

The Core Development Issue: Reversing Rural Decline and Loss of Population



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The Core Development Issue: Reversing Rural Decline and Loss of Population

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The most characteristic feature of any declining rural area world-wide is the loss of young people and women from the area, with a consequently ageing population and declining economic capacity. In many parts of Europe this process has ended in eventual abandonment and desertification.

Parts of North and West Cork and some islands have already effectively lost their population. In other areas, compound social exclusion and a population of elderly age profile may be sustained over a long period without total abandonment.

Many trends are impacting on the quality of rural living. The key ones appear to be an ageing population; migration of the young; increased commuting to urban areas for employment, with associated pressures on transport infrastructure and environmental quality; growing relative affluence of urban living, loss of services delivered locally, such as pubs, schools, post offices, health care, etc.

Rural decline and loss of population are inextricably related. The main reasons for outward migration amongst the young people have been found to be lack of education and employment opportunities, challenge of a different environment, opportunities for a vibrant and varied social life and, increasingly, access to independent housing away from family.

In this chapter key features of the population trends experienced and in prospect in North and West Cork are described and some of the main implications are discussed. In effect, the pre-requisite challenges to development – a reversal of current demographic trends – are described. This is a necessary precursor to achieving the goals and aspirations of communities in North and West Cork, see Chapter 3 below.



2.2 POPULATION TRENDS

2.2.1

SUMMARY OF GENERAL TRENDS IN THE COUNTY AND THE NORTH AND WEST CORK AREA

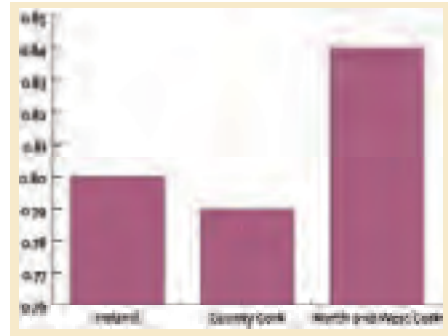
Some of the most peripheral parts of North and West Cork are undergoing a persistent negative cycle of population decline and loss of services. Other parts, particularly in the coastal zone, are experiencing the challenge of an expanding population. There was an increase of approximately 10,000 people in the county as a whole between 1981 and 1996. This took place almost entirely in the urban areas within the immediate influence of Cork City. There is substantial evidence that population growth has intensified from 1996 to the present, particularly in those areas which experienced growth between 1991-1996. At present, North and West Cork is attracting its share of inward migration of all kinds, including, for example return migrants, asylum seekers and people retiring from other European states.

Areas in County Cork growing strongly between 1991 and 1996 included Farran, Tower, Killumney, Fountainstown and Carrigtwohill. Carrigaline's population grew by just over 3,500. This growth can be considered to be essentially sub-urban in character, with a commuter population mainly dependent on Cork City for its services and employment. The population of Kinsale grew by 500 and Macroom by 100. In Macroom, population growth has been based both on increased employment

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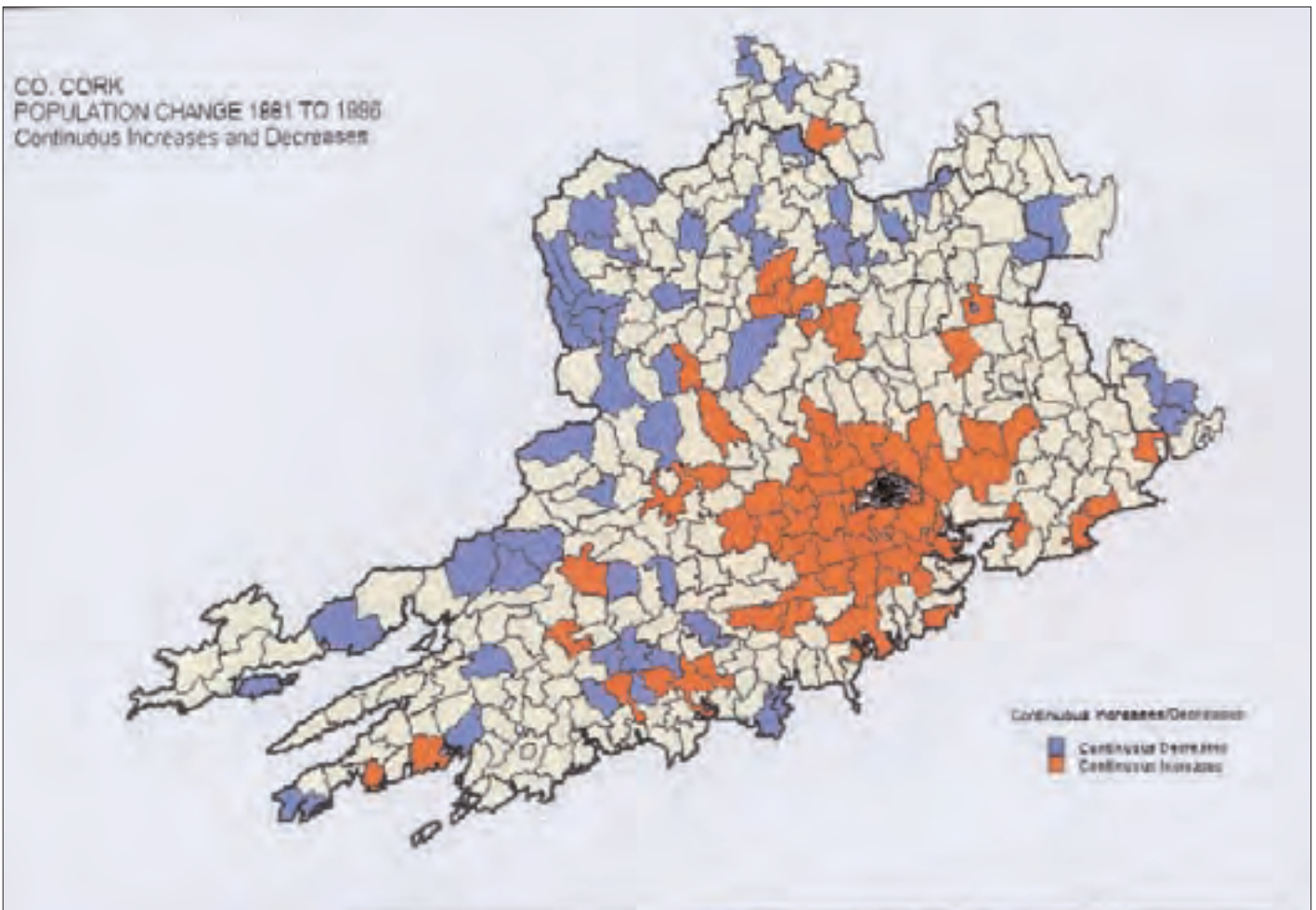
within the town and its attractiveness as a place to live. Outside the city, some coastal towns showed relatively high growth, notably Kinsale, Clonakilty, Timoleague, Bantry, Durrus and Skibbereen.

