholder groupings, agencies and statutory/voluntary bodies with a commitment to, and interest in, childcare development in Co. Wexford. Wexford Local Development is represented on the Board of the County Childcare Committee.

## 2.4 Summary of Conclusions from the Analysis of the Composite Area Profile

It is clear that the biggest challenge facing Wexford currently is the unemployment crisis. The county was heavily dependent on construction, manufacturing and services – sectors which have seen the most dramatic falls in employment since 2008. The impact of joblessness has reverberated throughout the community leading to greatly increased levels of stress, income poverty and personal indebtedness.

The geographic concentrations of disadvantage which persisted throughout the era of the Celtic Tiger remain. These areas include the **RAPID areas of Wexford town, Enniscorthy and New Ross, rural towns and villages including Taghmon, Ferns, Bunclody, Clonroche and Campile**. Many of these areas have associated levels of low educational attainment and anecdotal evidence indicates that it is unskilled young people and older workers who have borne the brunt of the sudden collapse of the building boom.

Other areas such as **Gorey town, Castlebridge** and the **Bridgetown/Kilmore Quay** area experienced a large growth in population since 2006 and WLD's work on the ground indicate significant levels of social exclusion in these communities as the impact of unemployment and the economic collapse becomes apparent.

In order to determine the relative priority to be accorded to LCDP target groups in Wexford, WLD has considered four criteria:

- A full analysis of the statistical data and local information gathered under the area profile and contained within Appendix 1;
- the prioritisation of outcomes and indicators at national level under the revised programme framework
- the main outcomes of the consultation with key stakeholders and beneficiary groups and
- an assessment of how the resources of the programme can be deployed with the greatest probability of a clear and measurable impact in the period to 2013 as required by programme guidelines.

This assessment is based on an analysis of the collective strengths, knowledge and experience of the company at present, as well as consideration of the supports and strategic relationships which exist in the wider environment such as the presence of other funding programmes and local and national policy priorities. In light of these four aspects therefore, the target groups which are considered to be **high priority** by WLD in the new strategic plan include the **long-term unemployed, lone parents, low income families, disadvantaged men, women and young people, Travellers, the LGBT community, substance misusers, offenders and homeless people.**

Long-term unemployed people and low income families as well as disadvantaged men, women and young people are at high risk of poverty and social exclusion as a result of the economic downturn – some are experiencing unemployment for the first time and preventative action is imperative for this group and for young unemployed people with low educational attainment in order to reduce the likelihood of long-term ‘scarring’ effects. Lone parents continue to suffer the effects of poverty disproportionately to other family types and remain a target group for activation by the DSP – a potential strategic partner in addressing the needs of this group.

WLD is already engaged in work with the Travelling community, who continue to experience severe exclusion and poverty in Wexford, and will seek to build on this work to achieve change for and with this community between 2011 and 2013. Substance misusers and the LGBT community are groups with which WLD has not had substantial engagement under LDSIP. However the active engagement of the Cornmarket Project and South-East Regional Drugs Task Force with substance misusers as well as the presence in the South-East region of LGBT Diversity (a three year support programme for the sector funded by Atlantic Philanthropies), BelongTo (the national LGBT youth development organisation) and increased policy initiatives within schools (such as the guidelines around homophobic bullying recently issued by the Department of Education and Skills) provide considerable flanking support for WLD to achieve change with and for these two target groups over the coming two years.

Social exclusion does not fall into neat packages and a high proportion of individuals with substance misuse issues are also involved in criminal behaviour and at risk of homelessness. Many are also young, male and unemployed. Recent legislative changes to encourage the greater use of Community Service Orders as a penalty for criminal offences<sup>28</sup> will also present challenges in local areas. The SERDTF has prioritised the Travelling community and LGBT people within its target group as communities at particular risk of substance misuse. WLD will therefore work with individuals experiencing extreme multiple exclusion and disadvantage in an inclusive manner and will advocate and model this holistic approach in its engagement with service providers and agencies locally under Goal One of LCDP in particular.

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<sup>28</sup> Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, March 2011

Older people and people with a disability will be considered medium priority on the basis of the considerable achievements of LDSIP and other initiatives in building infrastructure and services and increasing representation for these groups and the competing need to focus LCDP resources intensively on the rapidly increasing category of long-term unemployed people. WLD's work with older people in particular is now also supported under the Get Vocal programme, supported by Age and Opportunity and bears witness to a group who have worked steadily to progress to a point where they are actively seeking to lobby and influence policy at local and national level. WLD also provides support both directly and indirectly to older people through initiatives such as the Rural Transport Programme, Community Car Scheme, the WARM project and NRDP-funded training initiatives. There are a number of organisations representing and providing services to people with disabilities locally in Wexford. WLD will continue to seek to engage people with disabilities in education and work readiness initiatives, linking with advocacy groups locally and promoting access to and uptake of existing services.

Family carers, non-Irish nationals, refugees and asylum-seekers will also be considered medium priority on the basis that WLD has either had limited engagement with these groups heretofore or that the level of engagement has waned in comparison with previous years.

The category of the underemployed will be given a low priority in the plan deriving from clear messages about the higher priority to be accorded to long-term unemployed people by this programme and also the relatively low numbers of people falling into this category in Co. Wexford. WLD will seek to deepen the engagement of the NRDP with low income farm and fishing families in rural areas to continue to address the needs of this group and ensure the maintenance of a viable business where possible.

The target groups which are considered medium and low priority will continue to be supported within the programme, particularly through initiatives which are cross-community and targeting more than one beneficiary group such as local and area based community teams and networks, as well as within education and work readiness initiatives.

This hierarchy of need is in no way intended by WLD as an abnegation of the evident needs of the groups falling into the latter two categories, rather it is a pragmatic and necessary response to the new realities of restricted funding and a requirement to demonstrate the capacity of the LDC to target limited resources in the most effective way possible and in accordance with national priorities. The potential to form and capitalise on key strategic alliances with other actors, both statutory and non-governmental, in order to work towards the outcomes prioritised at national level under LCDP has been a key consideration in reaching this position.

In terms of service provision, and returning to the themes identified earlier in this section, WLD believes that LCDP in Wexford can best address the social inclusion needs in the County by focusing its resources as follows:

In the area of **welfare, information and advocacy**, WLD can interact with service providers to increase knowledge, awareness and uptake of services by LCDP target groups. In the area of **employment, training and enterprise**, WLD has identified gaps in provision of training at levels 3 and 4 for those who are most distanced from the labour market, a need for supportive and flexible training designed to keep those most at risk of the detrimental psychological impacts of long-term unemployment engaged in learning and work. This would include personal development courses, group supports and mentoring. Opportunities will also exist under the new Tús programme and other labour market schemes. Tracking progression through these and other initiatives will present another challenge. Facilitating more

effective coordination and design of training targeted at the long-term unemployed locally is another role which could be played by WLD under this plan – this could include online live databases and provider networks. Identifying and building on the strengths and knowledge of local communities will be another important strategy for WLD in connecting with and engaging long-term unemployed people. This could link to activities such as Men’s Shed-type initiatives, volunteering and others. WLD will continue to provide support to people interested in becoming self-employed and will focus an increased level of resources in this area.

In the area of **education and lifelong learning** WLD is aware of the impact of financial cut-backs on services which directly address educational disadvantage for groups such as Travellers and others. Deficits in information regarding levels of early school leaving and follow-up also present challenges to the successful delivery on outcomes identified under the national framework for LCDP. Nonetheless, WLD intends to build on successful models of informal after-school provision – working with local schools to link admission to these activities to school attendance – youth work, links with pre-school community providers in the most disadvantaged areas, transition programmes from primary to post-primary, homework and study supports, support for parents, literacy initiatives and community education.

The key areas for LCDP under **health and wellbeing** centre on increasing knowledge and uptake of services, linking with organisations working with substance misusers to provide a pathway to further opportunities for those who have successfully completed treatment and rehabilitation programmes, preventative work to promote positive mental health and wellbeing within communities, links to health promotion activities, active engagement of those experiencing exclusion in local community activity through outreach, one-to-one and group supports and recreational and social activities and finally targeting the participation of men in particular in such activities given the high levels of unemployment and stress experienced by this group.

Working with **children, young people and families**, WLD will prioritise the crucial importance of the early years of life, working to ensure that children in disadvantaged areas avail of the free pre-school year and that parents are supported in their own development. WLD will continue to work in the most disadvantaged communities to develop partnership approaches to youth work, involving young people themselves in assessing their needs and becoming aware of and engaged with their local community. Activities which bring young people out of their local areas and into contact with their peers from other localities also have a proven benefit in opening minds and building solidarity. Young LGBT people will have a safe place to discuss their issues through the provision of a dedicated youth service (in partnership with other agencies) thereby reducing the incidence of self-harm and early school leaving known to be related to this issue.

In the area of **housing, environment and planning**, WLD will work with communities to input to local authority development plans and assist them to develop and maintain community resources such as community buildings, recreational space and green areas. These are the assets upon which further social capital such as education and training activities can be built. In the area of **justice and community safety**, WLD will continue to work with communities supporting them to engage with other agencies and structures such as the Joint Policing Committees. WLD will also work closely with Youth Diversion Projects. The area of **culture and recreation** presents many opportunities for WLD to engage with LCDP target groups both in an educational way and also with a view to creating training and employment opportunities given the importance accorded this area by the CDB in its economic regeneration strategy.



The National **Rural Development** Programme represents a valuable opportunity for joint work with LCDP in the area of community development and also the provision of support for those who wish to become self-employed or engage in training. As the NRDP is now delivered and managed jointly with the LCDP by Wexford Local Development, this avenue should be actively pursued in the coming three years. WLD will therefore prioritise the further development of an integrated approach between LCDP and NRDP to strategically target WLD resources at those areas most in need of developmental support. The presence of the Rural **Transport** Programme in-house is also an important asset in targeting an issue often cited by LCDP target groups as a barrier to participation.

In the area of **Community Development**, WLD considers the following areas to be in greatest need of support under the new strategic plan: Designated areas within the three RAPID towns – Wexford (to varying degrees depending on local existing structures), Enniscorthy (as a recently-designated area) and New Ross, Ferns and Bunclody. Other areas with high levels of deprivation are nevertheless equipped with resources such as an FRC (in the case of Taghmon, Gorey town and Raheen/Clonroche) or a CDP (Campile/Kilmokea). To avoid duplication, these areas will be targeted for other supports such as education and training, building on links with existing community infrastructure.

Collaborative work to stimulate participation by LCDP groups in decision-making structures and wider social inclusion networks will also be supported in these areas. Ongoing work in Rosslare/Tagoat, Castlebridge and Kilmore Quay/Bridgetown where there are smaller but significant pockets of disadvantage will continue. This work will be predicated on engaging with LCDP target groups and building avenues for self-representation by these groups both within and beyond local and area-based structures.

Building the county-wide network of Community Teams in itself represents an important vehicle for achieving one of the aims of the LCDP namely developing, testing and implementing innovative approaches to social exclusion, facilitating joined-up thinking and approaches to specific issues at local level and documenting and learning from these initiatives. This work contributes directly to the bank of knowledge available to design better and more effective services and interventions to reduce social exclusion, address inequality and foster active and empowered communities. Put simply, developing an ongoing and mutually informative relationship with people and organisations in the most disadvantaged communities is the only way to know for sure if LCDP is doing its job in Wexford.

## **Section Three - The Process of Preparing the Plan**

### **3.1 Internal Review**

Prior to the cohesion process in 2009, the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, predecessor to LCDP, was delivered in Wexford by two organisations. Wexford Area Partnership operated in Wexford town and its rural hinterland while Co. Wexford Partnership worked in the remainder of the County. The process of reviewing work under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme therefore began separately in 2007.

In the Wexford area, the strategic review process (which included communities and target group representatives) concluded that the main strengths of LDSIP had been the capacity to engage with and include the most excluded groups, thereby increasing representation and influence locally as well as the provision of long-term and sustained support to communities permitting the development of local infrastructure both physical and human (e.g. development of FRCs in Taghmon and South End, the regeneration of Coolcotts Community Centre etc.). The weaknesses lay in the difficulty of communicating the work of social inclusion both to communities and to agencies as well as the difficulties in bringing about integrated working across agencies locally. Threats and opportunities fell broadly within the areas of working to change policy and sustaining voluntary inputs in the face of pressures within communities and also the pressure on local volunteers to draw down and manage resources to address issues in their local areas.

Wexford Local Development began the process of internal review in January 2011 with the discussion at Board level of the new LCDP and its implications for the social inclusion work carried out by the company. A Social Inclusion Focus Group comprising members of the Executive of the WLD Board and additional Board members was established on foot of this discussion and this group met on two occasions, in February and in March, to continue the process of strategic review, agree terms of reference for the strategic planning process itself and set the parameters for a company-wide analysis of the internal and external factors likely to have an impact on the delivery of LCDP in Wexford.

A company-wide internal review took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2011, engaging staff from the full range of programmes delivered by WLD and CDPs, the Chairman and members of the Executive and Board of WLD in a one-day workshop facilitated by WLD staff. WLD staff presented an overview of the new programme and the initial trends and issues emerging from the area profiling exercise. The review itself focused on the external factors affecting social inclusion in Wexford from a local, a national and indeed a global perspective utilising the 'steeple' framework (political, social, economic, technological, legal, equality and environmental issues) to assess the threats and opportunities confronting WLD in planning the delivery of LCDP in Wexford. This was followed by an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of WLD in relation to the task ahead, focusing in particular the following aspects of the organisation: people, skills, knowledge and experience, physical resources, structure, systems, style (accessibility, reach, engagement with stakeholders), strategy and innovation.

External issues identified through the 'steeple' analysis included the change of government (the workshop took place before the General Election) and mooted changes to policy, particularly in the area of employment services, welfare, education and training. The fiscal situation and economic crisis were

deemed to pose a significant challenge in terms of 'doing more with less' and communicating the impact of the work, particularly given Ireland's dependence on the EU/IMF bail-out programme to finance public expenditure. Budget 2011 had already introduced changes and increased costs as well as cutbacks in areas such as Traveller education supports.

The cohesion process itself was viewed as a significant challenge with the initial merger of LDCs being rapidly followed by the integration of CDPs, simultaneously with the introduction of the new LCDP. The return of mass unemployment and increasing rates of long-term unemployment will demand strategic and considered deployment of resources, particularly given the previous dependence in Co. Wexford on construction and services. High levels of personal indebtedness compound the difficulties faced by many of the unemployed and staff working with this group report extreme levels of stress, depression and personal distress amongst those coming to WLD for assistance. The knock-on effects of individual hardship on communities, many of which have struggled with poverty for years, are considerable. It was suggested that Wexford, with low levels of education and limited access to third level, is poorly positioned to rebound from the current crisis.

In planning a strategic response to these issues, those who participated in the review identified the the strengths and weaknesses of WLD as an organisation, as well as the opportunities and threats which exist in the external environment:

### ***Strengths***

- WLD staff are flexible, skilled, committed to social inclusion – the collective expertise and diverse experience and knowledge of staff is a significant asset in designing and delivering the new programme. The ability to work through a period of significant change throughout the two phases of cohesion/integration is testament to the resilience of staff.
- WLD and CDPs are closely linked to the most disadvantaged communities, with both types of organisation having many years of direct contact with these communities thereby establishing relationships based on trust and mutual respect. This is an invaluable asset in seeking to connect with and engage the most excluded people in our communities.
- WLD operates a diverse range of services and enjoys good relations with a wide range of agencies and service providers. These relationships have fostered collaborative work at local level and also led to the leveraging of significant additional funding into the County to complement the work of LDSIP/LCDP.
- WLD has a track record of innovation, borne out in the diverse range of projects and services developed over the years.

