Clare County Council

Section C Key recommendations, Objectives and actions for the new Strategy 2010 - 2013

1 Key Recommendations

Following a two-year period of consultation on and review of the implementation and delivery structures of the Strategy, 2005- 2009[1], it was recommended to retain the key aims of: strengthening the Traveller community's culture; developing self-governance capacity; enhancing quality of life and ensuring cohesive service delivery. It was also recommended to make certain adjustments to the Strategy's delivery structures. In order to achieve the key aims, each IG was asked to identify five objectives on which they would focus on a limited number of actions by means of which these objectives would be delivered. In order to increase both awareness of the new strategy and involvement in its implementation, each IG was also asked to: run an annual activity that would have wide appeal and would act as a neutral occasion to disseminate significant information; engage in outreach work with ten families who were not currently familiar with the Strategy or its implementation. In relation to implementation mechanisms, it was recommended that a process be identified; to trigger more speedy national responses; to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of IGs; to strengthen Traveller organisation; to respond to emergencies in an effective and timely manner. In relation to monitoring mechanisms, it was recommended that the performance indicators of all actions be quantifiable and that they be achieved within the timeframe of the Strategy.

---

[1] "Report on Consultation for new Strategy for the Co-ordination of Public Services to the Traveller Community" 2009.

2 Employment and Enterprise

2.1 Introduction

Employment as well as an enterprising culture is central to the generation of the many public goods and services that enrich modern living. They are equally important in providing individuals and families with the private goods and services that they may require from time to time. In addition, work and employment have their own intrinsic psychological and social value in creating a sense of achievement and a sense of power in shaping one's life and that of one's community.

2.2 Building on Success and addressing blockages

Many enterprise-related opportunities have been opened up by the development of the Shannon Horse Project, the success of work placements and the experience of self-employment. In addition, a number of actions can be further developed if certain blockages are addressed. Consequently, it is recommended:

Clare County Council

2.3   Objectives

Work and Employment Objective 1

"To develop an equine-related enterprise" by means of:

- providing training in equine and land management for traveller adults and children.

Work and Employment Objective 2

"Increase the number of young travellers taking up work placements" **by means of:**

- developing financial incentives for the young travellers to take up work placements.

Work and Employment Objective 3

"Identify potential employers of members of the Traveller Community" by means of:

- building working relationships with employers through their associations and networks.

Work and Employment Objective 4

"Increase employers' engagement of members of the Traveller Community" by means of:

- developing an employment prospectus that highlights the benefits to employers of providing work experience, work placement, apprenticeships and employment to members of the Traveller Community".

Work and Employment Objective 5

"To annually achieve '3 month' work placements" or "apprenticeships", where possible by means of:

- Identifying potential employers
- Introducing suitably qualified candidates to these schemes

3   Accommodation

3.1   Introduction

Accommodation is one of many elements that enhance people's quality of life by contributing to: the quality of family life; the sense of belonging and community; the formal and informal practices that underpin good neighbourliness; the shelter from which people can comfortably move and to which they can securely return. In these ways accommodation provides for and underpins a sense of neighbourhood and local identity. Collectively, accommodation and its surroundings offer opportunities for taking pleasure and pride in its beauty, development and maintenance. It also offers opportunities for people to actively shape both their relationships and their environment.

3.2   Building on Success and addressing Blockages

The successful completion of a number of accommodation-related actions strengthened the Traveller community's ability to move from the roadside to settled accommodation and, by and large, to manage and maintain their accommodation. This has been particularly the case in mixed housing estates. Progress was difficult on those actions that required highly specialised skills and high-level collaboration among the relevant agencies and where the support of the Traveller community, its leaders and representatives were required. The successes can be best built on by recognising the importance of: people taking pride in their neighbourhood; agencies collaborating to address difficult issues; neighbourhoods making binding collective decisions; availing of private-sector supply of accommodation; engaging in low-level self management; strengthening the cultural integrity of the Traveller community. Consequently, it is recommended:

3.3   Objectives

Accommodation Objective 1

"To increase residents' involvement and pride in their estate" by means of

- piloting a Traveller-led environmental planting programme at a Traveller Group Housing Scheme, involving at least 50% of the young children living there.

