



RAPID STRATEGIC PLAN 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carlow Area Implementation Team

July 2003



1 Background / Introduction

The RAPID programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) is aimed at improving the quality of life and the opportunities available to residents of the most disadvantaged communities in Irish cities and towns.

In a focused and practical way it aims to reduce the deprivations faced by residents of disadvantaged communities. It will do this through targeting state and local resources at the needs of the areas targeted.

These resources will be offered through targeted investment, provided through the Social Inclusion Measures of the National Development Plan.

Re-examining current methods of local service delivery, re-designing this delivery and redirecting existing resources so that the community's needs are better met are also key features of the RAPID programme.

Both of these elements of RAPID's work will be based on the principle that the services needed by these communities are best defined and planned by the communities themselves. All work, therefore, takes place with the full participation of the communities in which the programme operates.

RAPID is intended to result in significant and noticeable improvements in the lives of the residents of the areas that it serves.

The RAPID programme is the result of a commitment made within Framework III of the Programme for Prosperity & Fairness (PPF) to target investment in disadvantaged areas.

On the 6th Feb. 2001, the government agreed 25 target areas in the main urban centres (Strand 1) to be the focus of this programme.

Early in 2002, the government agreed to target a further 20 Provincial centres (Strand 2). In Carlow town two specific areas were designated, namely Graiguecullen and the Tullow Rd area.

“The RAPID Programme for provincial towns is about revitalising and renewing the selected towns. It's about targeting those communities in these towns who have, to an extent, missed out on our recent prosperity and frontloading investment under the NDP in the selected towns.”

Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D., Minister for the Environment and Local Government, on the launch of Strand 2 of the RAPID programme. Feb 2002.

In line with programme guidelines, a RAPID co-ordinator, Sinead Fitzpatrick, was recruited in July 2002 to support and develop the implementation of the programme in Carlow.

Nationally, Area Implementation Teams (AIT) were established in all RAPID areas. The AIT brought together statutory, voluntary and community representation whose primary role is the implementation and delivery of the programme at local level.

Likewise, the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) working group of the County Development Boards were identified as the monitoring committee of the programme at local level.

Given the importance of community and resident participation in the process, a forum, RAPID Communities Achieving Targets (RCAT) was established representative of the target communities. RCAT have three members representing their group on the Area Implementation Team. This facilitates wider participation, feedback and communication.

These three structures work in a co-ordinated manner to bring about positive change in the targeted RAPID communities.

Nationally the RAPID programme is within the remit of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaelteacht Affairs who have contracted ADM to co-ordinate the implementation of the programme.

At the outset the AIT were requested to develop an Interim Plan for submission in October 2002. This document identified a number of local and national initiatives for priority implementation. Carlow Area Implementation Team have been working towards the implementation of actions identified and to developing the strategic plan in partnership with the RAPID communities.

The AIT has proved itself a strong forum for identifying local needs, liaising with the communities, developing inter-agency responses and for prioritising local resources to meet community needs.

The Strategic Plan was formally adopted and endorsed by the Area Implementation Team on June 26th 2003, following which it was presented to the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group and endorsed on June 30th 2003.

The AIT are committed to the full implementation of this plan, which has clearly been led by residents of the RAPID communities.

The primary objective of the RAPID programme is to improve the quality of life of residents living in the targeted communities of Graiguecullen and the Tullow Rd area.

Through ongoing consultation with and participation of communities and agencies this strategic plan clearly identifies the necessary steps for improved service delivery and investment in the target areas.

In total 30 local actions have been developed, which require agencies in Carlow to prioritise support from their existing resources, 15 project proposals have received priority endorsement from the AIT and have been submitted to the appropriate

departments which require targeted investment from the NDP, there are a further ¹⁷ project applications yet to be finalised and submitted to relevant departments.

The key to successful implementation of this plan is increased co-operation between communities and agencies, collaborative responses to identified needs, co-ordination of existing resources in Carlow and a commitment from agencies and government departments at local and national level to active prioritisation of the actions identified.

¹ Not accounting for potential applications to DCRGA for Community & Voluntary Grants.