Other parts of the county, including extensive areas in North and West Cork, experienced a decline in population. During this period, the population of the North and West Cork Area as a whole fell by over 500, in spite of a natural increase in population. The electoral district of Kanturk underwent a decline in population of – 4.4 per cent and Millstreet of – 2.8 per cent: this degree of loss if it were to continue over the 20 year period would have very serious implications for these areas. Map 2.1 below illustrates the long-term population trends that have been experienced in the county from 1981 – 1996.



Age Dependency Ratio

As a result of adverse population dynamics, North and West County Cork has an older and ageing population compared with the County as a whole or nationally. In particular, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of the population aged 20-29 years, especially so in the case of females. A result is that the active population is



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smaller in North and West County Cork. Thus, nationally 24.6 per cent of the population is aged 50+ compared with 29.7 per cent in North and West County Cork. Another result is a higher age dependency ratio¹. This stands at 0.84 compared with 0.79 for County Cork and 0.80 nationally. A consequence of these relatively high age dependency ratios, when added to the fact that females are more likely to leave the Area in their 20s is that the proportion of females of child-bearing age is reduced. This will have an impact on fertility in the region and will adversely affect the future growth and structure of the population².

2.2.2

AGE AND SPATIAL ISSUES

The trend to a larger ageing population, living in isolated, scattered housing and dependent totally on car use for even basic shopping and social contact presents a serious challenge for the future. Rural isolation and lack of public transport are the two principal disadvantages of rural dwelling reported by older people.

Comparative household data from the Census shows an imbalance of younger population settled in newer housing in the environs of Cork City, Fermoy and Mallow. Older persons living alone are represented disproportionately in the older housing stock at the periphery of the county (Map 2.2).

The attractiveness of West Cork, including the West Cork towns, along with relatively cheaper land values in comparison with urban areas, has also led to a limited amount of commuter living and inward migration for retirement. Retirement brings new population and spending power into the Area, but can accentuate an already elderly age profile. Where large retirement populations emerge, heavy demands on medical and other support facilities may be expected. Public transport in these areas is an essential service. It should also be remembered that active retired people

can also make a very important contribution to community activity and quality of life in any area. Furthermore, it should be noted that these areas have experienced, also, inward migration from active persons, seeking employment and the attractions of the local life-style.

2.2.3

OUTWARD MIGRATION OF YOUNG ADULTS

Trends between the 1991 and 1996 censuses were for a dramatic loss from the 20-24 age group (5,853 in County Cork – 22 per cent of the total age cohort). This trend was acute in many rural areas, with some rural communities losing the entire cohort.

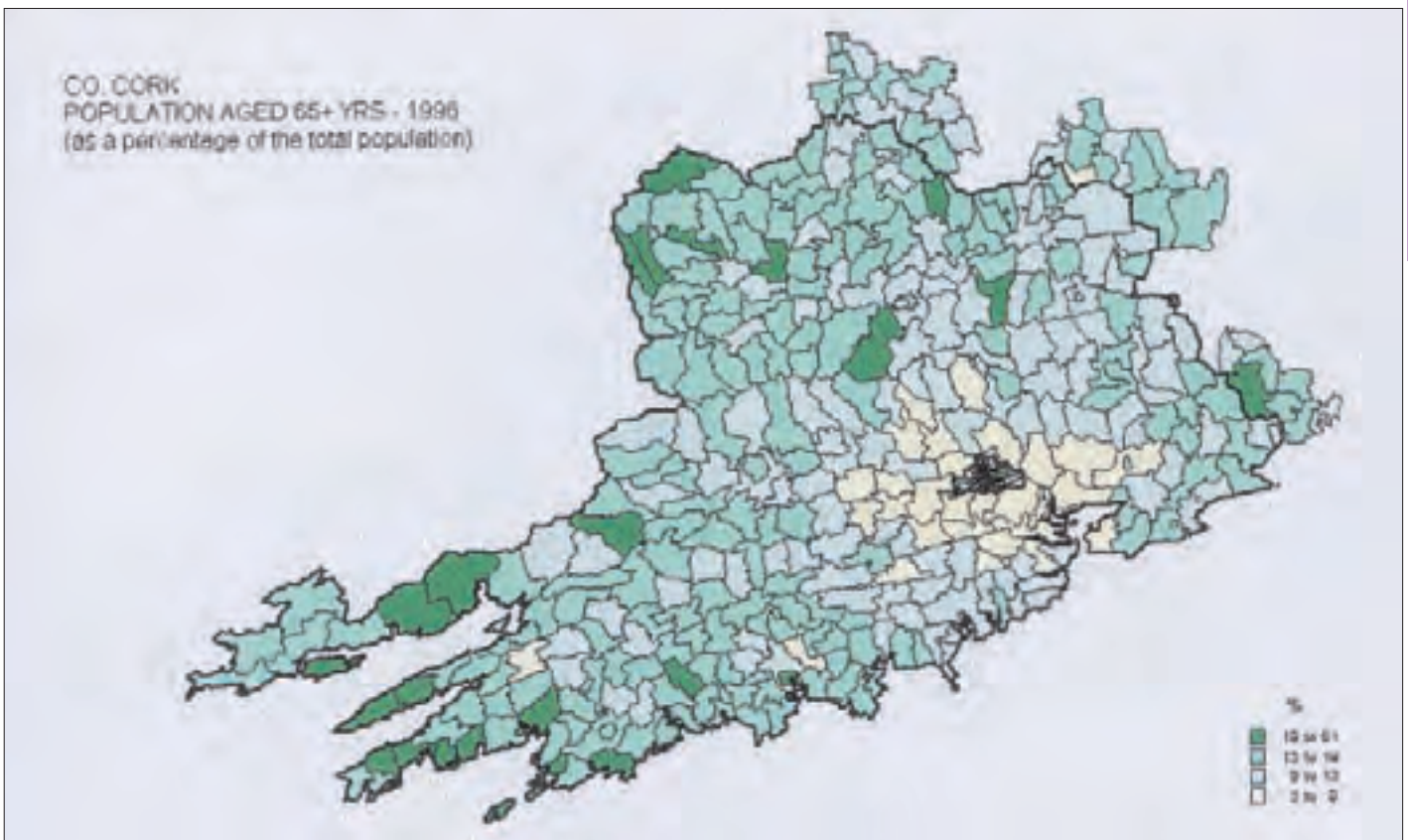
Educational, social and economic opportunities exert a powerful attraction on the mobile young single age group. Housing opportunities are also an important factor and the lack of suitable independent housing for young people places rural areas at a serious impediment to holding their young populations.