Accommodation Objective 2

"To reduce the illegal, unauthorised and poor behaviour that undermines the quality of life of the residents" be means of:

- establishing a multi-agency estate management action group for a small mixed development where these issues arise.

Accommodation Objective 3

"To increase the Traveller Community's ease of access to private rented accommodation" by means of providing information and advice resources to:

- increase landlords' and communities awareness;
- encourage travellers to recommend other traveller families;
- encourage landlords to positively advocate to other landlords.

Accommodation Objective 4

"To increase the capacity of the Traveller Community in Group Housing Schemes to effectively manage certain aspects of their own scheme" by means of:

- Preparing a document on the basis of which negotiations can take place to make keys to barriers available and pilot these negotiations on one site.

Accommodation Objective 5

"To increase the cultural expression of the traveller community" by means of:

- a lease agreement between the Local Authority and some Traveller families, on a site for keeping horses.

4 Health and Well-Being

4.1 Introduction

Physical and mental health, as well as general well-being, are key components to a good quality of life and to a willingness to participate and collaborate with others. A large number of factors impinge on individual and family health and well-being such as: genetics; cultural and social identity; quality of family life and friendships; quality of social and physical environments, including accommodation. People and communities who experience poor health and poor well-being are less likely; to aspire to better life conditions; to engage with others; to value relationships, activities and occasions for their own sake rather than their usefulness. Consequently, it is highly significant that, when compared with the general population, the Traveller community scores poorly across a number of indicators of health and well-being. For example, in comparison to the settled population, their average life expectancy is 10-12 years lower, their rates of both infant mortality and stillbirths are double and their rates of throat, ear and chest infections are much higher.

4.2 Building on Success and addressing Blockages

A number of primary healthcare workers, drawn from the Traveller community, have been trained and were central to carrying out: the health needs assessment; liaising with and informing the Traveller community; supporting the implementation of the actions in the previous strategy. Because of the importance of identity to physical and mental health as well as to quality of life, the understanding, appreciation and acceptance of Traveller culture is paramount to service delivery and uptake. A similar understanding of settled culture and of the central position played by public services in that culture is very important for the Traveller community to integrate with comfort and security and without threat to their identity. Consequently it is recommended:

4.3 Objectives

Health Objective 1

Clare County Council

"To increase the awareness of the Traveller culture among frontline staff and management in HSE and other agencies" by means of:

- a Traveller cultural awareness training programme delivered by the Primary Healthcare Programme and Traveller Health Unit.

Health Objective 2

"To achieve awareness amongst all Traveller Families as to their respective Primary Care Team and other local services" by means of:

- designing and developing a literacy-friendly Directory of Services and disseminating it to all Traveller Families.

Health Objective 3

"To increase the uptake, among the Traveller Community, of various health and personal social services initiatives such as 'Breast-check', 'Cervical and Prostate cancer screening', 'Immunisation Programmes' and 'Mental Health Services'" by means of:

- Health education programmes
- Promotion and awareness-raising
- A Mental Health Needs Assessment with Traveller Men
- The Health IG will strengthen links with the Clare Local Area Network (LAN) in order to support Traveller Women to access information and use Services. Information on Violence Against Women (VAW) training will be circulated to all Interagency Partners.

Health Objective 4

"To increase awareness among members of the Traveller Community as to what to expect should they attend a hospital" by means of:

Developing a user-friendly resource that is piloted in Ennis General Hospital

Health Objective 5

"To increase the uptake of the Child Development Appointments" by means of:

- Four public health nurses referring traveller families to primary healthcare workers for extra support in attending Child Development Appointments.