### ***Weaknesses***

- Social inclusion and anti-poverty work is difficult to explain and convey to a general audience but it is essential that the key messages about LCDP and WLD's role in pioneering responses to social exclusion locally are communicated to increase the level of awareness and understanding of the work in the broader community. To be effective, work to achieve social inclusion needs to focus on the mainstream structures, organisations, culture and practices which exclude LCDP target groups as well as on the groups themselves.
- WLD is still coping with the impact of cohesion particularly given the number of redundancies that resulted from cuts to funding. The company needs to define clear internal management structures for staff and programmes and implement uniform procedures. This will maintain a

clear focus on the client and the community as the central points of all work and will better equip the company to work through the rigours of the new LCDP and associated systems.

- There is a need to clearly delineate the work of WLD and not become 'sub-contractors' for other agencies – LCDP needs to demonstrate clearly the impact of its work.
- The fact that CDP integration has coincided with the introduction of LCDP has made it difficult for this process to happen in an optimal way – aside from the operational issues, the removal of CDP Voluntary Boards of Management's role in the direct management of the programme is a challenge to the need to maintain local and target group involvement in the decision-making structures supporting the programme.

### ***Opportunities***

- The range and depth of knowledge and expertise now available 'in house' in WLD present an opportunity for sharing of skills and training both internally and externally.
- There is an opportunity to review current structures and design new ones to engage LCDP target groups and CDP voluntary board of management members in WLD decision-making. This will allow for more effective programme design, monitoring and evaluation.
- The new Tús programme represents an opportunity to harness this resource and address social exclusion and poverty needs in the county in an integrated way.
- Cuts in mainstream services will give rise to gaps and barriers for LCDP target groups and will require WLD to develop innovative responses locally.

### ***Threats***

- Some socially excluded target groups may be 'displaced' by the sheer volume of people becoming long-term unemployed resulting in further marginalisation.
- The lack of firm direction on future policy regarding local development and social inclusion work creates an atmosphere of insecurity which makes it difficult to invest in local initiatives with the confidence required, particularly where work is innovative or pioneering.

## **3.2 External Consultation**

Wexford Local Development embarked on an intensive consultation process during the months of February and March 2011, encompassing meetings and workshops with community representatives (including LCDP target groups), statutory, community and voluntary providers of services, co-ordinating bodies and structures locally including RAPID area implementation teams, public representatives and social partners. In planning the consultation process, WLD identified key themes which were used to construct a framework for consultation. This framework was used in each consultation context, adapted to the participant group in every case thereby permitting a multi-faceted analysis of the key social exclusion issues in Wexford. The themes selected were

- Employment Supports, Training and Enterprise
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Community Development, Health and Wellbeing and
- Children and Young People

The main strategic findings and recommendations of the consultation process are summarised below, following an overview of the methodology and substance of the process itself.

**Community representatives and groups** were consulted primarily by means of four area-based workshops held in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey. LCDP beneficiary groups and organisations involved specifically in social inclusion work such as local RAPID community teams and organisations representative or inclusive of specific beneficiary groups were targeted for participation in these workshops to which invitations were issued by post. The workshops were advertised and promoted locally in RAPID areas and targeted areas of disadvantage as well as through local networks and community workers on the ground.

The workshops consisted of a presentation by WLD staff on the new programme and key issues emerging from the area profile of socio-economic needs followed by four fifteen minute small group discussions on each of the four themes with groups moving from 'theme to theme'. This allowed all of those present to contribute to a focused discussion of the key needs under each theme as well as to present ideas for potential responses to these needs. There were many common themes across the four areas as well as issues specific to each location which are detailed in Appendix 3.

In addition to the larger public meetings in each of the four districts, WLD consulted with local groups and networks supported by the company across the County drawn both from disadvantaged areas and communities of interest. Young people involved in projects directly supported by WLD took part in focus group discussions whilst other communities chose to avail of the option to complete an online survey on the WLD website. Member of CDP Voluntary Boards of Management and staff were also invited to participate in the area meetings. Open consultation days were also scheduled in each of the four WLD offices to afford community representatives an added opportunity to contribute their views however uptake of this option was minimal.

Unemployed participants in WLD training programmes and employment initiatives were consulted directly while the Cornmarket Steering Group (a multi-agency group with community representation) gathered and relayed the views and ideas of substance misusers and offenders and those who work with them in a rehabilitative capacity. Staff working with members of the Travelling community consulted informally and WLD also met with members of Wexford Traveller Network in February 2011 and encouraged members to engage in the LCDP consultation process which commenced shortly afterwards. Local organisations such as Gay Wexford, the Co. Wexford Age Equality Network and disability groups contributed directly both at community consultations and online.

In order to establish the views and priorities of **service providers** and gauge the potential for future joint work under LCDP, WLD invited agencies, community and voluntary providers and representatives of co-ordinating bodies to participate in a series of themed workshops on the four themes outlined above. In most cases, agencies and organisations were invited to participate in all four workshops but were encouraged to attend the workshop(s) of most relevance to their work and their current or potential linkages to LCDP. Key representatives who were not able to participate in these workshops were contacted and interviewed by telephone using the online survey designed for agencies and organisations on the WLD website. This option was widely publicised by WLD and utilised by a total of 15 organisations and groups.

**RAPID Area Implementation Teams** in Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross were consulted directly and at length by WLD staff teams who presented an overview of the new LCDP programme and framed discussion around the four themes identified earlier. However discussions at each AIT meeting tended to

focus on issues specific to the location in question. The outcomes of these discussions are summarised later in this section. WLD was invited to make a presentation to the **SIM Group** of Wexford CDB in early March at which a discussion of the LCDP and its implications for the coordination of social inclusion work in the county took place. This discussion was particularly relevant in light of the cohesion process which sees the preparation for the first time in Wexford of a comprehensive plan for social inclusion covering the entire county. **Public representatives** and **social partner representatives** also took part in a consultation meeting about LCDP. The **South-East Regional Drugs Task Force** initiated a regional consultation meeting with LDCs in the South-East at which WLD participated, while **LGBT Diversity** prepared a submission matching LGBT needs and issues as perceived by that programme with possible actions under the LCDP National Framework. The outcomes of both exercises have been incorporated into the framing of local priorities in Wexford.

## **Summary of Main Strategic Findings and Recommendations**

### ***Employment, Training and Enterprise***

There were several common themes amongst the needs identified under this theme by communities and by service providers. These included the severe effects of unemployment on men in particular as well as the difficulties faced by those who were self-employed. The impacts of unemployment which were highlighted in both consultations included stress, depression and income poverty. Youth unemployment was also of great concern. **Communities** focused on the barriers which exist to employment and training both for specific groups such as people with disabilities, including people with mental health issues, asylum seekers and lone parents, as well as the policy and 'supply' barriers which mean that there are insufficient training places and opportunities available in many parts of the County.

**Service providers** identified the need to educate people about FETAC and the significance of their qualifications. Low levels of training provision at Level 4 and Level 6 as well as the absence of a comprehensive system to track learners who move from course to course were also highlighted. The high incidence of people in their late 20s and early 30s who are becoming long-term unemployed was also noted by agencies. The Gorey area is poorly served in terms of youth training while New Ross does not have a FÁS centre. The FÁS representative present observed that many of the older long-term unemployed men who were previously employed on CE schemes no longer have the same access to this scheme. She also highlighted the needs of young adults living at home with parents who do not appear on the live register and whose needs are difficult to establish let alone address given that they fall outside the remit of many training schemes and progression routes.

Communities proposed a range of potential responses to these issues including linking unemployed people to opportunities for community involvement, increasing provision of men's social support and informal education projects and the development of training options that focus on re-skilling and lead to real employment opportunities, as well as work placements and work experience opportunities. Communities also called for more support for small businesses and those wishing to become self-employed as well as the potential to take action to increase local economic sustainability and develop social enterprise as an alternative form of employment. Communities proposed a greater focus on the

needs of groups who have difficulty in accessing employment and training opportunities or are experiencing unemployment for the first time, including the facilitation of access to support groups and services. Finally, it was felt that the unemployed have yet to 'find their voice' as a large and potentially influential community and lobby group.

Service providers and **elected representatives** largely echoed these ideas, reiterating the need for a focus on the considerable barrier posed by the 'scarring' effects of long-term unemployment such as depression and poor self-esteem. Service providers and agency representatives also emphasised the need to develop tailored training both for the needs of the individuals who are unemployed as well as to reflect potential growth areas in the local jobs market such as green energy, social care and childcare. Co. Wexford VEC highlighted the need for a co-ordinated strategy to address youth unemployment in the county and the introduction of initiatives such as the Jobs Sampling model in Waterford to enable young people to make informed career and education choices. A RAPID-style model of engagement in the Gorey area was also suggested to improve service delivery in this area. Members of the Cornmarket Project Steering Committee recommended the prioritisation of targeted access to education, training and work readiness opportunities for former substance misusers, offenders and homeless people, a call which was echoed by the South-East Regional Drugs Task Force consulting in the region with LDCs.

### ***Education and Lifelong Learning***

**Communities** highlighted a number of issues of concern in relation to the formal education system including early school leaving, pre-school education and the inaccessibility of higher education (high costs, location, insufficient places and other barriers). Many LCDP groups have negative perceptions/experience of the formal education system and the relevance of education is not prioritised in some families/communities. Communities prioritised the support and promotion of out-of-school supports such as after-school activities, homework clubs etc. The concept of lifelong learning was reflected in the desire to broaden the scope and understanding of education to include life skills and increase relevance to challenges faced in the 'real world'. Older people also requested more lifelong learning opportunities.

A number of responses were suggested by communities including increased provision of after schools activities, supports for parents, a greater focus on literacy and numeracy, a focus on the importance of the early years and the prevention of early school leaving as well as the need to work with those who have recently left school early. Communities also expressed a need for a broad range of educational opportunities including vocational training and lifelong learning initiatives that go beyond the 'traditional education' sphere, including community education. The need to increase not only access to but also attainment within further and third level education was also stressed. Groups such as young Travellers and their families require specialised support while a general need to collate local information and highlight gaps and possibilities for new initiatives was also emphasised.

Representatives of **agencies and services providers** at the thematic consultation workshop echoed many of the issues described above particularly around school retention and access to higher and further education. In addition there were calls to maintain supports for community education supported by the VEC (levels 1 - 4) as well as the personal effectiveness and personal development components of programmes for those not yet ready to embark on accredited training. Service providers noted that

despite the availability of the free pre-school year, uptake of this scheme amongst the groups who would benefit from it most is less than it should be as financial and access issues are still at play.

The thematic workshop also recommended a more imaginative approach to education and lifelong learning and the potential for inter-generational projects. The need for support for parents was also stressed. The financial costs of returning to education were seen as off-putting for many people who are unemployed and the spectre of debt and worry overshadows many of the choices and options being considered by those who are out of work in particular. Wexford Campus of Carlow IT noted the inadequacy of financial supports as an issue faced by its students in an online submission. The scarcity of jobs means that many people are looking to training and education not only as a means to an end but also as a way of offsetting some of the negative effects of being unemployed such as isolation, loss of skills and low self-confidence.

### ***Children and Young People***

**Communities** identified a number of issues of concern under this theme including uneven provision of services across geographic areas, the prevalence of risky and or/harmful behaviours and attitudes amongst young people and the negative perceptions of young people which exist in the broader community. It was felt that there is a need to counteract this and promote active citizenship and community involvement by young people as well as a need to provide adequate facilities and spaces for children and young people in a child and young people-friendly environment. Many children and young people are negatively affected by increasing levels of stress within families and are fearful of the future. There is also a need to support and include children with particular needs including those with disabilities.

Potential responses identified by communities included the development of innovative responses to the needs of young people at community level, the development of safe spaces to play and hang out, the provision of support to parents who in turn will support their children and the introduction of activities to promote healthy development for young people and their families.

**Young people** themselves highlighted the issues of drugs and alcohol, early school leaving and sexual activity as being of concern to them. They called for access to better quality facilities and activities, particularly at weekends and stated that relationships with the Gardaí and teachers were often problematic. Transport, especially at the weekends, was also deemed to be an issue. The consultation with young people also included discussions with **project leaders** who emphasised that children and young people need a safe and suitable place, to be listened to, a place of their own, to socialise and do activities. They need structure in their groups and to feel part of the community and other wider networks. They identified several gaps in services including activities for those who are not 'joiners', bigger premises, improved leisure facilities, early school leaver supports and increased efforts to connect effectively with young people at risk.

**Service providers and agency representatives** who attended the thematic workshop raised a number of issues in relation to this topic including the impact of the loss of pre-school supports for Travellers as well as dedicated teaching posts, the gap in provision for 14 -16 year old early school leavers, unmet mental health needs, insufficient youth work provision, youth homelessness and the many cracks



through which young people are falling at present. Those present emphasised the need to engage with parents. Models of good practice such as youth cafes, use of local libraries and community arts opportunities were all highlighted as potential responses to these issues. The need for effective Garda Vetting procedures as well as child protection training was also highlighted.

Co. Wexford VEC made a detailed submission to the plan based on their extensive recent research on youth needs in the county. Key recommendations included the need for a dedicated transport strategy for young people to access services and other opportunities, the need for a county-wide youth unemployment strategy, the need for inter-agency work to develop new initiatives and increase uptake of services often perceived by young people as being for 'adults only', programmes to address bullying and aggression and sexual health, dedicated support for young Travellers and young LGBT people, early intervention strategies and 'pre-counselling' support in community settings and promotion of a more seamless delivery of initiatives and services across the 'life cycle' building links between activities for children, youth work, education and entry to the workplace

### ***Community Development, Health and Wellbeing***

**Community representatives** were keen that volunteers be listened to, valued and supported. They described how diminishing resources are placing pressure on communities who experience unequal access to basic services depending on location. The value of recreational and community facilities, access to education and access to employment in promoting health were also emphasised. There is a common theme of information deficits across all four themes with low levels of awareness, over-complicated structures and lack of confidence in seeking advice or information on the part of LCDP target groups in particular.

Potential responses included continued support in continuing to build strong communities and provide support for volunteers, the development of innovative ways of spreading information, the identification and development of low/no cost activities and efforts to sustain and develop community buildings and facilities. Communities want to continue to engage in lobbying and participate in decision-making and see themselves as vehicle for greater inclusion as well as the promotion of better physical and mental health.

A range of **service providers, community organisations including CDPs and agencies** participated in a thematic workshop on this subject which identified a range of issues, service gaps and opportunities. At a strategic level the need for increased networking was identified with the aim of sharing information and knowledge and avoiding duplication. The possibility of further developing directories of services such as that produced in New Ross was also mooted. The need to focus resources and prioritise in the current budgetary context was also emphasised. It was felt that policy change should be a priority across all four goals. This is in contrast to the apparent low priority accorded to advocacy and community development support in LCDP framework. The need to strike a workable balance between reporting on work and actually doing it was also expressed.