A general pattern has emerged in Ireland of migration from the younger age group from rural to urban areas, with a more limited amount of inward migration into rural areas by families and individuals in their 30s and 40s. Increased participation in third level education and increased economic and social opportunities in cities is tending to increasingly drain rural areas of their young population. Young people and women in particular have moved to larger urban areas. A tradition of inheritance of land or businesses by sons contributes to the pattern of disproportionate loss of females. In the North and West Cork Area, there is evidence of significant numbers of older single men living alone in more remote areas.

¹ Defined as the ratio of the population aged 19 and younger or older than 65 to those aged 20 to 65

² Potential fertility is defined here as the number of females aged 20 - 44 per 1,000 population.

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2.2.4 ABANDONMENT, DERELICTION AND HOLIDAY HOMES

In the North West of the County, and in some other parts of the North and West Cork Area, abandonment of houses results from the continuing problem of rural decline. North West Cork, at present rates of decline, is in danger of losing a number of primary schools and other services with desertification of some areas in terms of human habitation. The islands also have a legacy of abandonment and consequent dereliction, coupled now with pressure for holiday home development. In North West Cork, which has experienced very high levels of population loss, a rural resettlement programme has encouraged some inward movement to rural communities.

Dereliction occurs in certain parts of the North and West Cork Area, and appears to be most concentrated in the areas, which are most remote from major urban development. These show disproportionate disadvantage even within the Area. Removal of dereliction, preferably through refurbishment, is a strongly expressed community priority.



The attractiveness of West Cork, including the West Cork towns, along with relatively cheaper land values in comparison with urban areas, has also led to a limited amount of commuter living and inward migration for retirement.

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2.3 FUTURE POPULATION TRENDS

Population projections for North and West Cork have been made for the years 2001 and 2011, based on explicit assumptions for fertility and migration³. A summary is contained in Table 2.1.

	North and West Cork		Ireland	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
M1F1	1.08	0.97	1.13	1.13
M1F3	1.07	0.66	1.12	1.12
M2F1	0.95	0.68	1.00	1.00
M2F3	0.93	0.37	0.98	0.98

Table 2.1: Population Projections to 2001 and 2011 (average annual % growth)

³ The fertility rates and migration rates are taken from the CSO Population and Labour Force Projection 2001-2031 (CSO, 1999). National migration is taken to be an indicator of the impact of economic performance on population while fertility reflects the impact of changing cultural norms. While there may be some divergence between the national and local level over some specific time, it is reasonable to assume the similar overall trends will assert themselves. The CSO assumptions are:

Fertility:

- £ F1: TFR to increase from its 1998 level to 2.0 by 2001 and remain constant thereafter;
- £ F3: TFR to remain at its 1998 level to 2001, decrease to 1.5 by 2011 and remain constant thereafter.

Migration:

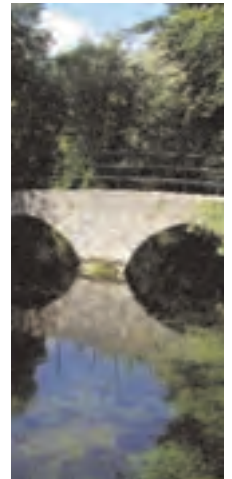
- £ M1: **Immigration continuing but diminishing**
 +20,000 per annum in 1996/2001
 +15,000 per annum in 2001/2006
 +10,000 per annum in 2006/2011
- £ M2: **Immigration diminishing**
 +15,000 per annum in 1996/2001
 +5,000 per annum in 2001/2006
 zero net migration in 2006/2011

The main point of these projections is that they show positive growth in the North and West Cork Area under all eight scenarios. However, the growth is less than is projected at the national level. They also indicate considerable sensitivity of the population of the Area to developments at national level.

Growth varies considerably between different areas and even with the most optimistic projection (M1F1) there are many DEDs that continue to experience decline. With the least optimistic projection (M2F3), 52 out of the 181 DEDs lose population in the period 1996-2001.

Population growth also varies between and across the Area. However, all regions show positive growth under all assumptions. This contrasts with the experience, particularly in the West region in recent years. This outcome is due to the positive impact of national growth and the assumption that the trends that have been observed in recent years will diminish over time.

There are a number of other important issues emerging. The first relates to the projection that the Coastal region will experience growth of over 20 per cent up to 2011. This has important implications for housing and infrastructure in the Area. In addition, the CSO assumptions may be conservative regarding developments at the national level given the strong economic prospects and the considerable tightening of the labour market⁴.



⁴ With a resumption in these circumstances migration could be higher and labour force participation rates could increase faster.

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Projections for the West and East show a quite different picture. Although it remains positive over the whole period, the rate of growth has fallen for the longer period under the less optimistic assumptions. This means that there is a fall in the period 2001 to 2011 under these assumptions. This means a return to the trend of recent years, although it was assumed that the underlying trend weakens over time. In other words, these projections indicate that unless there is a continuing strong performance at national level or a sharp change in the local trend, these regions will continue to lose population in the future. Furthermore, given the age analysis above, this loss is most likely to continue to occur in the 20 to 30 age group.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Inward migration should be an essential element of a future strategy for North and West Cork. It is necessary to replenish population numbers, as some outward migration is natural. It would bring also with it new skills, knowledge and ideas. Challenges of social integration arise for both new and receiving populations. In addition, retention of a higher proportion of the natural population increase is also needed.

If North and West Cork is to escape from the syndrome of decline, which is strongly entrenched in some areas, the primary focus of strategic action should be to make the Area an attractive place for young adults to live in. Making North and West Cork attractive to a young population is not a strategy that ignores or dismisses the needs and potential of the older population.

Decentralisation and rural resettlement are two forms of action, which directly redress spatial imbalance in population. The former is employment-induced migration and the latter relies on

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availability of affordable housing and quality of life. Both of these measures have had some success in the recent past and are likely to be important for securing the future of the Area.

Communities in parts of the Area that are suffering from very high levels of emigration, threatening the viability of communities, have been involved in rural resettlement projects. These projects involve relocation of people from urban areas into the locality.

In some inland parts of West Cork, the availability of relatively cheap land and houses in a pristine rural environment has been attractive to people seeking an “alternative” life style. This new population as with other migrants increases local expenditure and use of local services. It also brings in skills and commitment to living on the land, but in areas such as Dunmanway, with few employment opportunities, can lead to unemployment and poor social integration. These young populations represent an opportunity for rural areas but need attention and support from local community groups and development agencies to assist integration.

In both community appraisal and in the Future Search, participants considered the integration of new residents of all backgrounds into the receiving local communities as a priority issue. Given that the consolidation of the population of the Area is dependent on inward migration as the birth rate falls and emigration persists, the success of communities in drawing in new residents, is critical to their vision of a balanced, harmonious and cohesive society.



Inward migration should be an essential element of a future strategy for North and West Cork. It is necessary to replenish population numbers, as some outward migration is natural. It would bring also with it new skills, knowledge and ideas.

Recognising the Goals and Aspirations of Those Living in North and West Cork



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Recognising the Goals and Aspirations of Those Living in North and West Cork

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges for rural development in North and West Cork identified in this Plan and in the study on which it is based. Therefore, a clear vision is required of the kind of society towards which strategic actions should aim.