5   Education

5.1   Introduction

Lifelong informal and formal learning processes enable individuals and communities to both generate and access culturally-valued relationships, interactions, goods and services. The balance between informal and formal learning and between peer-led and mentor-led learning is one marker of cultural difference. In the predominant settled culture, great value is placed on individualism, female participation in the workforce and the early formal socialisation of children. These values are justified (rationalised) on the basis that they provide opportunities for all to succeed socio-economically on the basis of individual merit. However, unlike most other ethnic cultures, neither individualism, workforce participation nor early schooling are highly valued in traveller culture where, in addition, the family continues to be important, female employment prospects are poor and larger families provide their own environment for socialisation.

5.2   Building on Success and addressing Blockages

The achievement of socialisation within a process that recognises the need to reconcile and integrate the diverse values of the settled and Traveller communities, is a key challenge to the new Strategy. Consequently it is recommended;

5.3   Objectives

Education Objective 1

"To increase the commitment and competency of statutory, community and voluntary agencies that work with the Traveller Community, to counter racism and discrimination" by means of:

Clare County Council

- each agency, involved in the Strategy, adopting an anti-racism and anti-discrimination policy
- assigning frontline staff to undertake anti-racism and anti-discrimination training.

Education Objective 2

"To increase the uptake/return to education and employment opportunities for young members of the Traveller Community, who are outside mainstream provision" by means of:

- appointing a trainee, who is a member of the Traveller Community, to work with such young people
- providing a mentor for the trainee

Education Objective 3

"To increase the attendance of traveller children in integrated 'early-years' settings and increase the engagement of Traveller parents" by means of:

- developing integrated provision of early childhood care and education for children from the settled and Traveller communities.
- Delivering specific workshops, including specially developed DVD

Education Objective 4

"To increase the retention of Traveller students during their first three years in secondary schools" by means of;

- engaging a peer-support worker to encourage, 6 No. students who are at risk of leaving the education system

Education Objective 5

"To enhance the market potential of culturally transmitted skills of members of the Traveller Community" by means of:

- developing vocationally-based FETAC modules around such skills and market opportunities
- implementing the appropriate modules.

6 Promoting community and inter-community activities

In order to strengthen the Traveller community's cultural identity and sense of well-being by means of integrative activities, that can be shared by the traveller and settled communities, it is recommended:

- "To organise an annual sulky race". Lead – Work & Employment IG
- "To organise or contribute to an Inter-Cultural event in the schools highlighting the uniqueness of the Traveller Culture." Lead – Education IG
- "To implement an annual award scheme for permanent Traveller Group Accommodation Schemes in both categories of 'best new' and 'best-kept' grotto". Lead – Accommodation IG
- "To organise a road show to schools, events and fairs, highlighting the importance of healthy lifestyles". Lead – Health IG

7 Increasing engagement with and awareness of the Strategy

A number of traveller families have little awareness or involvement with the strategy. In order to increase their understanding and engagement an on-site outreach programme will be initiated. Community and Enterprise (Clare Co. Council) will assist this process by developing generic materials in conjunction with the 4 Implementation Groups, each of which will:

"engage over a period of six months, with 10 families who are not currently involved with any element of the strategy and continue to engage with them every six months for the remainder of the Strategy"

8 Traveller Organisation

Ennis CDP was the lead agency in the development of a Traveller Forum, which was envisaged as the key mechanism to deliver a number of actions (8) that would: strengthen the self-governance capacity of the Traveller

Community (5); contribute to their quality of life (1); address gaps in service provision (1); co-ordinate and monitor the delivery of the strategy (1). However, the funding necessary to develop the forum was not secured. In the meantime Ennis CDP held informal discussions with members of the Traveller community, Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) as well as the IGs. These discussions aimed to establish the level of interest in a forum as well as specific roles and working methods. At the end of this process, a training and development programme was put in place. However, it proved impossible to initiate a forum because there has been: an absence of leadership; a lack of inclusive representation; a divergence of opinion due to the fragmented nature of the traveller community; poor and inconsistent attendance at meetings. It is recommended that a less ambitious organisation be set up where each member will pay a membership subscription and mutual benefit will be derived.