Issues and target groups specifically identified included mental health and the increase in suicide – there was a call for more support groups, education, more effective promotion of mental health support services and the provision of affordable counselling. Obesity, and the need to promote physical activity

and its benefits, was also mentioned and the success of the partnership approach was highlighted. Fuel and income poverty and rural disadvantage were raised as issues while the absence of a needle exchange in Wexford highlights the need for greater community engagement on the issues of substance misuse, linking to local and regional drugs task forces.

Groups which were mentioned specifically included the growing population of older people, Travellers and the need to maintain existing WLD work, mental health issues and isolation experienced by asylum seekers, the needs of people with disabilities and men aged 25 to 50 and the reduction in school supports which has increased potential for educational disadvantage amongst young people as well as gaps in services for Family Carers, a theme echoed in an online submission from the Alzheimers Society of Ireland.

### ***Additional consultation outcomes***

Public representatives stressed the importance of community support for those experiencing hardship as a result of unemployment and poverty, particularly for people unused to coping on a low income who may also have high levels of debt. Social partner representatives highlighted similar issues and also drew attention to issues of rural disadvantage in the County.

Members of the Cornmarket Project Steering Committee, consulted directly, recommended the prioritisation of rehabilitation and reintegration pathways available for former substance misusers, offenders and ex-offenders and homeless people in Wexford, building on existing work. The group also called for the development of a dedicated methadone service and adequate drug treatment facilities generally for those who wish to move away from addiction.

In online submissions from both Gay Wexford and LGBT Diversity the need to build the capacity of the LGBT community to advocate for improved visibility, service delivery and safety was a recurring theme. Early intervention with young people at risk of leaving school early due to struggles with their LGBT identify was also called for.

Online submissions from Wexford MABS and the Senior Health Promotion Officer with the HSE in Wexford highlighted the need for support for those struggling with debt and poverty – practical suggestions included education initiatives focusing on ‘life skills’ including budgeting, healthier living, parenting and access to services. Grow Community Mental Health highlighted the training programme that they are providing in community settings to promote positive mental health in response to the increase in numbers presenting to their service.

Wexford Public Library Service in an online submission highlighted the need for IT literacy and information research skills and drew attention to the needs of the ‘new poor’ coping with unemployment and debt and uncertainty about where to turn for information and support. Another submission from Buí Bolg, a community arts organisation, highlighted the value of the arts in promoting social inclusion, particularly for young people. Clonroche Development Association also made an online submission highlighting the need for community facilities within their local community as a means to achieve other goals. The Presentation Secondary School in Wexford in its online submission drew attention to the issues of increasing family instability and financial difficulties which are increasing levels of educational disadvantage as availability and uptake of relevant supports declines.

## **Issues identified by RAPID AITs in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy**

### **Wexford**

The AIT in Wexford debated the level of representation of urban areas within the current WLD Board of Directors. The prioritisation at local level of additional local authority estates currently outside the RAPID boundaries was also raised. Discussion then moved to community involvement. The current participation model was deemed to be a success but the question of how best to support representatives and volunteers remains, particularly given the decline in opportunities for core funding such as that provided under the FRC programme. The need to develop/maintain community facilities was highlighted as well as the value of inter-agency responses to specific issues affecting LCDP groups.

A sub-group established to look at the needs of young people concluded that the 20 – 24 year old age group is a gap area in terms of service provision and highlighted the situation of ‘successful’ early school leavers who have disengaged completely from mainstream education. Mental health issues came up amongst 16-18 year olds and a general comment was made that the work should be linked to the recent VEC survey of needs in the county. DSP and FAS representatives proposed that there be an audit of job opportunities and training courses in the County in order to plan and deliver realistic training supports and also that we should seek to build on the strong enterprise culture which exists in Wexford. The AIT Garda representative believes that the reduction in Garda numbers will be a challenge. Community policing services, youth diversion projects and drug liaison officers are important links into work in RAPID areas. The HSE is actively promoting mental health services and prioritising young people’s mental health, health promotion and substance misuse prevention – the agency is working through existing social inclusion structures but does not have a seat on the board of directors of WLD.

### **Enniscorthy**

The AIT in Enniscorthy commenced work in 2010 following the designation of certain parts of the town as RAPID areas. An initial priority has been to develop a comprehensive audit and directory of local services. The value of collaborative work was also noted however the absence of key agencies on the AIT represents a potential barrier to achieving this. The language of social exclusion and poverty itself was deemed to be off-putting. Although communities are increasingly motivated, it has been a challenge to engage with local people and groups in the designated areas and the maintenance of LCDP support to the area was called for. Representatives spoke about a perceived disconnect between communities and the local authority in terms of getting ‘small things done’. Issues such as litter and dumping are of concern. Information provision was highlighted yet again and a range of options were discussed including the training of community volunteers to complement the work of over-stretched local services.

The needs of young people came to the fore in discussions with a focus on poor mental health, anti-social behaviour, substance and alcohol misuse and a perceived lack of opportunities and facilities for this group. There is also a higher than average percentage of young people with learning disabilities including autism and ADHD in Enniscorthy – the HSE is seeking to address these needs through early intervention schemes and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The availability of psychological assessments under NEPS is insufficient and parents require support to prevent their children leaving school early.

Depression and suicide are affecting a widening group as a result of the huge increase in unemployment and the lack of sufficient support services for those in crisis – again a ‘joined up’ response was called for. The needs of the Travelling community were highlighted also – the HSE is commencing outreach work with young Traveller men in the Drumgoold area. The population of non-Irish nationals living locally was also noted in relation to possible needs arising with this group. Finally access to transport was also mentioned as an issue in this area.

### **New Ross**

Discussions with members of the AIT in New Ross raised the need for greater community involvement in the process locally and the RAPID Co-ordinator called for the introduction of the ‘Community Team’ model of engagement pioneered in Wexford to be extended to New Ross to secure greater involvement by groups on the ground. The AIT called for the prioritisation of LCDP resources to particular currently under-served areas within New Ross.

The value of inter-agency working was acknowledged by all present and a recent successful initiative to develop a Family Support Strategy for the town was cited. This strategy highlighted a number of issues including the gap in service provision for 18-21 year olds, the support needs of young parents and one parent families, the need for recreational opportunities for children and young people as well as the potential of partnership working to maximise the impact of diminishing resources locally. A shared understanding of and vision for social inclusion locally would be helpful in this regard.

Mental health needs were highlighted in New Ross – local services are limited, particularly for young people. The RAPID Health Sub Group is conducting an audit of mental health needs, focusing on the needs of 11 – 25 year olds and the over 65s. Substance misuse is a significant issue in New Ross – the success of the Cornmarket outreach was noted, however the need for greater co-ordination and communication between Cornmarket and other local services was stressed by AIT members. There is a perception that Traveller work has ‘fallen off the agenda’ in New Ross and the needs of younger members of the community in particular were highlighted. The AIT was also keen to work with the LGBT community and develop initiatives such as visibility campaigns, awareness training and youth work in the town.

Access to training and employment supports locally was perceived to be poor. There were calls for a Network for Employment-style initiative, similar to those operating under LCDP in Wexford and Enniscorthy since 2010, to be extended to New Ross. Lack of transport is another barrier to uptake of training and education opportunities. One of the consequences of the integration of New Ross CDP with WLD may be the loss of the community building occupied by the project and the activities and services associated with this building. The importance of a dedicated community resource centre was emphasised in order to have a fixed point for delivery of services, contact with excluded groups and stability for those on the margins of society. WLD is working on a feasibility study for a local community building and the AIT called for the completion of this work as soon as possible to facilitate progress on this initiative. The progression of the Men’s Shed initiative was another priority for WLD to address.

### **3.3 Internal Process for Finalising the Strategic Plan**

The involvement of the entire team of LCDP staff in WLD in the internal review, organisation, planning and delivery of the community consultations and themed workshops has contributed to a shared understanding and increased knowledge within the company of the issues currently facing communities who are experiencing social exclusion and poverty in Wexford. Staff who are working on the ground are well placed to assess the issues which have most significant impact on social inclusion and the reduction of poverty in Wexford. The coordination of the ongoing work of LCDP at district level as well as the organisation of the community consultation process on this basis has allowed for focused discussion in specific areas alongside a county-wide sharing of perspectives and challenges.

Following the initial presentation to WLD Board on the new LCDP, programme managers met in early February to assess the work involved in preparing the strategic plan. The Programme Manager who had made the presentation to the Board assumed the work of co-ordinating work on the plan and drafted terms of reference for the process, designing the consultation process and commencing research on the area profile. Various staff members inputted into the area profile, particularly in the area of beneficiary group profiles.

The WLD Board Social Inclusion Focus Group met in February. The meeting was facilitated by the Programme Manager co-ordinating the process who presented the draft terms of reference. WLD programme managers (both LCDP and non-LCDP) participated in a further meeting in March with members of the Social Inclusion Focus Group of WLD Board to begin formally the process of establishing the priority needs in Wexford and potential strategic responses by WLD. This meeting focused on the particular issues presented by LCDP in the county but also went beyond this to look at the place of social inclusion work within WLD and its alignment with other key programmes such as NRDP and LES. As all programmes ultimately serve the same communities, albeit with some differences of focus, it was acknowledged that the development of a coherent company-wide strategy for tackling social exclusion in the county encompassing all of the key programmes delivered by LCDP must also be prioritised.

WLD programme managers met on three occasions in May 2011, firstly to consider and agree priorities based on evidence garnered through the analysis of the composite area profile, secondly to review the draft analysis of this profile and fine-tune the rationale to be used at the third meeting which focused on the development of local objective statements forming the bedrock of the strategic plan itself. Members of WLD Board of Directors met with the CEO and Programme Managers on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June to agree priorities, finalise the local objective statements and address issues raised by other sections of the plan, paving the way for the endorsement of the plan by the SIM Group on behalf of the CDB on June 17<sup>th</sup> and the formal adoption of the plan by the Board of Directors of Wexford Local Development on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June.

## Section Four – Setting Local Objectives

Results from the review and consultation process in Wexford have established that considerable progress has been made in social inclusion work under LDSIP/LCDP relation to:

*Building community infrastructure and organisational capacity:* While some areas have progressed more than others in this respect, it is clear that the establishment of a range of community-based projects, structures and initiatives in Wexford (coordinated locally by ‘community teams’) has been the direct result of LDC support and intervention. This is also true in respect of capacity building as it relates to ‘communities of interest’ as well as geographically defined communities (people with disability and older people providing some of the more notable examples).

*Building joint understanding and co-operative structures:* The ongoing existence of Wexford Area Community Team, agreement reached on the Community Manifesto in 2007, and community participation levels in jointly-organised conferences/events all point to significant progress being made in the task of linking people, communities and development challenges.

*Influencing policy and practice:* Progress here is also evident across a range of programmes, policies and plans – and is, arguably, closely linked to success in building unity and joint understanding (above). Some of the more obvious indicators of this are to be found in the particularly strong role played by community in the RAPID programme; strategic working alliances formed between mainstream service providers and community interests (for example in drugs-related and educational initiatives); and community input into development plans. It is also important to acknowledge the increased capacity afforded to WLD itself in building alliances, influencing policy etc. – coming out of the strength of its ‘constituency’, and ongoing links to community.

It is clear that this degree of progress has been possible because of the particular focus that has been maintained on ‘the community’ as the central organisational concept for all WLD actions and programmes. The focus has been on:

- Building the capacity of community-based organisations (‘community teams’) to identify and respond effectively to the needs of the most excluded in their areas.
- Developing partnership-based services and programmes in response to the needs identified.
- Strengthening new and existing organisations in their efforts to co-operate with each other, with partnership structures, and with mainstream service providers and policy-makers.

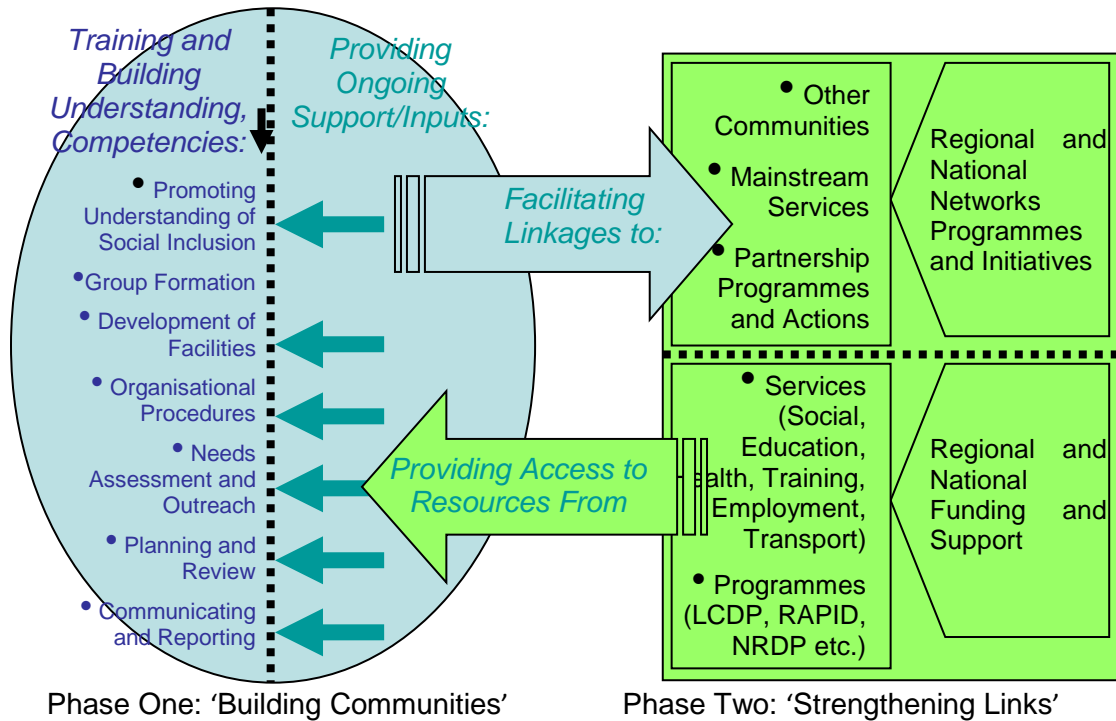
The most significant strengths moving forward are therefore in:

- The capacity of these community teams to continue to engage with, and represent the interests of, the most excluded.
- The range of effective working relationships between community teams and statutory agencies – most importantly to the extent that this can guarantee the allocation of resources and services to those who are in most need of them.

Building on these strengths over the coming years will depend upon the WLD’s capacity to maintain and expand this approach to social inclusion. Understanding the working ‘model’, and being able to

demonstrate and measure its benefits, is therefore of fundamental importance in providing the basis for a new strategic plan. Figure X below summarises the main elements of the model.