In this chapter, the goals and aspirations, which emerged from the process of community consultation, which was undertaken as part of the formulation of this Plan are set out and described. The methodology of the consultation process itself is described in detail in North and West Cork Strategic Study 2001-2020. The outcome of the process is summarised in the statement below, which is drawn from careful identification of the top priority goals indicated through community appraisal and Future Search, undertaken as part of the formulation of this Plan.



3.2 THE RESULTS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Themes identified in the Future Search process of stakeholder participation, broadly confirm the objectives and constraints on development identified by formal economic analysis of statistical material.

Thus, Table 3.1 summarises highest priority trends perceived by participants to affect their future.

“How we will live in 2021”

“We shall be an inclusive Area with a high level of community involvement: we shall make many local decisions for ourselves. We will have good working partnerships with public bodies. We will manage our environment in a sustainable way. Our Area will provide a good quality life for young and old, with a thriving, mixed local economy and strong links to the land and sea.

Our Area will have developed its own well-balanced network of distinctive, growing towns and villages in prosperous rural areas, with good quality housing linked by excellent public transport networks.

We shall have a culture of learning and skills, with a wide range of local training and education.

We shall preserve and enjoy our heritage and customs and celebrate the growing diversity of our population. We will have a strong communications network within our own area, across the region and world-wide.”

Table 3.1: Highest Priority Trends affecting our future

Trend	Number of Dots
Roads, Infrastructure, Sewerage and Water	85
Lack of Organic Farms	38
Cultural Identity/Diversity	36
Holiday Homes	30
River Destruction	29
Village Renewal	27
Clean Water	26
Maintain Hospitals	25
Lack of Leisure Facilities	25
Technology Growth in Rural Areas	21
Transport and Access	21
Celtic Tiger	21
Housing	13
Places for Elderly to Meet	12

Note: This chart was generated by a group "mind map"- a brainstorming session by the whole Future Search Conference: the number of dots represent "votes" according to each persons top priorities.

Recognising the Goals and Aspirations of Those Living in North and West Cork

As may be seen, very high priority is attached to physical infrastructure deficits, preserving environmental quality, improving social services and participating in technology development and the wider development of the Irish economy. Turning to stakeholders' vision of the future, (Table 3.2) summarises the themes, which emerge.

Table 3.2: 2020 Vision: North and West Cork Future Search, (Nov 2000)

1. Transport (See also Chapter 8)	2. Creation of self-reliant communities	3. Environment	4. Quality of life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ Public transport- less cars £ More light rail transport £ Fuel cells instead of fossil fuels £ More self-sustaining communities - hence less travelling £ Access to Islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ Adequate infrastructure in place £ Vibrant cultural activities locally £ Active local communities £ Less dependence on cities/local towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ Sustainable management of local resources £ Environment £ Economics /enterprise £ Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ Drug free, crime free society £ Elderly people should feel safe £ More partnership £ Local communities having a very significant say



These revolve around improved transport, the creation of self-reliant communities with sustainable environments and in which there is inclusive participation and community partnership.

“Bridging gaps” – the forging of new links and synergies – was identified as the primary “cross-cutting theme” of the North and West Cork Future Search. On the basis of the research carried out for this study and the views of the public and development agencies gathered throughout the study process, infrastructure development, including improvement of the transport and communications network emerged as a main priority of the strategic development framework. Other communications issues, particularly the potential of new modes of telecommunications and IT as a communications tool, were also ranked as a high priority by communities and agencies in the Area.

The people and agencies of North and West Cork have identified balanced spatial development as another priority goal for North and West Cork. The communities of the Area wish to build up the viability of their villages and towns to support social and economic sustainability. It is also a priority goal to maintain local heritage and traditions, including the built and natural heritage of each part of the Area. “Bringing the best of the past into the future”, with successful integration of new residents, has been identified as a priority by the population of the Area.

Local culture emerged as an important component of social cohesion of the Area. Local distinctiveness, traditions and pastimes contribute to the sense of identity of the people of North and West Cork. Pride of place and local uniqueness can be determining factors in

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Recognising the Goals and Aspirations of Those Living in North and West Cork

the success of any area.

Therefore, if the vision of the future, reflected in outcome of community consultation is to be attained a number of goals must be achieved, (Table 1.6) namely:

- N. Self-Reliant, Inclusive Communities, with a High Level of Community Involvement and Local Decision-Making.**
- O. Sustainable Management of the Environment - Land and Sea**
- P. Good Quality, Well - located Housing**
- Q. Varied, Quality Employment - Maintaining Livelihoods on the Land and at Sea**
- R. Improved Infrastructure - Sustainable Public Transport Options**
- S. Thriving, Balanced Growth of Towns, Rural Areas and their Villages**
- T. No Need for Emigration - Maintaining the Populations And Cultures of all Areas.**
- U. Wider Local Training and Education Opportunities**
- V. Good Facilities for Young People**
- W. Preserving our Local Heritage and Customs for the Future**
- X. A “High Tech” Society**
- Y. Wise Development of Coastal Resources**
- Z. Rapid Responses**

All of these Goals are deemed “high priority”, but are listed in order of the stakeholder priorities identified through community appraisal.

With the attainment of these goals the possibility would be created for vibrant sustainable communities with a range in age, income and occupational groups that would be able to fulfil the economic, social and cultural potential of people living in them and in a manner that overcomes marginalisation and isolation.

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Sustainability: The Need to Incorporate Environmental, Heritage and Cultural Dimensions in Future Strategy

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of consultation and participative work with communities and the public in North and West Cork, shows a general consensus that the environment, natural amenity sites, scenic areas, wildlife, nature etc., the many terms used to describe the environment around us, forms one of the main assets of rural County Cork⁵.

However, there is some concern that certain main waterways are polluted to some extent and many areas are identified as being under some kind of pressure from either agriculture, forestry or development. Fish stocks, both inland and off-shore, are perceived to be in decline. The biggest issue arising was the need for an upgrading of the water supply and the sewage treatment works throughout the north and west of the county, including for example, provision of sewage treatment to best practice standards in the coastal towns.

The need has been identified for a specific rural waste management strategy. There were numerous requests for recycling facilities and for steps to achieve waste reduction to be put in place. Habitat destruction and the

consequent loss of biodiversity is seen as a threat, as is the dominance of monocultural sitka forestry in some areas. The reduction in bird species in many areas was also recorded. There also exists a very widespread demand for safe foods, identified as organic food and non-genetically engineered food. Support for the development of renewable energy sources was strong. The current wind farm developments are generally viewed as positive and listed on the asset side. There is considerable concern about forestry practices, including planting close to housing and schools, impacts of fertiliser on watercourses and aerial spraying.