Carlow Area Implementation Team

Clare Knight	Graiguecullen Representative
Liam Hendricken	Tullow road Representative
Cathleen Holmes	Tullow Rd Representative
Helen O'Connell	CANDO.
Ger Deering	Carlow County Council, AIT Chairperson
Imelda Timpson	Community Services - FAS
Benny Mills	Carlow Gardai
Marian Duffy	Community Education Facilitator, VEC
Marie Kennedy	South Eastern Health Board
Frank Commerford	Dept. of Social & Family Affairs
Helen O'Connell	CANDO
Michael Brennan	Carlow Town Council
Michael Abbey	Cathaoirleach Carlow Town Council
Sinead O'Keefe	School Completion Programme
Sinead Fitzpatrick	RAPID Co-ordinator

AGENCY PARTICIPATION:

The role of agency representatives on the Area Implementation Team is:

- To ensure that agency input into the programme is appropriate, resourced and effectively managed.
- To develop internal reporting structures within organisations to ensure all relevant management is fully informed of the programme's actions.
- To oversee the alignment of agency budgets and local RAPID agency delivery programme.
- To communicate with the relevant National Departments re local RAPID plans.
- To lead on the identification of funding sources for projects.
- To prioritise local resources in target areas.
- To ensure that agency management is fully aware of all reports being provided to National Departments and National Monitoring Committee.
- To negotiate with other state agencies on issues of service co-ordination and integration.
- To arrange for appropriate agency representation on any working groups examining relevant service provision issues.
- To lead the development of agency responses to the priorities identified.
- To establish and lead multi-agency/community task groups on individual/themed issues.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

Following the consultation phase of the RAPID programme, RCAT (RAPID Communities Achieving Targets) was formed. This group is representative of residents of the RAPID community.

The primary role of this group is to:

- To be a point of contact for resident for information on the RAPID programme.
- To feedback information to the wider community and resident groups.
- To inform community representatives on community needs, which would in turn be fed back to the AIT.
- To support the community representatives in their role on the AIT.
- To encourage wider community participation in the RAPID programme.
- To invite relevant personnel to speak to the group on specific issues and to assist and inform the group of supports that they could access.
- To participate in task groups, and encourage others in the community to become involved.
- To identify possible initiatives in response to needs and work with appropriate partner organisations with particular expertise in developing these initiatives.
- To engage in wider community structures such as Carlow Community network

INTERIM PLAN: REVIEW / RESUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

INTERIM PLAN: Locally Based Initiatives

SOCIO/ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

CANDO prioritised resources for the completion of a socio-economic of the Graiguecullen and Tullow Rd area.

COMMITTEE SKILLS / EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK PROGRAMME

RCAT (RAPID Communities Achieving Targets) have completed a 10-week programme in committee skills and effective teamwork supported by CANDO and Carlow Community Network.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

CANDO, Carlow County Council and Open Door CDP co-ordinated a 10-week programme in community / tenant participation for residents of RAPID Communities on the Tullow Rd. Residents identified this programme as a need during the RAPID consultation phase. As a result four of the target areas have developed local area plans aimed at developing and sustaining their communities.

GRAIGUECULLEN OUTDOOR EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Carlow Vocational Education Committee (VEC) have prioritised Graiguecullen for an outdoor pursuits programme for young people of the target area.

PRIORITISATION OF C.E INITIATIVES:

FAS have prioritised RAPID areas in relation to maintaining allocated community employment positions.

HOUSING LIASION SUPPORT

Four communities in RAPID areas have been prioritised for targeted support from the Tennant Liaison Officer. This has directly impacted on the strengthening of residents association, developing links with other agencies to access training programmes, environmental actions and the expansion of the local bus service in one community.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT:

Carlow County Council have prioritised RAPID areas in support of community clean ups. Communities were supported through the allocation of addition skips, resourced with the personnel support of the amenity trust employees and environmental officers and provided with necessary equipment such as gloves, bags, rubbish picks ect.

PRIDE OF PLACE:

During the RAPID consultation phase, the Civic Link youth group participated in a photography initiative to identify environmental and safety issues in their community. As a result of this they organised a large-scale community clean up day in John Sweeney Park. This initiative encouraged the wider community to maintain their area and ongoing community clean-ups have resulted in the community being chosen to represent Carlow in the 'Pride of Place' initiative.

With ongoing support from the Town Council the young people of John Sweeney Park have continued involvement in the upkeep of the area. They recently requested a memorial bench be erected in memory of two young men from the area who died tragically. Carlow Town Council have agreed to this request and the youth group will be involved in enhancing the area by planting trees and flowers, they have also agreed to take responsibility for the long-term upkeep of the area.

UNISON BOXES

Carlow Rural Information Services have prioritised the distribution of Unison Box's in RAPID areas. Theses boxes enable residents to access the Internet via their television set. To date a number of residents from the Tullow Rd have received the boxes and appropriate training. Distribution is to begin in Graiguecullen in the near future.

Interim Plan: National Project Submission

CW-CRLW-001 YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE

Submitted on the 20/09/02. Initial response indicates that due to high level of existing commitments and the limited budget available that it was not possible to provide funding in 2002. This application has been resubmitted for consideration under the 2003 RAPID Strategic Plan.

CW-CRLW-002 DISADVANTAGED YOUTH PROJECT

Submitted on the 20/09/02. Due to high level of existing commitments and the limited budget available it was not possible to provide funding in 2002. This application has been resubmitted for consideration under the 2003 RAPID Strategic Plan.