Figure X: Main Elements of the ‘Community Team’ Model



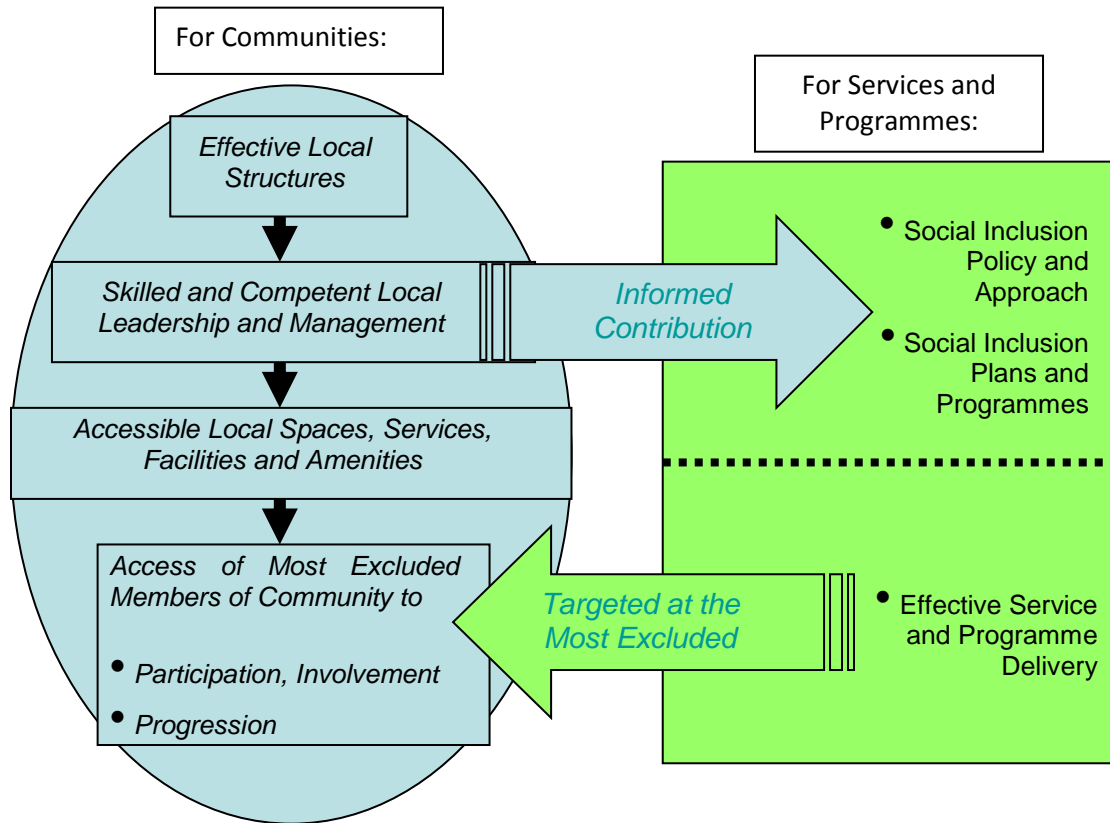
A large proportion of overall effort and resources has been, and will continue to be, invested in training and support for groups and individuals in disadvantaged areas. This is undertaken with the initial intention of increasing understanding and awareness in communities about social exclusion and ways of addressing it. It continues with ongoing support for people in efforts to develop their organisational structures, understand the needs of and involve their ‘target groups’, develop facilities, plan, review and communicate their activities. Time commitment to particular groups or communities<sup>29</sup> is therefore ‘front-loaded’ to some extent – in the sense that considerably more time and effort is required in areas and with groups where there are little or no existing organisational activity. Conversely, less support time is required for those areas and organisations where strong and autonomous organisations have developed. Contact with and support to all organisations is, nevertheless, ongoing. This allows for:

- Facilitation of linkages between organisations representing the most excluded and mainstream service providers.
- Facilitation of linkages amongst community-based and interest-based organisations.
- The development of particular service and programme responses (informed by needs identified by community teams and organisations on an ongoing basis, and delivered in partnership with the relevant statutory agencies)
- Connecting community teams and organisations with opportunities to access resources and to influence policy through locally-based and national programmes.

<sup>29</sup> The process or model is the same for communities of interest who are excluded (for example people with a disability, one parent families, LGBT community etc.) as it is for geographic-based communities.

The review of social inclusion work under the LDSIP has highlighted some of the benefits associated with this approach to the work. Figure Y below summarises these, relating to both the community and the broader policy and programme environment.

Figure Y: Summary of Benefits Associated with the 'Community Team' Model:



Within communities the most important outcome can be measured in the extent to which more excluded members of the community are able to participate and to access services and opportunities for progression – very much dependent upon these services and opportunities being locally accessible. Those programmes aiming to tackle social exclusion also benefit – in that well-informed and representative local teams/organisations can make positive contributions to how they are planned and implemented. This has been the case in relation to the RAPID Programme, local authority development plans and the LDSIP/LCDP itself. Equally, services intended to assist the most excluded are facilitated in achieving this goal through ongoing working relationships with locally-based and representative groups or 'community teams'. Work under the eight local objective statements identified by WLD will therefore be characterised by a strong community development approach, thereby differentiating LDC work from that of mainstream service providers but also facilitating better connections between those providers and the target groups of LCDP, rooted in the communities and areas where they live.



## ***Local Objective Statement One***

**To work with service providers and local communities in the most disadvantaged areas of Co. Wexford to develop joint initiatives which will increase awareness, knowledge and uptake of services by LCDP target groups by 2013.**

Goal 1	Promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services.
Rationale	<p>Socially excluded groups and communities experience many barriers including lack of awareness and consequently low uptake of services which could play a role in bringing about greater inclusion. In Wexford, consultation with people who are unemployed highlighted difficulty in accessing information about entitlements, training and education and labour market opportunities. Other groups such as Travellers and substance misusers have difficulty in accessing an even broader range of services.</p> <p>The need for greater co-ordination and information sharing between service providers has emerged in consultations with agencies and communities relating to specific areas such as training, health and information services and particular groups including unemployed people, young people, lone parents, Travellers, LGBT people and substance misusers and homeless people. The need to develop more innovative responses to gaps in services and/or improve service delivery on the ground has also been highlighted throughout the consultation process. WLD, with extensive links with communities and agencies is well-placed to address these needs and, in undertaking this work, will focus on the geographic areas and LCDP groups prioritised in Section 2.4.</p>
Financial Cost	€ 101,424
Partners	CIC, MABS, FAS, DSP, SERDTF, HSE, Wexford Local Authorities, CDB, RAPID AITs, Homelessness Action Team, Probation Service
List of actions/ role in Key Planning and Policy Structures	<p>The following actions will be targeted at the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, with a particular focus on RAPID areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborative research with key service providers to identify areas of need and barriers experienced by priority target groups and areas.</li> <li>2. Development of referral and follow-up mechanisms and data-capture systems both within WLD and with other service providers.</li> <li>3. Information seminars and workshops tailored to the needs of particular groups and areas.</li> <li>4. Localised service directories and community websites.</li> <li>5. Provision of outreach, technical support and funding advice to communities and groups experiencing high levels of disadvantage.</li> <li>6. Development of joint initiatives to address the service needs of young unemployed people, LGBT community, substance misusers, offenders and homeless people.</li> </ol> <p>WLD will use its participation in the County Development Board, Social Inclusion Measures</p>

	<p>Group, the SERDTF (via a regional representative for LDCs), and on RAPID AITs to research the service needs of LCDP groups, identify priorities and develop joint initiatives with service providers and communities to address priority needs and evaluate the impact of LCDP-supported work through ongoing dialogue with providers and communities. Actions under this objective statement support the achievement of Action 1.1 ('Develop a coordinated plan for services for the unemployed'), Action 4 ('Develop a service integration model – WLD and Wexford County Council') and Action 9 ('Community Support Programme to positively promote mental health and well-being') of the CDB Action for Change Strategy 2009 – 2013.</p>
<p>Expected National Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased awareness, knowledge and uptake of a range of services.</li> <li>▪ Increased and improved joint planning and delivery between local service providers.</li> </ul>
<p>Expected Indicators of Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of LDC Clients' uptake of specified services.</li> <li>▪ Strategy in place between providers showing (for example) in the medium to long term:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduced duplication</li> <li>○ More cost effective provision</li> <li>○ Shorter lead times for action</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Level of resources leveraged from other organisations (direct and indirect) to deliver social inclusion activities and amount of funding channelled via LDC on behalf of community and voluntary groups.</li> </ul>
<p>Baseline Position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While difficulties in accessing services were highlighted during the consultation process in relation to a number of groups including unemployed people, Travellers, disadvantaged young people and substance misusers and offenders, more detailed research will be needed to assess the exact baseline position and levels of need across the range of priority groups and areas.</li> <li>▪ Considerable work has already been undertaken within Co. Wexford by a variety of agencies working together to tackle particular issues related to social exclusion. An initial baseline study would scope the extent and current validity of this work, relating it to the needs of the priority groups and areas identified by WLD as identified in Section 2.4, providing a clear starting point for further work to be undertaken under Goal 1 up to 2013.</li> <li>▪ WLD has consistently supported target communities and groups to access external funding and resources from a variety of statutory and philanthropic sources – this work will be benchmarked as part of this exercise to determine the additional value of work done under LCDP up to 2013.</li> </ul>
<p>Local Objective Statement Target</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2,500 individuals taking up services as a result of research to identify needs and resulting actions.</li> <li>2. Referral and data-capture system developed and in place to monitor increased levels of service uptake as a result of WLD intervention via LCDP.</li> <li>3. 600 individuals participating in information seminars.</li> <li>4. 2 directories of services compiled and 4 community websites set up.</li> <li>5. 60 groups/networks/teams supported to access external funding. 500 individuals engaged through outreach work.</li> <li>6. 5 joint initiatives/local strategies in place with service providers.</li> </ol>

## Local Objective Statement Two

**To work with providers and communities to increase awareness and uptake of formal educational opportunities by LCDP priority target groups in Co. Wexford by 2013.**

Goal 2	Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources.
Rationale	Traditionally Co. Wexford has had very low levels of educational attainment at post-primary level with low levels of progression to 3 <sup>rd</sup> level and further education. Historically this has been linked to the reliance on low-skilled/service based industries in Co Wexford and more recently the demise of the construction industry. Co. Wexford has DEIS designated disadvantaged education status in all seven VEC schools and two community schools. Participants from the stakeholder consultation process consistently highlighted the need for additional supports to address educational needs as a priority in tackling social exclusion. Recent cuts in educational supports, including VTT, Resource & HSCL Teachers as well as SNA and resource hours, have created further obstacles to greater levels of educational inclusion in Co. Wexford.
Financial Costs	€ 178,430
Partners	Co. Wexford VEC, SCP, HSCL, RAPID AITs and Sub-Groups
List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures	<p>The following actions will be targeted at areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy and will build on partnerships with DEIS schools and related initiatives in these areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Headstart Programme:</b> A pre-primary to primary education evidence based transfer initiative which originated in the US in 1965 to assist and prepare children for the transfer to primary education. It aims to close the gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the education system at the same levels as their peers and to establish familiarity with the main concepts and ideas of the formal education system for the children and their families so as to optimise their chances of success in the education system.</li> <li>2. <b>Magic programme:</b> A primary to post primary education transfer programme designed by Wexford Local Development to promote positive self esteem, confidence and general readiness for 6<sup>th</sup> class students transferring from primary school to post primary school. The programme is an eight week modular programme delivered in schools in small groups with a maximum of 10 students per group by trained facilitators and staff of WLD. The MAGIC programme addresses issues related to bullying, familiarity with post-primary education, changes during the transition, expectations and the importance of staying in the education system promoting educational attainment levels.</li> <li>3. <b>Anti-bullying Programme:</b> Modular anti -bullying programme which runs in 2 schools in Co. Wexford during the SPHE class time. 4 week programme focusing on types of bullying, strategies to cope with bullying, cyber bullying and reflective work on "Am I a bully?". Programme is three-pronged and works with 1st and 2nd year students, parents and teachers.</li> </ol>

	<p>4. <b>Meitheal:</b> Recruitment and training of senior 2nd level students to mentor 1st year students in their school thereby providing support and affording the opportunity of an initial positive experience of 2nd level and contributing towards the promotion of positive experience of education and promotion of retention in formal education system.</p> <p>5. <b>Wexford Education Network:</b> is a local education network comprised of representation from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, parents, schools and pre-schools. Wexford Education Network was originally set up to address the causes and consequences of early school leaving in the Wexford town area. WEN has now expanded to a county-wide base. WEN runs a number of information sessions, a learning fair, parenting seminars and in-school programmes and promotes positive engagement and positive retention approaches in the education system.</p> <p>6. <b>Leaving Certificate Group Grinds Programme</b> in priority areas of disadvantage, including RAPID areas. Targeted programme to enhance disadvantaged students' abilities to optimise educational attainment levels at Leaving Certificate level in Irish, Maths and French.</p> <p>7. <b>WLD Financial Supports for progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level and further education:</b> Financial supports for students (Post Leaving Cert &amp; Mature Adult Learners) accessing further and third level education courses.</p> <p>WLD will continue to engage with local management groups for School Completion Programmes and the National Education Welfare Board in the county to promote positive retention within the formal education system. WLD will also work on local RAPID AITs to increase awareness of educational disadvantage and develop appropriate responses. Wexford Education Network is a long-established structure supported by WLD which will continue to promote inter-agency and community responses to educational disadvantage.</p>
Expected National Outcomes	Increased awareness and uptake of formal educational opportunities for children, young people and adults.
Expected indicators of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number and percentage of people participating in LDC supported educational activities over a 12 month period.</li> <li>▪ Number and percentage of young people supported by LDCs with improved school attendance.</li> <li>▪ Uptake of specified educational activities supported by the LDC.</li> <li>▪ Number and percentage of people supported by LDCs who enroll in accredited post-compulsory education or training.</li> </ul>
Baseline Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Levels of educational attainment in Co. Wexford are low – the proportion of the adult population with primary level education only fell from 40.2% in 1991 to 22.4% in 2006. At 21.5% Wexford has the lowest proportion of adults with a third level qualification, the national average being 30.5%.</li> <li>▪ There are 5 School Completion Programmes in Co. Wexford. All 7 VEC Schools and 2 large community schools are included in School Completion Programme indicating designated educational disadvantaged status in the four main urban centres and in 4 rural education hubs in Co. Wexford.</li> <li>▪ WLD will continue to work with education providers through Wexford Education Network, and community structures to increase access to</li> </ul>

	<p>educational resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLD works to increase access at pre-primary level through the Headstart Programme, at primary and secondary level through transition programmes and at third level through supports to disadvantaged third level students.</li> <li>▪ The withdrawal of the Millennium grant has left many students unable to continue in their course or struggling to continue. This is evidenced through consultation with clients through LES one-to-one mediation, Wexford Education Network seminars and contact with clients expressing frustration at the lack of funding. Consultations with Wexford Campus, Carlow IT and with PLC providers in the county would indicate that many students are struggling financially to continue or to maintain themselves through a course.</li> </ul>
Local Objective Statement Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 25 Higher and Further education participants/students per annum (75 in total) supported to participate in further and higher education in Co. Wexford.</li> <li>▪ 400 (1200 in total) post primary students per annum supported in formal education through a bully-free environment in schools.</li> <li>▪ 235 Meitheal Leaders per annum trained to implement Meitheal programme with 1800 first year students (total no. of young people including Meitheal leaders and first years= 2505) in 21 post primary schools in Co. Wexford.</li> <li>▪ 3 Education Seminars engaging parents, practitioners, students and strategic partners.</li> <li>▪ 250 students supported to complete Leaving Certificate through group grinds programme.</li> <li>▪ 300 pre primary students prepared for transfer from pre primary to primary education.</li> <li>▪ 600 6<sup>th</sup> class students supported during the transition from primary to post primary schools through the MAGIC programme.</li> </ul>

***Local Objective Statement Three***

**To work with providers and communities to increase awareness and uptake of informal educational opportunities by LCDP priority target groups in Co. Wexford by 2013.**