The communities of the Area wish to build up the viability of their villages and towns to support social and economic sustainability. It is also a priority goal to maintain local heritage and traditions, including the built and natural heritage of each part of the Area. “Bringing the best of the past into the future”, with successful integration of new residents, has been identified as a priority by the population of the Area.

Local culture has emerged as an important component of social cohesion of the Area. Local distinctiveness, traditions and pastimes contribute to the sense of identity of the people of North and West Cork. Pride of place and local uniqueness can be determining factors in the success of any area.

On the basis of these reflections of communities’ values it is appropriate that future strategy should contain an increased appreciation of the unique qualities –environmental, heritage and cultural - of each part of North and West Cork. This Chapter deals with the issues arising under these headings.



The communities of the Area wish to build up the viability of their villages and towns to support social and economic sustainability. It is also a priority goal to maintain local heritage and traditions, including the built and natural heritage of each part of the Area.

⁵ For details see, *North and West Cork Strategic Study 2001 - 2020*.

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4.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1

PRESSURES ON WATER

Water resource management involves ensuring that a supply of clean drinking water is available. It is also important to look broadly at the aquatic habitat, at the river environment which is a product of the nature of lands through which it flows, its geology, flood plains, marginal bankside and instream vegetation and most importantly surrounding land use practices. Developments such as urbanisation, flood relief and drainage, landfill on floodplains, road construction, afforestation, intensifying farming practises are all causing major changes in the ecology and hydrological patterns of our rivers. These impacts can involve destruction of instream habitats, interference and removal of fish spawning and nursery grounds, the decrease in flow or increased rapidity and scouring. When waterways are diminished in this way a downward spiral in quality and amenity can occur.

Of the 384 river sections tested by the EPA in County Cork 86 are considered as unsatisfactory, i.e. requiring improvements. Approximately 25 million gallons (80%) of public water supplies are sourced from rivers and lakes. The rest of drinking water is sourced from underground aquifers. In the North and

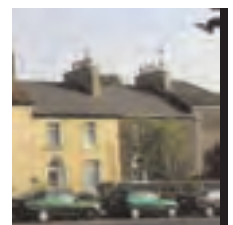
“Bringing the best of the past into the future”, with successful integration of new residents, has been identified as a priority by the population of the Area.

West Cork Area approximately 30,000 dwellings dispose of effluent through private septic tanks. Treatment facilities for towns and villages in some cases are minimal. Lakes are naturally subject to increased nutrient levels over thousands of years as their water is not exchanged as is the case with rivers. Human impacts can be as great in a ten-year period as the effects of thousands of years of natural siltation and nutrient increase.

Agricultural and forestry practice can impact heavily on water quality. Pressures from agriculture arise from over 600,000 tonnes of slurry that arise every year from farm animals and another 35,000 tonnes of effluent arising from animal slaughtering and dairying (Fehily and Timoney, 2000). Use of herbicides and fertilisers in farming and forestry is also a pressure on water as leaching from soils can occur. High stocking rates can also lead to erosion with effects on soils and watercourses. Leachate from septic tanks is also a factor.

Standards are set by the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977 (Water Quality Standards for Phosphorus) Regulations, 1998, which demand that polluted watercourses must be improved by the year 2007. The new Water Framework Directive, which was adopted on June 29th, 2000, is designed to develop integrated and coherent water policies on the basis of River Basin Management Plans. It especially emphasises the need to establish a sound basis for the collection and analysis of a large amount of information on the state of the aquatic environment to provide the essential information on which the competent authorities can develop sensible and sustainable policies. These Management Plans require an integrated inter-agency approach and public participation.

Marine and estuarial waters are under pressure from land and from sea-based activities. Over four fifths of Ireland’s municipal and industrial wastewater is discharged directly to estuarine and coastal waters (Bowman et



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al 1996). They also receive river borne materials carried down stream. Impacts on seawater can include eutrophication leading to deoxygenation, which may inhibit migratory fish, as well as interfering with other aquatic organisms. Microbiological contamination of bathing waters and shellfish rearing areas can also result. Marine dumping is a problem: oil spills, dredging and sand and gravel extraction are all issues of concern in the Area.

4.2.2

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Currently, the Irish Government is preparing a National Coastal Zone Policy to deal with the recognised urgent need for coherent action in this area, because of the rapidly increasing pressure on the coast. Cork County Council has been the first local authority to support an integrated coastal zone management proposal in the Bantry Bay Charter launched in September 2000.

“Traditionally, planning tends to apply to either an area based approach or to focus on particular processes or activities. Integrated coastal zone management includes both these aspects in a comprehensive approach to planning; taking account of all processes and interests occurring within the particular coastal zone” (Bantry Bay Charter, 2000).

The Bantry Bay Charter currently is the only project of integrated coastal zone management in Ireland and as such will be closely monitored as to success rate. The charter includes agreed position papers on 21 issues and their vision for the future is quoted here to show the high ambition and innovative approach of the project.



“...This vision sees the Bantry Bay coastal zone in the future as a flourishing place where a high quality of life is enjoyed by all:

- £ **where the natural environment of the area is protected and improved**
- £ **where there is opportunities for all residents and future generations to live and work in the area**
- £ **where respect for the environment and economic success go hand in hand**
- £ **where there are opportunities for recreation and fulfilment for residents and visitors alike**
- £ **where people work together for shared benefits and to resolve differences as they build a better future.”**

The Charter agreement is based on consensus. Participation was open to all those with an interest in the Area. Including all interests has ensured that the agreed proposals are integrated and that maximum gain is delivered for all those participating. The Bantry Bay Coastal Zone Charter is the agreed product of all stakeholders involved.

Other responses to the pressures on the offshore region are more specific as for example, the monitoring of radioactive contamination carried out by the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland. Oil pollution is another threat

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A very high level of public concern exists with respect to waste. The approach emerging strongly from Future Search and the Community Appraisal is that waste should generally be seen as a resource which needs a use.

with 5 main oil spills listed in the last 20 years. The Irish Marine Emergency Service of the Department of the Marine was set up in 1991 and maintains a National Marine Emergency Plan which is co-ordinated with Harbour Authorities and oil companies.

The Marine Institute and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources are joined in a project to manage the aquaculture activities within our bays. Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems (CLAMS) are being drawn up for the bays of southwest Cork involving all the producers within the bay and a group of consultees. The CLAMS for Roaringwater Bay is finished in its first version, and the CLAMS for Dunmanus Bay is underway. They are designed to be evolving documents which means that they develop into different versions as times goes on. CLAMS produce:

- £ A concise description of the bay area in terms of physical characteristics, history, aquaculture operations, future potential, problems etc.
- £ Integration of a series of codes of practise for current aquaculture operations and translation of those national codes to the specific circumstances of each bay or coastal region.
- £ Expansion of the concept of Single Bay Management (SBM) to species other than Salmon.
- £ A development plan for aquaculture in the bay.