In the absence of a specific youth project in Graiguecullen, agencies have prioritised resources in an attempt to meet the needs of the young people in the area. Initiatives developed include:

- VEC Outdoor pursuits programme
- CANDO Youth Sports programme
- Carlow County Council have provided resources for an Youth Arts initiative

This project remains a priority project within the RAPID plan.

CW-CRLW-003 MILLENIUM PARTNERSHIP FUND

Submitted on the 20/09/02. Application success, 25,000 euro received.

Funding received has been used to support people from target areas in their participation in third level education. Applicants from RAPID areas received a 50% increase in their allotted support

CW-CRLW-004 EXP. HOME BASED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Application submitted 20/09/02. Awaiting update

CW-CRLW-005 PARENTING CO-ORDINATOR

Application submitted 20/09/02. Awaiting update

CW-CRLW-006 COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR YOUTH AT RISK

Application submitted 20/09/02. Additional funding (15,000 euro) has been prioritised and allocated to Carlow Regional Youth Services for Youth at Risk

CW-CRLW-007 EXP. HOME BASED PARENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

Application submitted 20/09/02. Awaiting update

CW-CRLW-008 DISABILITY RESEARCH GRANT – CAM

Application Unsuccessful. CANDO have proceeded with this action from existing resources

CW-CRLW-009 ASKEA COMMUNITY CHILDCARE PROGRAMME

Submitted 10/10/02. Approved for 500,000 euro.

CW-CRLW-010 YPFSF² Facilities Application (DE&S)

Application submitted for a central youth facility in Carlow town.

CW-CRLW-011 YPFSF Services Application (DE&S)

Application submitted for continued funding for youth work activities under the YPFSF.

CW-CRLW-012 Garda Youth Project (DJELR)

Application submitted for a target garda youth project for Graiguecullen.

CW-CRLW-013 Eire Og Sports Capital Grant (DAT&S)

Funding secured for extension to existing premises, E100,000

CW-CRLW-014 Housing Management Initiative (DELG)

Application Successful. E45,330 approved.

CW-CRLW-015 NAOINRE – Staff Grant – EOCP (DJELR)

Application for staffing grant for the Irish language childcare facilities in Graiguecullen and the Tullow Rd.

² Young People Facilities & Services Fund

STRATEGIC PLAN: PROJECT SUBMISSIONS TO BE DEVELOPED

CW-CRLW-016 Open Door CDP Childcare Application (DJELR)

To develop a local childcare facility in the John Sweeney Park / Laurel area, the application will be developed following additional analysis of childcare needs on the Tullow Rd area.

CW-CRLW-017 Graiguecullen Family Resource Centre (DCRGA)

To initiate research and pre-development work necessary for the development of a family resource centre in Graiguecullen.

CW-CRLW-018 Safety Supports for the Elderly (DCRGA)

To provide elderly residents with socially monitored alarm systems.

CW-CRLW-019 Springboard Initiative (DH)

A number of Springboard initiatives are to be prioritised in RAPID areas over the next 2 years. Carlow AIT will develop an application in response to family support needs identified during consultation.

CW-CRLW-020 Traveller Primary Healthcare Initiative (DJELR)

Following a pre-development programme, an application for the provision of a mainstream primary healthcare initiative will be submitted.

CW-CRLW-021 Equality for Women Project (DJELR)

The Equality for Women project piloted in Carlow has had a significant impact in RAPID Communities particularly Graiguecullen. It is a priority to secure mainstream funding to ensure the project continues.

CW-CRLW-022 Community & Voluntary Grants (DCRGA)

A number of project applications have been submitted under the community & voluntary grants initiative. Carlow AIT will forward endorsed applications which meet the priority needs identified in the consultation process.

STRATEGIC PLAN: LOCAL PROJECTS / ACTIONS

Theme: Environment

TR01 Burrin Manor Riverside Development

To develop the riverbank area in Burrin Manor as a natural community resource inclusive of an amenity walkway & fishing bays.

G02 Community Liaison Team

To establish a community liaison team to co-ordinate and support the maintenance and upkeep of Carlow Park.

TR03 Environmental Support

To prioritise RAPID communities for support in environmental actions e.g. community clean up's, recycling initiatives, environmental awareness.

Theme: Play & Recreation

TRG4 Youth Sports Programme

To develop a comprehensive range of sporting opportunities for young people in target communities, informal street soccer teams, Boxing Club, Youth Health and Fitness programme, training re equestrian care, water safety.

TRG5 Access to facilities

To support young people in accessing local facilities and address issues relating to insurance and supervision, explore the potential of existing facilities eg schools for youth work activity.