Goal 2	Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources.
Rationale	Many of the issues alluded to in the rationale for Local Objective Statement 2 (above) also support the provision of informal educational, recreational and cultural activities to increase educational attainment and increase engagement with learning across the life-cycle. The evidence-based activities described in the actions below are derived from successful informal education models and support the learning needs of young people and adults who require additional support to re-engage with and/or succeed within the education system. For example, in providing after-schools and homework supports, WLD works closely with local schools, linking admission to these activities to

	attendance at school. Community Education initiatives are a non-intimidating locally-based route for adult learners to take the first steps back into education.
Financial Cost	€ 206,340
Partners	VEC, Local Communities, Probation & Welfare, SERDTF, HSE
List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures	<p>The following actions will be focused on the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy. Target groups identified as medium and low priority in Section 2.4 will be targeted under generic actions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>After-school sessions and homework supports:</b> Develop accessible opportunities for young people’s learning and development by supporting after-school projects in disadvantaged communities with a particular emphasis on RAPID areas.</li> <li>2. <b>Education supports for substance misusers and offenders:</b> supporting access to educational opportunities for a difficult to engage with client cohort i.e. offenders, ex-offenders, ex-prisoners and substance misusers. This action will deliver BTEI type programmes for groups of twelve clients at a time who will move through a series of specifically designed modules which will take account of the particular educational and psycho-social needs of this client cohort.</li> <li>3. <b>Supporting LCDP target groups to participate in Grundtvig European Adult &amp; Community Education Programme:</b> Socrates/ EU Adult Education Lifelong Learning informal education programme addressing engagement for older people in informal educational activities enhancing social, cultural and personal effectiveness of target group.</li> <li>4. <b>Community Education Programme:</b> Informal unaccredited educational activities in areas of high disadvantage (including RAPID areas in Enniscorthy, New Ross and Wexford Town) and with prioritised target groups. Courses to include creative cookery, intermediate and advanced Information technology, horticulture, media literacy skills, sewing/craft activities, lifeskills programmes, Men’s Shed-type projects and older people’s informal education groups.</li> <li>5. <b>Young Parents’/ Young Women’s programme:</b> Development of a pilot project to support young women including lone parents to engage with learning, support their children’s education and increase confidence in their parenting skills.</li> </ol> <p>WLD is represented on the Board of Wexford County Childcare Committee and will seek to influence the provision of and support to childcare and after-schools sessions in prioritised areas and to LCDP target groups, particularly those provided by community groups. WLD will work through RAPID AITs to identify and address education needs in partnership with other agencies and communities.</p>
Expected National Outcomes	Increased awareness and uptake of informal educational opportunities for children, young people and adults.
Expected indicators of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number and percentage of people participating in LDC supported educational activities over a 12 month period.</li> <li>▪ Number and percentage of young people supported by LDCs with improved school attendance.</li> <li>▪ Uptake of specified educational activities supported by the LDC.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number and percentage of people supported by LDCs who enroll in non-accredited post-compulsory education or training.</li> </ul>
Baseline Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation with the community and with local education providers in 2010 provided clear evidence of educational disadvantage in the area coupled with a lack of out of school opportunities for young people. The Home School Liaison Teachers and Parent's associations fully supported the development of an after school in this</li> <li>▪ Research undertaken by the SERDTF in 2010 indicated that Wexford had the highest number of users of illegal drugs in the South East region at 11,500. Offenders and ex-offenders make up 72% of the clients on the counselling and day programmes of the Cornmarket Project in Wexford, a service for those with substance misuse and criminality issues. The delivery of effective supports in training, education and employment as well as community supports and other opportunities will require close interaction between service providers located both within the treatment and rehabilitation sector and also in mainstream provision.</li> <li>▪ In 2009, Co. Wexford had 3,592 recipients of One Parent Family Payment. The incidence of one parent families is marginally above the national average of 21.4% at County level but in urban areas this rises to 35% in Wexford, 37.8% in New Ross and 36.5% in Enniscorthy. The evaluation of the "Moving On" programme in Carlow in 2006 demonstrates the positive progression of this target group from a similar programme.</li> </ul>
Local Objective Statement Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 400 children receiving after-schools support.</li> <li>2. 144 substance misusers and offenders participating in education.</li> <li>3. 50 Participants in Grundtvig Adult Education Lifelong learning programme.</li> <li>4. 500 Adult Community Education learners participating in Adult and Community Education programmes.</li> <li>5. 45 young women/lone parents participating in Young Women's programme.</li> </ol>

### ***Local Objective Statement Four***

**To work with providers, community organisations and LCDP priority target groups in Co. Wexford to increase opportunity of access to recreational and cultural activities including developmental youth work by 2013.**

Goal 2	Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources.
Rationale	The cost of summer activities for young people and families on low incomes is prohibitive – by responding to demand for summer and recreational activities in areas of high disadvantage, WLD experience has shown that positive interventions can be made in the lives of young people at risk of low educational attainment. Goal 1 and 4 outcomes are also achieved by engaging with the parents of these young people

	<p>including the development of contacts and data-bases for future initiatives, raising awareness of services and facilitating participation in local decision-making processes. The opportunity to provide informal support and encouragement to parents during summer programme and recreational and cultural activities has a beneficial effect on participation in education both for children and adults as it is less intimidating for those who may have had prior negative experiences of the formal education system.</p> <p>The need for WLD youth actions was identified by the clear evidence of educational disadvantage coupled with gaps in provision of out of school supports for young people. The actions are supported by national and international research which demonstrates that youth projects can have a positive impact on personal development and social skills. The emphasis on sharing responsibility with disadvantaged communities for the design and delivery of these initiatives is another distinguishing feature of 'social inclusion' youth work under LCDP. The Wexford Area Community Team (a WLD supported network of voluntary community groups) identified local youth needs as a priority for their action plan for 2011. The process was informed by local pilot projects, local education providers and local needs audits.</p> <p>BelongTo estimate that there are 1324 young people between the ages of 14 and 23 who identify as LGBT in Co. Wexford. A study by the Anti-Bullying Centre in Trinity College in 2006 revealed that 50% of LGBT youth had been bullied in school in the past 3 months compared to 16% of the general population. Research supports the positive impact of young LGBT people having access to a dedicated support project on continued participation in education and reduction of self-harm. BelongTo have prioritised Wexford as an area for the future development of a youth project - WLD has been working with BelongTo since September 2010 on this initiative.</p> <p>Finally, Wexford is rich in cultural amenities and the need to engage all sectors of the community with this resource is important both from a social and an economic perspective.</p>
Financial Costs	€ 83,980
Partners	Community groups, BelongTo, ABC Trinity College Dublin, FDYS, Co. Wexford VEC, Sports Active Wexford, RAPID AITs, HSE, Garda Síochána, Youth Diversion Projects.
List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures	<p>The following actions will be focused on the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Partnerships with Community Teams to develop summer fun and holiday-time programmes for young people:</b> Provision of innovative summer and holiday time supports for children and young people which expand the range of educational, cultural and recreational activities to meet social inclusion priorities in communities with high levels of disadvantage.</li> <li>2. <b>Collaborative youth work with Community Teams:</b> WLD will work with local communities, target groups and service providers to support and initiate youth projects in the areas of greatest disadvantage in Co. Wexford including work with the Travelling community, initiatives in RAPID areas and in projects in rural areas with high levels of disadvantage.</li> <li>3. <b>Cultural Programmes with priority groups and areas to increase LCDP target</b></li> </ol>



	<p><b>group engagement with local cultural resources:</b> WLD will build on work initiated with Wexford Opera House and other organisations in the cultural field in Wexford to increase access to and engagement with these resources by LCDP target groups.</p> <p>4. <b>LGBT Youth Activities:</b> WLD will work with local service providers to initiate the development of a dedicated youth project to serve the needs of LGBT young people in Wexford. WLD will develop and support a strong inter-agency working group to support this initiative. WLD will continue to liaise with BelongTo (the national LGBT youth development organisation), working towards the eventual accreditation of the group in the national LGBT youthwork programme.</p> <p>WLD will continue to work on the CDB and at SIM level to address the recreational and cultural needs of LCDP groups in the county. Actions under this objective statement support the achievement of Action 8 of Wexford CDB's 'Action for Change Strategy 2009 – 2013' ('Develop a recreation strategy for Co. Wexford'). WLD will work in RAPID areas at AIT level and also on relevant sub-groups to increase opportunities for LCDP groups in this area. WLD will also work on the Board of the Local Sports Partnership - Sports Active Wexford - to develop joint approaches to the provision of recreational opportunities for LCDP target groups.</p>
Expected National Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased awareness and uptake of informal educational opportunities for children, young people and adults.</li> <li>▪ Increased opportunity of access to recreational and cultural activities.</li> </ul>
Expected indicators of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number and percentage of young people who attend youth work provision.</li> <li>▪ Number of people participating in LDC supported recreational and cultural activities within a twelve month period.</li> </ul>
Baseline position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summer fun programmes were delivered successfully at various locations in the Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross areas in 2010 (and in previous years) – parents were actively involved and some subsequently became involved with other WLD initiatives. Confidence levels in local communities who jointly delivered these initiatives with WLD support were increased (local surveys and anecdotal evidence).</li> <li>▪ WLD supports or links with 7 community based youth projects in the Wexford area with over 90 participants. WLD has also recently initiated work with young Travellers in Enniscorthy and Clonroche.</li> <li>▪ Culture has been identified as a growth area for jobs in Co. Wexford and WLD will build on existing links with local facilities/resources to increase access to culture, literature and the arts by LCDP target groups as a means to address not only educational disadvantage but also to stimulate interest in this sector from an employment perspective.</li> <li>▪ There is currently no dedicated service for LGBT young people in Wexford anecdotal evidence indicates that young people from Wexford travel to Dublin to avail of supports.</li> </ul>
Local Objective Statement Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 933 children engaged in summer and holiday time activities.</li> <li>2. 600 young people engaged in youth projects and initiatives. 195 children engaged in after school and homework supports.</li> <li>3. 100 people engaged in cultural activities.</li> <li>4. 30 LGBT participants in LBGT Youth group.</li> </ol>

***Local Objective Statement Five***

**To develop and provide a range of services to support, prepare and assist the long term unemployed in Co. Wexford to re-enter the labour market by 2013.**

Goal 3	Increase in people's work readiness and employment prospects.
Rationale	The numbers on the live register have grown by unprecedented levels over the last 18 months with almost 20,000 people on the live register in Co. Wexford. Unemployment is now one of the biggest challenges facing the County. Wexford was significantly exposed to the building and construction industry and has been badly hit by the collapse in this sector. WLD, with a diverse range of labour market programmes in-house and extensive links in the community and with other agencies, is well-placed to deliver innovative responses to the needs of LTU people locally.
Financial Costs	€ 116,010
Partners	Department of Social Protection, FÁS, Probation and Welfare, Regional Drugs Task Force and SEAI. The DSP have given a commitment to the employment of 9 supervisors and 180 places on the TUS Programme for 2011. WLD have a commitment from SEAI under the Warmer Homes Scheme for €492,000 for 2011. FÁS support the Local Employment Services and the employment of 9 employment mediators. FÁS also have given a commitment to a CE scheme for the Warm Project for 25 places for 2011 and for a special drugs scheme for the Cornmarket Project. Wexford CEB, the local enterprise centre networks and Chamber of Commerce would be partners in developing a business network.
List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures	<p>The following actions will be focused on the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy. Most initiatives will be delivered in the main urban centres in order to capitalise on critical mass, transport links, availability of suitable facilities etc. however outreach work in rural communities with high levels of disadvantage will seek to engage residents of these areas with programmes using resources such as the RTP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Network for Employment:</b> Provision of 'jobs club'-style group support to job seekers, providing them with access to information re: jobs, training opportunities and support with CV preparation, interview skills and cover letters. This Network will be rolled out as a complementary action to the individual service provided by the LES in Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross and Wexford and will operate on a drop-in basis with a six week cycle of facilitated inputs and group discussion/support. Depending on levels of work readiness, participants may progress onto the more intensive 'Career Focus' initiatives described below. This action also responds to a need identified under Action 1.1 of the CDB Action for Change Strategy 2009 – 2013 'develop a coordinated plan for service for the unemployed'.</li> <li><b>2. LES supports:</b> WLD has an LES contact office in each of the four urban centres, New Ross, Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford town. In each of these offices job seekers will have access to an employment mediator who will provide them with one to one advice and guidance in relation to career path planning and</li> </ol>

	<p>training opportunities. The LES staff will refer their clients to other support services provided through WLD.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Career Focus and Interview Skills Initiatives:</b> To assist jobseekers to identify and focus on employment related strengths and skills. These 4-6 week part-time courses will improve clients' communication and job-seeking skills, including CV development and interview preparation and practice. The course promotes group discussion, support and individual goal setting.</li> <li>4. <b>WARM project:</b> The Warm Project is funded by SEAI under their Warmer Homes Scheme and the labour aspect of the programme is supported by FÁS through a Community Employment Scheme. This project provides insulation services to low income families and families at risk of fuel poverty but also provides valuable training and development opportunities for the long term unemployed in an identified growth area of energy efficiency measures.</li> <li>5. <b>Tús initiative:</b> The <b>Tús</b> labour market activation programme will provide an opportunity for 180 LTU people from Co. Wexford to participate in an employment programme where they will be placed in employment within the Community and Voluntary sector. This employment will gives them the opportunity to up-skill and learn new skills and also to contribute to the delivery of local services.</li> <li>6. <b>Social Economy Initiatives:</b> The development of social economy initiatives assist with the development of social capital at local level. Programmes planned such as the home maintenance project/care and repair programme give the opportunity to work in collaboration with other agencies to deliver a service which has been identified locally but at the same time contributing to the provision of employment and development opportunities for the long term unemployed.</li> <li>7. <b>Cornmarket Re-integration Programme:</b> This action is specifically targeted at the offenders, ex-offenders and ex-prisoners and will deliver individual mentoring to support the reintegration of this difficult to connect with client cohort. An individual mentoring programme will be rolled out in the Enniscorthy, Wexford, Gorey and New Ross areas.</li> <li>8. <b>Facilitated Business Network:</b> This action will be to support a network of local enterprises and ensure that they have access to information and to ensure that local enterprises are supported to increase the numbers of LDC clients that they are recruiting and increase the number of work placements and levels of training opportunities available to LDC clients. The businesses targeted initially will be businesses supported through the BTWEA scheme and the NRDP programme by WLD.</li> <li>9. <b>Co. Wexford Smallholders Initiative:</b> Support to low income farmers in receipt of farm assist payment to explore the possibilities of obtaining off farm employment, up skilling and participating in training initiatives and support with setting up alternative small enterprises.</li> </ol> <p>WLD will use its participation in the County Development Board, Social Inclusion Measures Group, SERDTF, RAPID AITs and national policy structures to promote the needs of the LCDP groups and to identify potential areas of work and develop joint initiatives to improve the preparedness for work and employment prospects of the LTU in Co. Wexford.</p>
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Expected National Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long term unemployed and the underemployed are better prepared for the labour market.</li> <li>▪ Increased recruitment of LDC clients by local employers.</li> </ul>
Expected indicators of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Services are in place to support the long term unemployed and the underemployed in the 4 main urban towns in Co. Wexford, Gorey, New Ross, Enniscorthy and Wexford (1.1, 1.2, 1.4. 1.5. 1.6).</li> <li>▪ Number of employer partners/percent of employer partners offering jobs to clients. (2.2, 2.2)</li> </ul>
Baseline Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLD currently runs a <b>Network for Employment</b> in Wexford town and Enniscorthy. This initiative arose from collaborative work with the CDB in under the 'Actions for Employment' section of the current County Development Plan where the need for group supports for LTU people was identified. This action will be continued in Wexford and Enniscorthy and expanded to Gorey and New Ross over the lifetime of this strategic plan.</li> <li>▪ <b>LES</b> supports are provided through a contact point in Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross and Wexford town and employment mediators are based in each of these towns.</li> <li>▪ The focus of the <b>Co. Wexford Smallholders Initiative</b> will be redefined and will focus on supporting small holders in receipt of farm assist to obtain off farm employment or establish a small business. There is a long history of working with other agencies in a collaborative way to address the needs of this target group with a much broader remit.</li> <li>▪ <b>The Warm Project</b> is funded through the Warmer Homes Scheme which is part of the National Better Energy Programme. Funding has been committed to this programme up to the end of 2013. Ongoing development of the WARM project to sustain the existing levels of employment and provide training and development opportunities for the LTU on the CE scheme (25 places).</li> <li>▪ WLD will seek to develop linkages and build on existing relationships with community based organisations with a social inclusion focus with a view to providing placement opportunities for the <b>Tús programme</b>.</li> <li>▪ WLD will seek to build on the work of the <b>Cornmarket Project</b> in Wexford town to develop progression opportunities for persons with substance misuse or alcohol dependency issues throughout the rest of the County.</li> </ul>
Local Objective Statement Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 340 individuals to avail of supports through Networks for Employment.</li> <li>2. LES supports provided to 576 individuals.</li> <li>3. 240 individuals participating in Career Focus/interview skills.</li> <li>4. Sustain the existing 7 full time jobs on the Warm Project, continue to provide training and employment opportunities to 25 CE participants per year, provide FETAC level 5 training to 10 participants per year.</li> <li>5. 180 people placed on Tús programme, 9 supervisors employed</li> <li>6. LTU employed on Labour market activation programme.</li> <li>7. 120 people accessing training/progression via Cornmarket Project.</li> <li>8. 10 employer partners offering placements/20 individuals placed in employment, 50 training/work experience related placements.</li> <li>9. 75 smallholders to access off-farm employment or establish a small enterprise.</li> </ol>