4.2.3 WASTE

A very high level of public concern exists with respect to waste: the challenge of solving waste problems emerges from community appraisal and from Future Search as a real opportunity for the Area. The approach emerging strongly from Future Search and the Community Appraisal is that waste should generally be seen as a resource which needs a use. Waste reduction (with a 20 year goal of zero waste) and an end to the plastic bag

were common themes of future visions. The wish to avoid generating waste, and to recycle, was frequently stated.

A number of factors are resulting in increased waste generation:

- £ Increased consumption of all kinds of goods - cars, clothing, food.
- £ "Throw away" culture of cheap, replaceable goods - built in obsolescence.
- £ Construction - building waste.
- £ Retail competition - packaging, centralised production.

At present waste volume per capita is still increasing. There are seven landfill sites in County Cork. All these are planned to close in the next two years, being replaced by one landfill site, seven transfer stations or material recovery facilities and 16 civic amenity (recycling) sites. Whilst waste management standards are increasing, such sites will nevertheless create impacts. Costs of waste disposal are becoming serious for those on low incomes. Rural dumping was reported in all parts of the Area and there were many requests for a rural waste management programme.



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4.2.4 AIR POLLUTION

The Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment and Management provides the framework for future legislation on air quality in Europe and requires a radical restructuring and expansion of monitoring networks in Ireland. Greater emphasis will have to be placed on data dissemination and the need to keep the public fully informed on the state of the air quality. These issues have been addressed by the first National Air Quality Monitoring Programme drawn up by the EPA.

Energy and Transport

The driving force behind the increase in energy consumption is consumer behaviour and increased demands. Cork County Council was the first local authority in Ireland to establish a Public Energy Office and has been involved for more than twelve years in the Renewable Energy Project in Mallow. The Council also runs a long-standing wind farm project aimed at identifying areas suitable for

wind farms. There is also support for small-scale renewable energy projects.

For Ireland as a whole, the projected increase in greenhouse gases emissions by 2012 in a 'business as usual' scenario lies at 30%, as opposed to our Kyoto target of 13%, figures that outline the very real challenge faced in the next years. The green paper on sustainable energy outlines how the government proposes to meet this target and a Draft National Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy has been prepared by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. Key sectors in respect of carbon dioxide emissions are energy, transport, household and industry with the biggest scope for reduction seen in the energy sector.

4.3 HERITAGE AND CULTURE

4.3.1 CULTURAL APPRAISAL

Due to the relatively slower move to industrialisation and urbanisation, a rich heritage of distinctive local traditions and pastimes has survived in North and West



Two factors, physical isolation and the instability that prevailed in County Cork for many centuries, contributed to the very low population levels in the county and to the very late predominance of rural rather than urban patterns of life.



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Cork to an extent unusual within modern Europe.

Two factors, physical isolation and the instability that prevailed in County Cork for many centuries, contributed to the very low population levels in the county and to the very late predominance of rural rather than urban patterns of life. From the thirteenth century up to the sixteenth century, County Cork was divided by a state of intermittent war between the hiberno-norman people who occupied the best of the county's agricultural land to the east of the County and the Gaelic clans, who with their pastoral and hunting activities held the mainly wooded uplands to the west⁶. In Cork, for much of the medieval period, west of Blarney was Gaelic territory, with only nominal control by central authorities in London or Dublin. Macroom was the only Gaelic town in the county. This division between east and west is still evident, with the western parts of the county bounding Kerry maintaining the Irish language to a far greater extent than the east and with many differences in local culture, patterns of habitation and agricultural practices.

As part of the community appraisal, information was gathered on both cultural assets and cultural values by people working in groups, in their own surroundings. The findings of this

appraisal have contributed to both the County Strategy process and to the development of the strategic framework. The extensive survey material gathered through the appraisal has been carefully transcribed and reviewed in the North and West Cork Strategic Study 2001-2020. A representative sample of material, which illustrates local culture in different parts of the County, has been disaggregated and compiled into a report. The report, entitled "Culture and Heritage in County Cork: a Community Appraisal", is published in the appendices of the North and West Cork Strategic Study 2001-2020 and has been drawn on for the description and analysis made here.

As part of the community appraisal, "annual calendars" of the important events held throughout the year were recorded, illustrating the complex, seasonal, living culture of each different part of the county. Other tasks carried out by communities taking part in the survey included listing qualities of "local uniqueness", compiling timelines of landmark local events in the past and present and mapping the location of important local landmarks. This survey forms an important resource for future planning purposes.

The cultural heritage of County Cork as recorded in community appraisal is predominantly based on the shared experience of communities of small farmers and fishermen and of the inhabitants of small market towns and villages. Up to the turn of the 20th century each local economy had craftsmen who made products such as shoes, nails, barrels, leather goods etc. Self-sufficiency in producing these goods was made necessary by remoteness and slow transportation. These trades, now lost, were mentioned in nearly every village, town and rural area surveyed.

Across the county, pre-Christian and early Christian religious practices continue including the care and visitation of holy wells and grottoes and the preservation of mass bushes. Some



⁶ The Development of Lordship in County Cork, 1300 - 1600, Kenneth Nicholl

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landmark events go back many centuries, including markets and fairs originally chartered up to 800 years ago. Gaelic sports, rural pastimes, music, songs, road bowling, harness racing and stories have a legacy which goes back thousands of years.

The appraisal showed that religion remains one of the most significant elements of shared culture. Some religious sites and customs in Cork date back thousands of years. Agricultural practices such as ploughing and threshing, horse-related and sporting activities, skills and trades are also important locally. Coastal areas recorded regattas and other traditions and practices associated with fishing and marine trading. The role of public houses as a part of local culture is generally taken for granted. Where it has occurred, the loss of the local pub is seen as a serious blow to the viability of a community.