G6 Youth Arts Initiative

To develop a youth arts programme in Graiguecullen, with a view to long term support from the youth theatre co-ordinator.

Theme: Education & Training

TRG7 Locally based community / adult education programmes

To prioritise RAPID communities for locally based community education programmes.

TRG8 Research Action

To research the needs of early school leavers in the target areas, identifying current services available to meet their needs and possible gaps that may need to be addressed.

TR9 After Schools Services

To expand the current after-schools services provided in both target areas, at present this service is available to a small % of children.

Theme: Employment & Industry

TRG10 Local Employment

To develop links between new employers in Carlow Town and residents of target communities, with a view to supporting residents in accessing locally based employment opportunities.

TRG11 Employment skills Programme

To target residents in communities to participate in programmes aimed at increasing their opportunities of securing employment eg personal development, computer training, interview skills ect. Link with existing organisations delivering such services and if necessary develop collaborative programmes to meet these needs.

Theme: Area Facilities & Services

G12 Expansion of Bus Service

To expand the current bus service in Graiguecullen to the Fr. Byrne Park / The Numbers area.

G13 Sacred Heart Hall

To support and promote the development of the Sacred Heart Hall in Graiguecullen as a central community facility.

G14 Citizens Information Centre

To develop a satellite Citizens Information Centre in Graiguecullen which would be available on a weekly basis.

TR15 New Oak Community Facility

To support the residents of New Oak Estate in progressing the construction of a purpose built community facility.

TR16 The Laurels: Childcare Facility

To explore potential opportunities to the community in developing a childcare facility in the Laurels / John Sweeney Park area.

TRG17 Local Area Plan

To develop a local area plan for the overall physical development of the target areas.

TRG18 Information Strategy re statutory services

To develop accessible, community friendly information initiatives aimed at informing communities of the work and services of statutory agencies.

Theme: Community Development

TRG19 Community Participation

To strengthen local participation in Carlow Community Network structures; therefore strengthening the mechanism for community representation on decision making structures e.g. Community Forum, County Development Board, SPC's etc.

TRG20 Capacity Building Programme

To work with residents in developing their understanding of local development issues and their capacity to collectively represent the voice of the wider community.

TRG21 Social Inclusion Strategy

To develop specific programmes aimed at increasing awareness in relation to socially excluded groups, i.e. anti-discrimination work, racism, cultural difference and appreciation of diversity.

TR22 Conflict Resolution and Mediation

To support community mediation services in communities that are experiencing difficulty with particular issues.

TRG23 Social Inclusion Support Programme

To work with existing anti-poverty groups in Carlow to strengthen their voice both locally and nationally and support them in progressing the social inclusion agenda in Carlow.

TRG24 Local Democracy programme

To support residents participation in local democracy through the implementation of citizenship programmes, and the provision of outreach voter registration facilities.

TRG 25 Targeted Support of Marginalized Groups:

To support agencies working with communities who have experienced specific barriers and social exclusion and to ensure that priority support is given in the implementation of actions developed for disadvantaged groups e.g. Travellers, Lone Parents, Youth, Women, people with disabilities ect.

Theme: Community Health & Safety

TRG26 Riverbank Safety

To link with the Garda Riverwatch Scheme to ensure appropriate safety procedures are in place.

TRG27 Neighbourhood Watch / Community Alert

To establish neighbourhood watch schemes in target communities, ensuring residents have contact with their assigned community garda.

TRG28 Community Health Initiative

To develop a programme aimed at the promotion of healthy lifestyles, eating habits and activities. Develop opportunities for outreach health programmes in target communities.

TRG29 Community Safety Group

To develop a community safety group, bringing together Carlow Local Authority, the Gardai and residents in order to identify specific issues in target communities and develop appropriate responses

TRG30 Primary Healthcare Pre-Development Programme

To develop a primary healthcare pre development programme for the Travelling community in target areas. The programme is aimed at building the capacity of participant so as to enable them to participate in a mainstream primary healthcare initiative.

Conclusion:

Since the launch of the RAPID programme the economic climate has changed considerably, this however makes the RAPID programme a more influential factor in the allocation of available resources.

While recognising that it has taken some time, Government Departments are now using RAPID as a key factor in making decisions regarding available resources.

The government commitment to the programme is specifically notable in programme application forms requesting whether or not the application targets a RAPID area. Also the proposed introduction of a fourth measure to the local development social inclusion programme, aimed at leveraging resources to RAPID Communities demonstrates the long-term commitment of Government to RAPID communities.

At local level, RAPID has enabled communities to liaise directly with agencies regarding their priority needs. This has resulted in a number of initiatives being developed which specifically target and benefit RAPID communities.

As we move into the project implementation phase of the programme it is agency co-operation, collaboration and prioritisation strategies that will have most influence on the impact of the RAPID programme locally.