**Local Objective Statement Six**

**To increase the availability of a range of training focused on key growth areas in the labour market which have been identified as culture and tourism, green economy, sustainable construction, health care and food production to assist the long term unemployed in Co. Wexford to up-skill and to re-enter the labour market by 2013.**

Goal 3	Increase in people’s work readiness and employment prospects.
Rationale	<p>With nearly 20,000 people on the live register in the Co. Wexford and 55% estimated to be out of work for twelve months or longer, there is an urgent need for training and up-skilling to mitigate the ‘scarring’ effects of long-term unemployment. The main FÁS Training Centre for the region is located in Waterford. Wexford has only a limited number of FÁS training places available through contracted training. VTOS Training places are also limited and there are not sufficient places to meet the increased demand.</p> <p>Several sectors were identified as presenting potential for future jobs growth in Wexford in the report “Positioning Wexford for the Upturn” commissioned by Wexford County Development Board and launched in 2010. In the short term the main job opportunities in Wexford will be in industries that have a very high turnover of staff including sales assistants, clerical, caring, catering and security. Drawing on the conclusions of the above-mentioned report as well as feedback from the Local Employment Service and consultation with other service providers, WLD has prioritised training in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Green Economy:</b> The sharp decline in construction employment has led to a decline in the demand for apprenticeship and construction trades and the continued increased levels of youth unemployment and long term unemployment among males has increased the demand for training provision in the area of retrofitting skills and energy efficiency.</li> <li>2. <b>Culture and Tourism</b> has been identified as an area of potential employment for County Wexford “Positioning Wexford for the upturn” CDB. Targeted training in this area for our target group will ensure that they are better placed to avail of this employment.</li> <li>3. <b>Healthcare</b> certification at a minimum of FETAC level 5 will be the national requirement for employment in the area by 2012. Planning for 4 new nursing homes has been approved for the County and further expansion of existing services is underway. A retirement village is also planned for the county. Up-skilling long-term unemployed people will ensure that they are better placed to avail of these opportunities.</li> <li>4. <b>Food Technology:</b> This area has also been identified as an area of potential employment based on Wexford’s tradition of food production as well as</li> </ol>

	<p>factors such as the recent takeover of a Wexford factory by the global company Danone. WLD is ideally placed to provide a suitable framework to develop and provide this training locally.</p> <p>These actions will be focused on the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy. Most initiatives will be delivered in the main urban centres in order to capitalise on critical mass, transport links, availability of suitable facilities etc. however outreach work in rural communities with high levels of disadvantage will seek to engage residents of these areas with programmes using resources such as the RTP.</p>
Financial Costs	€ 135,262
Partners	Department of Social Protection, FÁS and the VEC.
List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures	<p>Working closely with the LES and communities in areas of high disadvantage, WLD will provide FETAC accredited training in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy Efficiency Building Skills (Level 5)</li> <li>2. Culture and Tourism Awareness (Sales, Customer Service) (Levels 4 and 5)</li> <li>3. Health Care (Levels 4 and 5)</li> <li>4. Food Technology (Levels 3, 4 and 5)</li> </ol> <p>The training will be delivered in the Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross areas, with priority given to RAPID areas. Progression routes into further education/training at FETAC level 5 and 6 and employment will be identified and learners will be supported into these progression routes.</p> <p>WLD will use its participation in the County Development Board, Social Inclusion Measures Group and RAPID AITs to promote the needs of the LCDP groups and to ensure that training delivered under LCDP is responsive to needs identified by individual agencies and at a strategic level in Co. Wexford. WLD will work with FAS and the DSP in particular to co-ordinate and reduce duplication of provision in order to ensure the maximum return on the resources invested in labour market programmes for those who are long-term unemployed in Co. Wexford.</p>
Expected National Outcomes	Long term unemployed and the underemployed are better prepared for the labour market.
Expected indicators of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number and proportion of LTU people who participate in labour market activation measures (including training initiatives) following intervention by LDC or through LDC led activity.</li> <li>▪ Number and proportion of LTU clients reporting being satisfied with the interventions provided.</li> <li>▪ Number and proportion of LDC clients attributing their preparedness to find work to an intervention by LDC or through LDC-led activity.</li> </ul>
Baseline Position	Wexford at 22.7% has above the national average 18.9% of adults with primary education only. This is also reflected in the higher proportion at 21.7% of semi and unskilled manual workers than the national figure of 18.6% and the higher unemployment rate. There is currently a waiting list for training places within VTOS and waiting list for FAS training within the county. At present there is no provision of FETAC Level 3 and 4 in Healthcare, Food and the Services Industry to engage with the most educationally disadvantaged jobseekers as a bridge to progression onto FETAC

	Level 5. In developing this training programme, WLD will work closely with the relevant stakeholders - DSP, VEC, Wexford Campus of Carlow IT and Youth Train Community Training Centre, to avoid duplication and to maximise the benefits of collaboration for LCDP target groups in particular.
Local Objective Statement Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1 Major Green energy programme for the county certifying 15 long term unemployed per year (45 individuals in total).</li> <li>2. 4 Services and Food Industry initiatives in the county each year giving FETAC certification to 48 learners (392 individuals in total).</li> <li>3. 4 Healthcare Training initiatives in the county each year, giving FETAC certification to 48 learners each year (392 individuals in total).</li> <li>4. 2 Tourism training programmes training 28 individuals to full FETAC certification (168 individuals in total).</li> </ol>

### ***Local Objective Statement Seven***

**Develop a range of supports and aftercare services to increase the levels and numbers of long term unemployed people in Co. Wexford becoming self employed by 2013.**

Goal 3	Increase in people's work readiness and employment prospects.
Rationale	<p>The numbers on the live register have grown by unprecedented levels over the last 18 months with almost 20,000 people on the live register in Co. Wexford. Wexford was significantly exposed to the building and construction industry and has been badly hit by the collapse in this sector and also by the decline in traditional manufacturing industries. The National Spatial Strategy identified Gateways and hubs which were to be prioritised for any inward investment. Waterford is the regional gateway and will therefore be prioritised by the Government and state agencies such as the IDA and Enterprise Ireland as the preferred location for any inward investment.</p> <p>Wexford has a strong entrepreneurial culture and agencies such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Development Companies and the LEADER organisations have a proven track record in creating employment through supporting the establishment of small enterprises. Wexford also has a network of enterprise centres which have been very successful in providing incubation spaces to support the growth and development of micro enterprises. WLD has significant experience in administering the BTWEA scheme over many years on behalf of the DSP and the numbers in Wexford availing of the BTWEA scheme is one of the highest in the South East Region. WLD is therefore well-placed to work collaboratively with other key actors at local level to promote self-employment as a viable option for LTU people in the County.</p>
Financial Costs	€ 196,338
Partners	Department of Social Protection in particular the Jobs Facilitators who refer clients to WLD and also provide financial supports to BTWEA clients through DSP TAT funding. Wexford CEB, local enterprise centres and the Chamber of Commerce.

<p>List of actions/ role in key planning and policy structures</p>	<p>The following actions will be focused on the areas and target groups identified as high priority in Section 2.4, in particular RAPID areas in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy. Most initiatives will be delivered in the main urban centres in order to capitalise on critical mass, transport links, availability of suitable facilities etc. however outreach work in rural communities with high levels of disadvantage will seek to engage residents of these areas with programmes using resources such as the RTP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Enterprise supports:</b> One to one advice and guidance to support business start ups and development. Administering BTWEA scheme on behalf of the DSP.</li> <li>2. <b>Pre-enterprise supports:</b> “Moving from Welfare to Self Employment”, group supports with the development of business plans.</li> <li>3. <b>Aftercare Supports:</b> Business Skills Training and information seminars, one to one coaching and mentoring programme and facilitating business networks for BTWEA clients.</li> <li>4. <b>Co. Wexford Smallholders Initiative:</b> One-to-one support with a caseload of small holders to support them with the development of a business plan and with setting up an alternative farm enterprise.</li> </ol> <p>WLD, in its participation in the County Development Board and its sub-structures such as the Economic Development Sub-Group, Action for Change for the Unemployed, Social Inclusion Measures Group, RAPID AIT and Wexford CEB, will highlight the needs of LCDP target groups, identify potential areas of work and develop joint initiatives to promote self employment and enterprise amongst socially excluded groups. Actions under this objective statement are linked to Action 2.5 of the CDB Action for Change Strategy 2009 – 2013 (‘Implement mentoring support programme for SMEs’).</p>
<p>Expected National Outcomes</p>	<p>Increased levels of self employment amongst the LTU.</p>
<p>Expected indicators of progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of LTU people who become self employed following an intervention by WLD. and the</li> <li>▪ Number and proportion of LTU who set up an enterprise that is operational for 12 months or more following an intervention by WLD.</li> </ul>
<p>Baseline Position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 180 LTU were supported to set up a business with the support of the BTWEA scheme in 2010.</li> <li>▪ 50 people attended training on Moving from Welfare to Self employment. Over 50% of the participants started a business and availed of BTWEA scheme.</li> <li>▪ Approx. 150 people attended business skills training in 2010.</li> </ul>
<p>Local Objective Statement Target</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLD will support 400 LTU to avail of the BTWEA scheme and 200 people to avail of STEA by 2013.</li> <li>▪ 150 LTU individuals will participate in Pre-enterprise training.</li> <li>▪ 250 individuals will be supported to avail of aftercare supports and remain in business for 12 months.</li> <li>▪ 60 smallholders will be supported to set up an additional enterprise by 2013.</li> </ul>



### **Local Objective Statement Eight**

**To develop and increase the number of effective structures and processes for dialogue between policy makers, providers and local communities in Co. Wexford by 2013, thereby contributing to the development of more inclusive and transparent policy and decision-making processes.**

Goal 4	Promote engagement with policy, practice and decision-making processes on matters affecting local communities.
Rationale	<p>WLD experience has demonstrated that developing structured relationships based on sustained support for an agreed social inclusion agenda in disadvantaged areas and with LCDP beneficiary groups ('community teams') has ensured that WLD services and projects are responsive to the needs of the most excluded groups and individuals in each area. By networking local groups and individuals, the teams serve both as a vehicle for engaging with the most excluded people in each community and as a platform for creating opportunities for participation for these target groups at a local and accessible level. Utilising local knowledge and building trust, these linkages also increase the effectiveness and uptake of service promotion, education and work readiness initiatives. The knowledge gleaned from these 'on the ground' relationships with communities and groups will be used to design more effective actions under LCDP and secure more meaningful involvement by LCDP target groups in the delivery of the programme.</p> <p>Actions under this objective will also support community representatives and teams to bring forward issues from their areas/groups to district and county networks facilitated by WLD and other structures as well as to local decision-making structures. This will provide further added value in terms of learning, mutual support and information sharing between communities which face common issues related to social exclusion.</p>
Financial Cost	€ 102,124
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Teams /community organisations in areas prioritised for community development support in Section 2.4 (including RAPID areas).</li> <li>▪ Volunteers involved with former CDP Boards of Management.</li> <li>▪ Wexford Area Community Team, Co. Wexford Age Equality Network, Gay Wexford, Co. Wexford Traveller Network.</li> <li>▪ Wexford County Development Board and Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, the South East Regional Drugs Task Force, Wexford Local Drugs Task Force, The Cornmarket Project , Co. Wexford Community Forum.</li> </ul>
List of actions/ role in Key Planning and Policy Structures	<p>The following actions will be targeted in areas identified as high priority and in need of additional community development support in Section 2.4, with a particular focus on the needs of areas and target groups within RAPID areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued development of local 'Community Teams' in areas with high levels of disadvantage, including area- and group-specific initiatives (e.g. needs analysis, action research, training etc.).</li> <li>2. Developmental support for existing groups/networks/initiatives with communities of interest, specifically: older people, disadvantaged young people and the LGBT community and initiatives to support Travellers, substance misusers, offenders</li> </ol>