As well as the more typical cultural elements such as set dancing, step

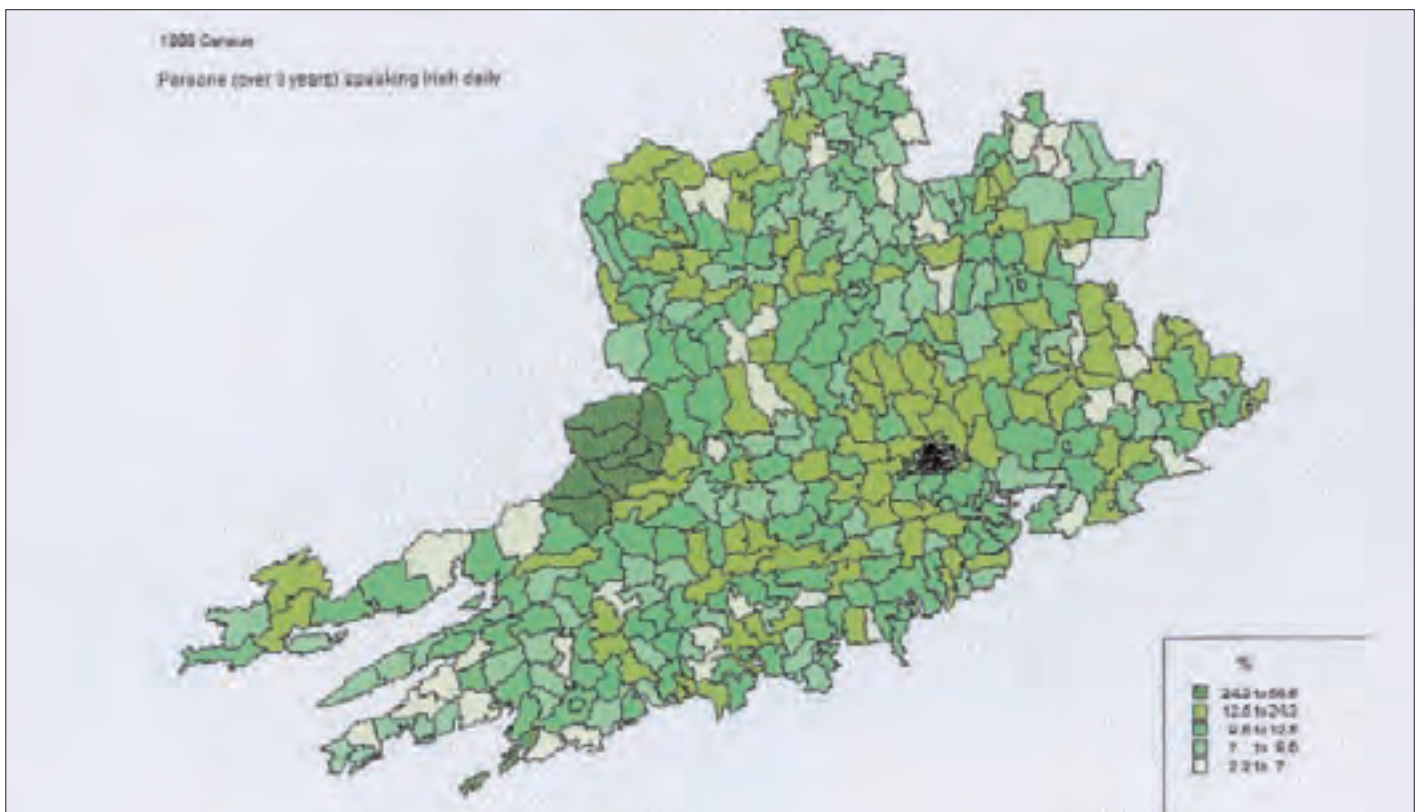
dancing, traditional music and gaelic sports, community appraisal has recorded road bowling, regattas, sulky racing and a myriad of local events, fairs and festivals in the Area. Some recent change was also recorded, including the loss of the dance halls and the arrival of cinemas, discos, rock festivals and Disney on Ice. Traditional music and story telling remain important, particularly in the west and north west.

4.3.2

THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN COUNTY CORK

There is a strong adherence to the Irish language in County Cork both inside and outside the Gaeltacht. Joseph Lee has emphasised in his writings in the 1990s that ownership of the national language is a key issue of national identity and self-confidence (Ireland 1912-1985). The French spoken by the Normans inhabiting Cork from the 12th century has disappeared with the exception of some place names

Map 4.1: 1996 Census - Persons (over 3 years) speaking Irish daily



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and many surnames, as has the much earlier language which existed in Ireland before Gaelic. The Irish language has remained strong through centuries of cultural pressures and has the potential for a healthy future in Cork.

Map 4.1 shows the distribution of people speaking Irish daily throughout the County, recorded in the Census of Population of 1996. With the exception of the Gaeltacht and Cape Clear the pattern is somewhat surprising. The Cork suburbs emerge as the most extensive area for use of Irish outside of the Gaeltacht area. This pattern may well result from general population movements from Irish speaking areas into new housing close to employment centres of Cork City and its suburbs. It may also reflect a general national increase in the use of Irish recorded in the 1996 Census and the youthful age group in the Area. The emergence of people like Louis de Paor, born in Bishopstown with “no sense of identity” and now a poet in the Irish language, indicates that loss of language is not a fixed state in Cork.

The growth of the Gaelscoilleanna is a strong positive indication of the potential for a future for the Irish language in County Cork. There are a total of 19 Gaelscoilleanna (with approximately 3,500 pupils in total) in Cork City and

County of which 11 are in the County. A new one is planned for Blarney. There are 27 Naionrai (Playschools) in the County. Ten of these are in the Gaeltacht, Cape or Muscraí. It is estimated from rolls that there is demand for another 40 Gaelscoilleanna. With the development of the Gaelscoilleanna, the association of the Irish language with educational exclusion is being broken, as these schools attain high standards. Bilingualism and high educational attainment are being demonstrated as able to go hand in hand.

The low levels of provision of information and customer services in the Irish language places Irish speakers at a disadvantage. The use of the language by public bodies is both a matter of leadership by example and an issue of the rights of Irish speakers to have access to public services through their native language. The County Development Board has begun work on policy development for public bodies and Cork County Council is preparing a plan for use of the language. Native speakers and those who choose to learn need support for use of Irish. It is a basic cultural right and is also both directly and indirectly an economic resource: there is an unmet market for educational aids and translation. The strategic framework therefore includes

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measures for the support of those choosing to speak or to learn Irish.

4.3.3

CONCLUSIONS ON LOCAL CULTURE

In identifying priorities, the continuation of local customs and traditions is a high priority goal of the majority of communities. The attainment of this goal is seen as linked to the general economic strength of the Area, and in particular to the continuation of a significant percentage of the population working on the land or sea. Cultural

distinctiveness is one of the great strengths of North and West Cork. The present situation of cultural change presents an opportunity not just for successful preservation of unique cultural traditions, but also as an occasion for widening access to and breadth of a range of cultural activities.

The development of cultural resources and activity should not be seen as marginal within the Strategic Framework. It is a central theme, important to the social and economic well-being of the Area.



5 An Approach for Addressing Core Development Issues and Achieving Community Goals: A Strategic Model for Inclusive Sustainable Development



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5.1 INTRODUCTION

The core development challenge facing North and West Cork is a reversal of population loss and decline in rural living. The trends and influences giving rise to this challenge are set out in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 sets out the future goals and aspirations of the communities, as uncovered through consultations and appraisals by communities themselves as part of the process for drawing up this Plan. In addition, issues of environmental quality and preserving unique and distinctive features of the culture of North and West Cork, while expanding the range and quality of social and recreational services are of very high priority. These are described in Chapter 4.

Many of the goals and aspirations described reflect the challenges posed by population loss and rural decline and are concerned with redressing the factors giving rise to these trends. In all, these chapters establish the agenda and issues that need to be addressed by a Strategic Development Plan for the area.

In this chapter an approach or model which incorporates the breath of this agenda, in a coherent and integrated way is described. Thus, the material contained in this chapter is the core of the Plan, encompassing all the headings under which actions are required and the rationale for including them. Subsequent chapters of the Report contain proposals and recommendations in relation to individual components of the Plan.