By focusing on such an organisation, personal and group identity is strengthened, collective decision-making is fostered and the need for collective discipline is learned since the emotion (identification with the group), time and money that has been sunk in the organisation cannot be withdrawn. As a result, both the individual members and the group would be better positioned in the future to understand and address those issues over which they had individual and collective control such as projecting a positive image of their community as well as fostering quality intra- and inter-family relationships. It is recommended that, after a two-year lead-in period, representation on the various IGs will be drawn from this organisation.

9   Implementation Structures

The revised structure is presented in Appendix 1, showing the Steering Group and the Four IGs with their respective chairpersons. The structure also shows that membership of the IGs is confined to those agencies which are taking a lead or support role in particular actions. The level of Traveller representation is also indicated.

10 Steering Group

The publication of the 'Report of the High–Level Group'[2] in 2006, generated a lot of momentum. However, there was a perception that much of this momentum was lost as local issues that had been referred to the High-level group remained unanswered for a long period or unresolved in terms of developing appropriate policy. It is recommended that the Steering Group identify a process to trigger more effective and timely national responses and to address blockages identified and supports needed by the IGs.

11 Emergency Response

As emergencies arise, the relevant agency will respond in line with their established emergency protocols. Where situations warrant it, they can seek assistance from other agencies as required. In the event of any such emergency a review of the response will be undertaken.

12 Implementation Groups

In addition, some of the blockages, which were identified, were attributed to weaknesses in the IG structure. In some instances these included: a failure of high level officials to chair; a failure to focus on the agreed actions and a failure to undo blockages that were identified; a failure to confine membership of IGs to decision-making personnel with authority to assign resources (personnel, finances, facilities, etc); a failure to build in the flexibility in the participation of members of the Traveller community that would ensure the presence of those who could influence outcomes. Consequently, it is recommended that each year four to six meetings of IGs will take place and that they focus mainly on undoing blockages[3]. In addition it is recommended that they be chaired by a senior executive of the relevant agency such as: Education (VEC); Accommodation (Clare Co. Council); Work/Employment (FÁS); and Health/Well-being (HSE) to ensure that personnel with decision-

---

[2] Department of Justice & Law Reform, Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues, March 2006.

[3] The practice of spending a lot of time on relaying progress has induced a false sense of successful implementation. Progress could be the focus of every third meeting.

Clare County Council

making and influencing power are present. It is also recommended that representation from the Traveller community would be sufficiently flexible to ensure that those who could best assure successful implementation of specific actions are present. It is recommended that after a two year lead-in time all representation would be drawn from the Traveller Organisation.

13   Monitoring and Review

Constant and steady progress in meeting clear targets improves motivation and collaborative working. Consequently, it is recommended that each IG set clear targets and specific timeframes and they agree a set of performance indicators for their actions. In relation to each performance indicator, baseline data should be acquired prior to the commencement of the action. It is recommended that each IG monitor performance twice early. In addition it is recommended that both a mid-term and final review of the Strategy be carried out by the Steering Group.

Clare County Council

14   Appendix 1 - New Structure

Steering Committee

Chair, Director of Community & Enterprise,4 Traveller Reps

4 IG Chairs

4 meetings annually

Work & Emp IG

Chair, FAS

4 Traveller Reps

Lead and support Agencies responsible for individual actions.

6 meetings annually

Education IG

Chair, VEC

4 Traveller Reps

Lead and support Agencies responsible for individual actions.

6 meetings annually

Accommodation IG Chair, Housing & Social Services, Clare County Council 4 Traveller Reps Lead and support Agencies responsible for individual actions.

6 meetings annually

Health IG

Chair, HSE

4 Traveller Reps

Lead and support Agencies responsible for individual actions.

6 meetings annually

Clare Traveller Organisation

(2 Year Developmental lead-in time)