	<p>and homeless people to engage effectively with policy makers, providers and local community teams and networks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Supports for volunteering as a means to promote greater social inclusion. This action is linked to Action 5.2 of the CDB Action for Change Strategy 2009 – 2013 ('Develop an online Volunteer Resource Bureau for Co. Wexford'). WLD has been working with WCC Community and Enterprise Section to develop this initiative.</li> <li>4. Develop, expand and resource the Community Team network piloted in the Wexford Area (Wexford Area Community Team) to the Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross areas thereby creating networks for social inclusion throughout the County, including targeted support and mentoring for individual community representatives working on internal and external structures. This action is linked to Action 6 of the CDB Action for Change Strategy ('Enniscorthy Action Team').</li> <li>5. Organisation of seminars and conferences aimed at deepening the involvement of communities in policy issues and decision-making.</li> </ol> <p>WLD will actively support LCDP target group participation in local decision-making structures including the WLD Board of Directors, Wexford County Development Board and SIM Group, RAPID AITs, Wexford County Childcare Committee and the local and regional Drugs Task Forces. In addition WLD will ensure that communities are supported to participate effectively in the management of WLD-led projects and initiatives, including the development of greater synergies between LCDP and NRDP.</p>
<p>Expected National Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective structures and processes in place for dialogue between policy makers, providers and local communities.</li> <li>▪ More inclusive and transparent policy and decision-making processes.</li> <li>▪ Greater engagement in priority policy and decision-making processes by members of identified disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul>
<p>Expected Indicators of Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engagement strategy in place for reaching different local groups is in place.</li> <li>▪ Evidence of progression of local community groups through stages (1 – 3) identified in the guidance document.</li> <li>▪ Representation by key target groups on governance structures of LDC-supported projects.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities are provided for community to contribute to policy and decision-making (for example):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of meetings held</li> <li>▪ Accessibility of venues</li> <li>▪ Quality of advertising and publicity</li> <li>▪ Level of attendance</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Number and type of key planning and policy structures, networks and committees which contain LDC-supported representatives of disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>▪ Representation by key target groups on governance structures of LDC-supported projects.</li> </ul>
<p>Baseline Position</p>	<p>WLD is currently working with established teams/community networks in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clonard/Coolcotts, South End, West Wexford (RAPID areas – Wexford town), Bellefield, Ross Road, Templeshannon (RAPID areas – Enniscorthy), Taghmon, Castlebridge, Kilmore Quay/Bridgetown and Rosslare/Tagoat. These groups will be supported at levels 2 – 3 in the development matrix.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ WLD intends to link with existing FRC/CDP organisations in the following areas to develop a shared social inclusion agenda locally and link these areas with district and county-wide networks: New Ross (RAPID), Gorey, Kilmokea/Campile and Clonroche/Raheen.</li><li>▪ WLD will seek to connect with LCDP beneficiary groups and organisations with a social inclusion focus on the ground in the following areas to develop new community teams: Ferns, Bunclody.</li><li>▪ WLD will work with the following existing groups representing communities of interest: Co. Wexford Age Equality Network, Gay Wexford, Wexford Area Youth Participation Initiative.</li><li>▪ WLD will support members of the Travelling community involved in LCDP supported projects to engage with the Co. Wexford Traveller Network as well as other area-based networks and structures.</li><li>▪ WLD will seek to develop mechanisms for the inclusion and self-representation of substance misusers, offenders and ex-offenders and homeless people in local decision-making processes and structures as such opportunities are limited or non-existent at present.</li><li>▪ WLD will build on existing volunteer support initiatives (coordinated jointly between Wexford CDB and WLD) to increase the level of dedicated support provided to volunteers involved in social inclusion work, both to work in their local communities/groups effectively and to participate in dialogue with policy makers and service providers.</li><li>▪ WLD currently supports one area-based network focused on social inclusion, Wexford Area Community Team (WACT), which encompasses the RAPID community team in the town (see below). WACT also includes rural community teams supported by WLD. The existing network of three teams in the Enniscorthy RAPID areas will be expanded to include teams from the wider district including Clonroche, Bunclody and Ferns. An additional two district social inclusion networks will be developed in the New Ross and Gorey areas.</li><li>▪ WLD manages the community participation support budget in the three RAPID areas in Co. Wexford – Wexford town, Enniscorthy and New Ross. In practical terms, WLD supports dedicated community teams in all of these areas and in particular works with community representatives on the AITs to ensure that they feel confident in bringing issues forward and achieving change for their areas and the RAPID area as a whole as a result.</li><li>▪ With the exception of Wexford Area Community Team (which formally elected two representatives to the Board of the newly formed company at the time of cohesion) there is currently no formal mechanism for the Community Directors on the WLD Board of Directors to interact with the community structures supported</li></ul>
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	<p>under LCDP. Equally there is no formal engagement with LCDP beneficiary groups or communities of interest. This will be addressed as part of the actions to be undertaken under this objective statement. Internal WLD structures such as the Cornmarket Project Steering Group and Wexford Education Network have representation from communities supported under WACT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The engagement of communities across county boundaries via regional structures and programmes such as the SERDTF and LGBT Diversity is currently in the early stages but will be developed in partnership with these organisations and other LDCs in the South-East over the next 3 years.</li> </ul>
<p>Local Objective Statement Target</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 10 existing local community teams (inclusive of RAPID areas) supported and up to 6 additional teams developed within the 'Community Team' engagement strategy for reaching LCDP groups at levels 2-3 of the development matrix. 80 community groups supported within the team structures. 12 training initiatives.</li> <li>2. Support to 3 existing networks/initiatives involving communities of interest. 2 regional initiatives with substance misusers and the communities affected by drugs and with the LGBT community. Support for LCDP target groups to participate in county, regional and national policy networks (e.g. Co. Wexford Traveller Network, LGBT Diversity South East Region Consultancy Group, SERDTF).</li> <li>3. 50 groups supported under volunteering support programme.</li> <li>4. Support for 4 area-based Community Team networks focused on social inclusion – 80 community groups supported via networks. 30 meetings. 6 networking events. Support to 15 individual community representatives on LDC and external structures, including RAPID AITs.</li> <li>5. 3 annual Community Conferences at county level – 360 delegates.</li> </ol>

## Section Five – Organisational Development

### 5.1 Governance Information about the Organisation

i) Financial Management

Financial Reports, covering all programmes delivered by the company, are considered by the board at its monthly meeting.

Human Resources Management

Key decisions in relation to HR management are made by the Board in conjunction with the CEO.

Strategic Review & Planning

The Board has been directly involved in the development and approval of all Plans developed by the company. The Board endeavours to ensure that all key decisions around the work of the company are strategic in nature. The Board are also mindful of the increasing need to plan strategically in a rapidly changing environment with diminishing resources.

Coverage of areas formerly served by CDPs

Members of the Board would have met with the staff and management committees of each CDP. Through the LCDP Strategic Planning Sub Committee the board considered in detail coverage of the areas formerly served by CDPs.

ii) **Board Sub-Structures, their Roles and Reporting Mechanism**

<b>Name of Board Sub-structure/Committee and Chair</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Executive Committee</b> Chair : Pat Rath	To consider strategic, financial & HR matters and make recommendations on same to the Board.
<b>NRDP Focus Group</b> Chair : Pat Rath	To strategically consider Rural Development issues in the context of the NRDP.
<b>NRDP Evaluation Committee</b> Chair : John Power	To appraise applications from promoters for funding under the NRDP and make recommendations on same to the Board.
<b>Enterprise Sub-Committee</b> Chair : Dave Ormonde	To appraise applications from applicants for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme.
<b>Smallholders Sub-Committee</b> Chair : Willie Gleeson	To advise and support the work of the Smallholder's Initiative and make recommendations to the Board as appropriate.
<b>Cornmarket Steering Committee</b> Chair : Michelle Weir	To advise and support the work of the Cornmarket project and make recommendations to the Board as appropriate.
<b>Rural Transport Steering Committee</b> Chair : Betty Breen	To oversee the delivery of the Rural Transport Programme and make recommendations to the Board.
<b>LCDP Strategic Planning Sub Committee (Social Inclusion Focus Group)</b> Chair : Pat Rath	To oversee the strategic planning of the LCDP.

***All sub-committees listed above have directors as members who report to the Board.***

iii) The effectiveness of the Board and its sub-committee structures will be reviewed by the end of 2011. These structures have been in place since early 2009.

iv) Community and voluntary representatives on WLD Board of Directors are nominated by the Co. Wexford Community Forum. Prior to cohesion, Wexford Area Community Team was the nominating body for the board of Wexford Area Partnership and community representation was therefore drawn directly from the target groups and geographic areas of greatest disadvantage in the catchment area through an annual nomination and election process. As part of the current strategic plan, WLD will work under Goal 4 to strengthen the links between WLD Board and the existing team in the Wexford Area (WACT) as well as with networks which will be developed in the remaining three areas of the County (Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey) in order to better facilitate the inclusion and participation of LCDP target groups and communities in the workings of WLD itself. This process of engagement will also facilitate more in-depth qualitative evaluation of work under the plan, feeding into the review of actions and development of annual plans in a systematic way. In addition to these formal structures, WLD will also pursue more innovative methods of engaging hard-to-reach groups (in particular substance misusers, offenders, homeless people and Travellers) in this process.

## **5.2 Organisational Development**

Wexford Local Development was formed through a merger of Wexford Area Partnership, Co. Wexford Partnership and Wexford Organisation for Rural Development in January 2009. WLD has undergone huge changes in the last 16 months with the loss of 10 staff from the LDSIP and the loss of key senior management, including the CEO. There are also five new CDPs with 11 new staff now part of the company.

In light of this the company is now looking to restructure itself with a renewed focus. This will entail looking at the skillset and experience of the new staff coming into the organisation and examining how the work and roles of existing LCDP staff can be reoriented to meet the challenges of delivering the new programme. There is a vast experience and knowledge of social inclusion in the company with many of the staff involved in Social Inclusion Programme delivery for ten years or more. In addition there are long established key 'programmes' such as the Local Employment Service, the National Rural Development Programme and the Cornmarket project that will assist in the delivery of the new LCDP. The new Tús initiative, with 180 places for Co. Wexford, will also make a significant contribution.

Systems that facilitate review, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the LCDP will be developed based on an extensive experience of delivering previous Social Inclusion Programmes. The methods used to monitor and evaluate the above mentioned programmes will also significantly influence these systems.

The CEO has overall responsibility within the organisation for ensuring that monitoring related information in relation to actions is being collected, recorded and entered into IRIS or securely maintained for future collection/ analysis.

## Section Six – Strategic Linkages with other Programmes and Agencies

### 6.1 Strategic alignment with other Social Inclusion work

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Local Employment Service Network (FÁS)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1,5, 6 <i>Access to services, work readiness and labour market training</i>

Wexford Local Development's strategic plan links LCDP funded labour-market, self-employment and training programmes to the LESN. LESN Mediators and Information Officers will be fully informed in relation to LCDP Goal 3 actions and will also work closely with LCDP staff to increase access to ancillary services for the long-term unemployed. This will ensure LTU clients registered with LESN can avail of appropriate WLD programmes and progression routes. In addition, LESN offers follow-up one-to-one support to LTU individuals who take part on LCDP employment focused programmes. Clients who are long-term unemployed often present with a number of issues relating to unemployment and require intensive one-to-one support from a trained guidance mediator. Wexford Local Development recognises that the combination of services is essential to tackle issues of long-term unemployment.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>The Cornmarket Project (Probation and Welfare, VEC, SERDTF)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 3, 5, 8 <i>Access to services, informal education, work readiness initiatives, community development</i>

The Cornmarket Project is a community-based service delivered by WLD with funding from the Probation and Welfare Service, the South East Regional Drugs Task Force, Co. Wexford VEC and LCDP itself. The service addresses the needs of people dealing with problems of anti-social and criminal behaviour and concurrent substance misuse. The project provides counselling, training and rehabilitation, drop-in and outreach services for people over 18 affected by drugs and alcohol, along with a support group for their families. The service is based in Wexford town with outreach in Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross.

The Local Probation Service has testified to the success of interventions under the project amongst their client group - at least two thirds of those attending the project are direct referrals from this service, and the outcomes for clients are viewed as having been very positive. The Cornmarket Service is well-positioned within WLD to contribute to the achievement of LCDP strategic objectives in Wexford across all four goals, particularly in relation to the uptake of services, the provision of opportunities for substance misusers and offenders to progress from rehabilitation to education and training and the internal linkages with community teams in the areas most affected by substance misuse and criminal behaviour.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>RAPID Community Participation Support Programmes (DECLG)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 3, 4, 8 <i>Access to services, informal education initiatives, recreational and cultural initiatives, community development</i>

WLD manages the community support budget for the RAPID programme on behalf of Wexford County Council and local Area Implementation Teams in Wexford, New Ross and Enniscorthy. WLD has developed a Community Participation Strategy in each of these areas. WLD staff provide ongoing support to the communities by developing and sustaining local structures to provide accountable and transparent community representation and facilitate ongoing feedback.

The work carried out by WLD under the RAPID community programme is strategically aligned with a number of local objective statements within the LCDP plan, most notably under Goal 4 in terms of supporting access to decision-making through the development of effective structures. The model of community participation pioneered in Wexford has been recognised as a model of best practice nationally. The presence of effective and informed local community structures feeding into the RAPID process also facilitates more effective and targeted delivery of actions under Goals 2 and 3 as well as increasing awareness of and uptake of services as envisaged under Goal 1.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>The WARM Project (SEAI, FÁS)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 5, 6 <i>Access to services, work readiness initiatives, labour market training</i>

The Warm Project was set up to realise two social objectives; to provide employment, training and development opportunities to the long term unemployed in Co. Wexford and to provide a service to low income householders who are experiencing fuel poverty. This programme is funded by SEAI through their Warmer Homes Scheme which provides funding for a range of insulation services to house holders who own their own home and are experiencing varying levels of fuel poverty. FAS also funds the project by means of a CE Scheme (sponsored and managed by WLD) which provides employment and training opportunities for 25 LTU to work on the Warm Project.

All of the installers working on the project are trained to FETAC level 5 training in installing thermal insulation and are also provided with training in cavity wall insulation, health and safety, manual handling and safe pass training which are all a compulsory element of participation on the scheme. This project assists WLD in meeting its objectives under Goal 3 by providing training and employment opportunities for the LTU people, up-skilling them in identified growth areas and providing them with the industry recognised qualifications in the retrofitting area which increases their chances of progressing in to full time employment. The Warm Project has been successful in providing 7 full time jobs - all of these individuals were formerly participants on the CE scheme.



<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (DSP)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 7 <i>Access to services, enterprise supports</i>

WLD administers the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme and the Short Term Enterprise Allowance Scheme on behalf of the Department of Social Protection, work which is strategically aligned with LCDP work under Goals 1 and 3. WLD provides the clients with access to an Enterprise Officer on a one-to-one basis to provide them with assistance in the development of a business plan, give them information on starting a business and registering for tax, guiding them through their entitlements under the scheme. WLD also provides aftercare supports such as business skills training and information workshops on various topics such as book-keeping, taxation, financial management and sales. The Jobs Facilitators from DSP work closely with WLD on this programme and are members of the Enterprise Evaluation Committee, supporting WLD in the evaluation process. Once clients have been approved for the scheme they are referred by the Enterprise Officer to the Jobs Facilitators to access financial supports under their TAT funding.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>National Rural Development Programme (DECLG)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 6, 7, 8 <i>Labour market training, enterprise supports, community development</i>

WLD operates the National Rural Development Programme which is strategically linked to the delivery of LCDP across a number of objective statements. Training for LCDP groups living in rural areas, promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship as well as social economy initiatives as well as the regeneration of community facilities are some of the areas where synergies are actively sought with LCDP in the delivery of the NRD programme.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Tús Programme (DSP)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 5, 8 <i>Access to services, work readiness initiatives, community development</i>

WLD has been given responsibility by the DSP for the roll-out of the Tús labour market scheme in Co. Wexford. The programme will involve the employment of 9 supervisors and the placement of 180 long term unemployed individuals in various roles within the community and voluntary sector. This programme will enable WLD to liaise with organisations operating within the community and voluntary Sector to develop work placement opportunities for the TUS participants and at the same time providing work experience and development opportunities for the LTU in our area. This programme will support the achievement of the strategic objectives under Goal 3 in terms of access to progression routes for long-term unemployed people and under Goal 4 in terms of increasing the capacity of community groups to respond to social inclusion needs in their local area. Participants on the scheme will also be referred to appropriate ancillary services, thereby achieving outcomes under Goal 1 for long-term unemployed people, a primary focus of LCDP.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Rural Social Scheme (DECLG)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 5 <i>Access to services, work readiness initiatives</i>

The Rural Social Scheme is administered by WLD and currently employs two supervisors and 39 individuals involved in farming and fishing in the county who are on low incomes. The scheme allows this target group to earn a supplementary income through the provision of services in local communities and is strategically aligned with LCDP in terms both of its contribution to employment supports for the underemployed and also as a vehicle for increasing uptake of services through direct contact with the target group.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Meitheal Programme (DES)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statement 2 <i>Initiatives to support access to formal education</i>

The Meitheal Programme is a mentoring programme delivered by WLD in all 23 post-primary schools in Co. Wexford funded by the DES. The programme is strategically aligned with LCDP under Goal 2 and contributes to the successful transition of first year students from primary to post-primary education, promoting positive retention in formal education and optimising progression opportunities for disadvantaged students.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Rural Transport Programme (DoT), Community Car Scheme</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 4, 8 <i>Access to services, recreational/cultural initiatives, community development</i>

Work under RTP is strategically aligned with activities under Goal 1, as a health promoting service for isolated older people, increasing mobility and access to local services through providing transport to essential services as well as social activities as well as under Goal 2, by facilitating increased access to recreational and cultural activities for both young people in communities with high levels of disadvantage and older people countywide.

The Community Car Scheme operates through a team of volunteer drivers and facilitates older people to access hospital appointments in Wexford and Waterford. The CCS contributes to work under Goal 1, as a health promotion action for LCDP beneficiary group providing access to essential health services. Both of these programmes link with organisations who work with LCDP target groups including the HSE, local community structures, youth groups, Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, Get Vocal, St. Vincent de Paul, Age and Opportunity and the Wexford Carers Association.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Traveller Programmes (HSE, NATC)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 3, 4, 8 <i>Access to services, informal education initiatives, recreational and cultural opportunities</i>

WLD delivers a range of health supports for the Travelling community with funding from the HSE, NATC and additional supports from LCDP. The Traveller Primary Healthcare Programme operates in the south of the County and supports Traveller women who have successfully completed training in primary health care in New Ross in their health promotion work with the HSE. A further four community health workers from amongst participants in the Bunclody Primary Health Care Project were employed directly by WLD in 2010 along with a support worker.

The Traveller Men’s Health Programme is delivered by WLD with HSE funding and additional financial support for participants from the DSP and its work is directed by an inter-agency steering group. Both initiatives involve inter-agency work and collaboration and are strategically aligned with LCDP in terms of increasing awareness of and access to services (particularly in relation to health) and creating opportunities for informal education, recreational and cultural activities. In addition the support workers support Traveller men and women to become more aware of an involved in local decision-making structures and networks, work which is supported under Goal 4 of LCDP.

The National Association of Traveller Centres fund WLD to employ a youth worker who is based in Taghmon – this action is strategically aligned with Local Objective Statements 3 and 4 in terms of the provision of after-school and homework support and youth activities.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>Get Vocal Programme (Age and Opportunity/Atlantic Philanthropies)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 3, 8 <i>Access to services, informal education initiatives, community development</i>

The aim of the Get Vocal programme is to strengthen the voices of older people in Ireland by increasing their capacity to make themselves heard. Age & Opportunity funds Get Vocal which works in partnership with organisations throughout the country. Wexford Local Development in association with the Co. Wexford Age Equality Network is funded to employ a Project Officer under the programme. The National Programme is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies.

Get Vocal supports the objectives of Goal 4 of the LCDP programme by enabling individual older people and older people’s organisations to participate in policy development, service planning and delivery. This is achieved by providing training in advocacy, capacity building, leadership, media skills and lobbying, developing networks and the publication & dissemination of relevant information.

It also supports the achievement of Goal 2 objectives through the local network groups who support the increased uptake of community initiatives, volunteering and adult and community education initiatives. The programme also supports the roll-out of ‘Ageing with Confidence’ Training, which is often a first step for isolated/excluded older people to become involved in other LCDP initiatives – with a particular focus on older people living in disadvantaged communities.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>FETAC accredited centre</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 2, 3, 6 <i>Formal and informal education initiatives, labour market training</i>

WLD strives to ensure that LCDP target groups who participate in formal and informal training and education courses delivered under LCDP and other programmes have access to accredited learning. WLD's status as a FETAC accredited centre is therefore strategically aligned with formal and informal education initiatives under Goal 2 which are fully or partially accredited and labour market training under Goal 3. WLD provides specially designed training programmes to allow jobseekers to participate in short courses and gain component certification in FETAC qualifications at Level 3, 4 and 5, leading to major awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. WLD will endeavour to strike a balance between the establishment of detailed formal procedures for certification under FETAC and the need for flexible training to meet the immediate and emerging needs of the target group.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>WLD Volunteering Initiative</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 8 Access to services, community development

The commitment to develop volunteer resources and structures across County Wexford originates from the CDB Strategy Action for Change (2009 – 2013) in which WLD was named as lead partner for an initiative to set up a volunteer centre in the county. In the absence of funding for a dedicated Volunteer Centre, the development of an online facility for volunteer recruitment was agreed. In late 2011, following the development of the interactive website linked to the Volunteer Centres of Ireland website, WLD will promote and facilitate recruitment largely through its existing infrastructure and staff resources. This initiative will be strategically aligned with Goals 1 and 4 of LCDP in terms of maintaining a focus on groups and services which have a social inclusion agenda and require voluntary support to deliver and manage responses on the ground.

<b>Name of Programme</b>	<b>New Ross Men's Shed Initiative (Dormant Accounts Fund/RAPID)</b>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	Local Objective Statements 1, 3, 8 <i>Access to services, informal education initiatives, community development</i>

WLD employs a worker for this project which is based on the Australian Men's Shed Model and aims to achieve improved health and well-being for older men in New Ross (RAPID area) through greater social interaction and communication leading to improved mental health. The project is managed by an inter-agency steering group and will provide a point of contact for the HSE and other service providers to engage with socially isolated men, providing opportunities for increased health screening, health promotion and awareness-raising. This initiative is strategically aligned with LCDP in terms of its contribution to increased awareness and uptake of services, opportunities for informal education and greater involvement of disadvantaged men in community structures.

## 6.2 Strategic alignment with national policy priorities

### The Policy Context

As resources for social inclusion work tighten and needs increase, Wexford Local Development understands the importance of dovetailing local efforts to combat social exclusion with national policy on this issue. In order to achieve a full return on social investment, it is vital that the work of local development companies is fully in tune with national social inclusion priorities and policy initiatives.

The Government is committed to a coherent strategy for social inclusion based on the lifecycle approach reflected in several key policy documents. The principal policy document aimed at addressing poverty and achieving social inclusion is the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPinclusion) – *Building An Inclusive Society 2007-2016*. This National Action Plan, complemented by the social inclusion elements of the National Development Plan 2008-2013 – *Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All and Towards 2016* the Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement for 2006 - 2015, sets out how the social inclusion strategy will be achieved over the period to 2016.

WLD's Strategic Plan for the delivery of the Local and Community Development Programme in Co. Wexford reflects these national policy initiatives in two respects. Firstly, the local objective statements agreed reflect the lifecycle approach of the key social inclusion policy documents at national level with actions targeted at and/or inclusive of children and young people, people of working age, older people and people with a disability. Secondly, WLD will assess social inclusion progress locally against these national targets and specifically in relation to the outcomes and indicators prioritised in the LCDP National Framework.

Another significant policy document is the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland – *People, Places & Potential 2002-2020*. The National Spatial Strategy is a twenty-year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. Its focus is on people, on places and building communities. The National Spatial Strategy aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. In the South-East region, Wexford has been designated as a hub town, along with Kilkenny, which together with Waterford (the "Gateway") are designed to form a nationally strategic "growth triangle". The development of Wexford town as a hub will stimulate growth and opportunities in smaller towns and rural areas within its influence.

Finally the provisions of the Equal Status Act (2000 – 2004) provide a legal framework to safeguard equality of access, participation and outcome on the nine grounds: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Membership of the Traveller community. Many LCDP target groups have experienced some form of discrimination on the basis of one or more of these grounds. This strategic plan has been constructed in a way which actively seeks to engage LCDP target groups on an equal footing with other stakeholders in the process of planning for social inclusion work to meet their needs locally. WLD will remain vigilant on the issue of ensuring that actions, programmes and services delivered not only under LCDP but also with the resources of other programmes will support and promote greater equality for our target groups.

## NDP Horizontal Themes

In terms of **balanced regional development**, WLD is cognisant of the National Spatial Strategy which has designated Waterford City as the Gateway for the South-East region and Wexford as a hub town. WLD administers the National Rural Development Programme in tandem with the LCDP and a range of other programmes and endeavours to achieve synergies between these two programmes in particular in terms of links between work readiness initiatives under Goal 3 and the **development of the rural economy** in Wexford under NRDP.

In terms of **environmental sustainability**, WLD has prioritised the development of skills related to the green economy under its plan for labour market training linking with the County economic regeneration strategy. The WARM home insulation project which is supported by LCDP with funding from SEAI and FÁS also aims to reduce fuel poverty by increasing energy efficiency in homes and environmental awareness amongst low income households.

Finally, in addressing the theme of **gender equality**, this strategic plan has prioritised disadvantaged women and lone parents (predominantly female) amongst other target groups. While women are well-represented in local community structures, they are less visible in more formal structures within the county and at regional and national level. Work under Goal 4 will seek to address this imbalance. Men have been hit hard by the unemployment crisis and are experiencing many issues including poor mental health, depression and loss of social contact. This plan will specifically seek to work with men to address these issues, helping them to come to terms with the more severe impacts of unemployment and avoid associated long-term 'scarring' effects.

## Contribution to NAPS Inclusion targets

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016 has set out one overall goal for the reduction of poverty and twelve high level goals for the achievement of greater social inclusion in Ireland. The overall goal is "to reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 0% by 2012 with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016". The strategy adopts a lifecycle approach which is reflected in the goals and their associated targets. The anticipated contribution of work under WLD's local objective statements to these targets in the period from 2011 to 2013 is outlined under the description of each high-level goal below.

## Children

### Goal 1: Education

Ensure that targeted pre-school education is provided to children from urban primary school communities covered by the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan.

- *WLD will work with Wexford County Childcare Network and through initiatives under LCDP (Local Objective Statement 3) to support parents and providers in disadvantaged areas to increase access to pre-school education.*

## **Goal 2: Education**

Reduce the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties in primary schools serving disadvantaged communities. The target is to halve the proportion from the current 27%-30% to less than 15% by 2016.

- *WLD will work with children, families, community organisations and schools in disadvantaged areas and from disadvantaged groups under Local Objective Statement 2 to support efforts to increase literacy levels in line with national policy.*

## **Goal 3: Education**

Work to ensure that the proportion of the population aged 20-24 completing upper second-level education or equivalent will exceed 90% by 2013.

- *Work under Goal 2 (Local Objective Statements 2, 3 and 4) will target disadvantaged young people and will aim to increase retention and prevent early school leaving. WLD has prioritised the establishment of a dedicated LGBT youth project in Wexford (LOS 4 and 8) in response to the documented link between LGBT identity and early school leaving as a result of bullying and intimidation.*

## **Goal 4: Income Support**

Maintain the combined value of child income support measures at 33%-35% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate over the course of this Plan and review child income supports aimed at assisting children in families on low income.

- *WLD will continue to highlight the situation of low income families in its work on key planning and policy structures.*

## **People of Working Age**

### **Goal 5: Employment and Participation**

Introduce an active case management approach that will support those on long-term social welfare into education, training and employment. The target is to support 50,000 such people, including lone parents and the long-term unemployed, with an overall aim of reducing by 20% the number of those whose total income is derived from long-term social welfare payments by 2016. This target will be reviewed in the light of experience.

- *WLD already operates a case management system via the LESN and aims to introduce elements of this approach in its work under Local Objective Statement 1 to manage referrals to other services as well as more targeted work with substance misusers also envisaged under this Goal with the support of the Cornmarket Project.*

### **Goal 6: Income Support**

Maintain the relative value of the lowest social welfare weekly rate of at least €185.80, in 2007 terms, over the course of this Plan, subject to available resources.

- *WLD will continue to highlight the issue of income inequality experienced by those dependent on social welfare in its work on key planning and policy structures.*

## **Older People**

### **Goal 7: Community Care**

Continue to increase investment in community care services for older people, including home care packages and enhanced day care services, to support them to live independently in the community for as long as possible.

- *WLD will continue to support the delivery of initiatives such as the Rural Transport Programme and home insulation under the WARM project to contribute to the goal of independent living. Developmental work with older people will also provide social contact as well as a means for the voice of older people to be heard in decision-making locally.*

### **Goal 8: Income Support**

Maintain a minimum payment rate of €200 per week, in 2007 terms, for all social welfare pensions over the course of this plan.

- *WLD will continue to highlight the situation of those dependent on social welfare pensions in its work on key planning and policy structures and will continue to support older people's organisations to articulate these concerns at local, regional and national level.*

## **People with Disabilities**

### **Goal 9: Employment and Participation**

Increase the employment of people with disabilities with the immediate objective of having an additional 7,000 of that cohort in employment by 2010. The longer-term target is to raise the employment rate of people with disabilities from 37% to 45% and to increase the overall participation rate in education, training and employment to 50% by 2016.

- *WLD will actively support people with disabilities to access employment supports both internal to the company under Goal 3 and externally under Goal 1.*



## Communities

### Goal 10: Housing

Deliver high quality social housing for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the development of sustainable communities. An important element will be the enhanced housing output reflected in 'Towards 2016', which will result in the accommodation needs of some 60,000 new households being addressed over the period 2007 to 2009, including meeting the special housing needs of the homeless, travelling community, older people and people with disabilities.

- *WLD will continue to highlight the housing needs of LCDP target groups in particular those named in this high level goal. Work under Local Objective Statement 8 will also focus on increasing access by these groups to decision-making and policy structures locally which directly engage with the issue of housing and accommodation.*

### Goal 11: Health

Develop 500 Primary Care Teams by 2011 which will improve access to services in the community with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of holders of medical cards.

- *WLD will continue to highlight the value of primary care interventions in preventing illness and reducing ill health amongst LCDP target groups and will work at community level to complement the mainstream health services linking in particular with the Health Promotion section of the HSE locally and the SE Traveller Health Unit under Goals 1 and 4.*

### Goal 12: Integration of Migrants

Develop a strategy aimed at achieving the integration of newcomers in our society. As an initial action, resources for the provision of 550 teachers for language supports by 2009 and access to other public services through translation of information and supports will be improved.

- *WLD will continue to engage with migrants, addressing their needs through the development of effective local structures under Goal 4 and recreational and educational activities under Goal 2.*

The aim of the NAPSInclusion is to facilitate greater co-ordination and integration of structures and procedures across Government at national and local levels as well as improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms. The emphasis is on services and activation as a means of achieving social inclusion. The key themes informing the strategy include:

- Collective responsibility and coordinated and integrated approaches
- Strengthened interagency collaboration and 'joined up' services
- Adopting a lifecycle approach
- Investing in, supporting and empowering communities
- Monitoring and evaluation against set social inclusion targets

*WLD, by maintaining a strong partnership approach to its work, will contribute to these overarching themes of collaborative work and support for communities. WLD also intends to develop a robust system to measure the outcomes of the work in order to make a clear link between the impact of work on the ground and the achievement of national targets.*