5.2

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

In shaping a strategy to achieve the objectives of development for North and West Cork in the future it is important that an appropriate analytical model of rural development should be articulated and pursued. Historically, the agricultural sector did play a more pivotal role in rural development. The economic welfare of many provincial towns was shaped by the cyclical fortunes of the agriculture

sector and economic activity of these towns was focussed on meeting demand arising from income generated in agriculture.

The success of industrial policy in attracting multinational companies to certain towns and counties has critically altered the productive capacity of these locations and altered the composition of employment and sources of economic growth, which they experience. In effect, the dynamic underlying development has altered in favour of towns, which have become self-sustaining economic entities, rather than providers of goods and services to agriculture based rural communities. In this sense the impetus for economic growth has shifted spatially to towns and cities and away from rural hinterlands. In general, the employment creation associated with industrial expansion has been associated with increasing urbanisation, although the greater availability of employment has also supported rural based living in the vicinity of these towns to some degree.

However, as a model for rural development the process outlined above is deficient in a number of important respects.

- € **In the first place, industrial expansion and foreign direct investment has been very uneven geographically so that many towns and counties have not experienced any significant stimulus from investment in new industries or services. North and West County Cork falls into this category. At the same time, contraction in numbers engaged and migration from rural settlements have accompanied weakness of income growth in the agriculture sector. Therefore, some counties, including North and West Cork, have experienced continuing high dependence on agriculture – almost 50% of the labour force in North and West County Cork is engaged in or dependent on this sector – which has**



There is no part of Ireland more disadvantaged in terms of access to urban-based facilities than west and north west Cork and the islands. North and West Cork is at the periphery of a region which is itself peripheral within Europe. This region (the Republic of Ireland) is, since the opening of the Channel Tunnel, the only significant European economy not linked by road and rail to the European mainland.

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been static or contracting, without experiencing any significant offsetting impetus from investment in non-agricultural activity.

- f Secondly, where counties and towns have experienced significant investment in new industries and international service provision the impact on rural development is not always assured. Inward investment boosts the productive capacity and spending power of those engaged in new industries. Undoubtedly, this contributes to sustaining rural communities in the hinterland of these investments. However, unless there is accompanying improvement in access to and development of public infrastructure and services across a broad spectrum - including, transport, education, health, social and recreational – the potential for vibrant rural development will be difficult to realise in full. In effect, the achievement of rural development, in the sense of vibrant, inclusive communities with stable or expanding populations requires expansion of both productive capacity and opportunities and expansion of access to and availability of consumption opportunities.
- f Thirdly, there have been ‘spill-over’ effects on some counties and their rural communities, including parts of West Cork, from congestion and lack of access to Cork City. This has resulted in significant increases in housing demand and development, especially in South West Cork, along the coast. There is a positive economic effect associated with this trend, in terms of increased construction activity and local employment generation in this sector. In addition, there is likely to be some longer enduring effects through the ongoing spending of these households in the local area. However, this kind of

development also poses significant challenges to rural development. Part time residences can make it difficult to establish roots and social contacts within the local community or any significant sense of being part of the local community. Barriers to integration become significant and the result can be stratification and the emergence of enclaves.

- f Fourthly, without proactive policies and effective measures it appears that the current process of adjustment and consolidation which is occurring in the agriculture sector could be more attenuated and painful than need be the case. If so, viable alternative opportunities may be missed and the creation of a more commercially viable farm sector could be forestalled. In either event sustainable rural development will be more difficult to promote.



5.3 ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH AND WEST COUNTY CORK

In essence a successful model must build on the strengths of the existing paradigm, while addressing the shortcomings outlined above. However, it should be stressed that the development of a strategy for a sub-region in a country when it is without independent policy instruments, as County Cork is, is inherently difficult.

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5.3.1

RAISING THE PRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF THE ECONOMY

A number of factors directly influence the productive capacity of North and West Cork, these include:

- £ **The national economic context;**
- £ **The competitive position of the regional economy; and**
- £ **The human resources available for future growth.**

These various aspects are examined below in turn.

In addition, the availability of good quality infrastructure and services (Section 5.3.3 below) plays a very

important role, both in fostering the productive potential of the economy and in directly raising the welfare of consumers, who can avail of these services.

The National Economic Context

Looking out to the end of the decade, the latest *Medium Term Review* of the ESRI, Table 5.1 views the Irish economy as having the potential to continue growing rapidly. However, the growth in potential output, which averaged over 7 per cent between 1995 and 2000, will probably fall to 5 per cent for the period to 2005. In this benchmark forecast it is assumed that the economy slows gently from the exceptional growth rate of the last five years. This must be considered a relatively

Table 1: Benchmark Forecast, Growth in Major Aggregates

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	1995 - 00	2000- 05	2005 - 10	2010- 15
Per Cent									Annual Average % Growth			
GNP	9.9	6.0	5.4	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.4	4.3	8.4	4.8	4.3	2.8
Consumption												
Deflator	5.8	4.8	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.9	3.2	3.2
Employment, April	4.8	4.3	2.2	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.8	4.9	2.0	1.8	0.7
Real After Tax Non-Agricultural Wage	2.1	5.2	5.8	4.2	2.8	2.1	2.3	2.5	1.8	4.0	2.5	2.4
Per Cent of GNP									2000	2005	2010	2015
Surplus	-0.7	-0.9	-1.7	-1.5	-1.0	-0.8	-1.1	-1.4	-0.7	-0.8	-1.5	0.8
Debt-GNP Ratio	42.1	34.5	29.0	24.3	20.9	18.3	15.7	13.2	42.1	18.3	6.8	-2.3
Per Cent of Labour Force (ILO basis)									2000	2005	2010	2015
Unemployment Rate	4.3	3.8	3.6	4.3	5.3	5.8	5.7	5.5	4.3	5.8	4.0	4.1

Source: Medium Term Review 2001-2007, ESRI: Dublin 2001

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benign scenario as there is the very real possibility that the US economy, will face an unpleasant adjustment process over the next few years. If the economic difficulties of the US continue into next year, other aspects of the external environment will turn sour and an alternative slowdown scenario, may turn out to be correct.

In this benchmark forecast, growth in GNP' over the period 2000 to 2005 is projected at an average of 4.8 per cent a year (compared to the annual growth in potential output of around 5 per cent). The result will be some rise in unemployment, peaking in 2005 at around 5.8 per cent of the labour force. In the subsequent five year period the economy could grow more rapidly than potential, averaging 5.3 per cent a year, returning the labour force to full employment.

The Competitive Position of the Regional Economy

Uneven sector development and very high dependence on agriculture is the key competitive feature of the economy of North and West Cork.

Agriculture

Agriculture is particularly important in North and West County Cork, with over 50 per cent of jobs depending either directly or indirectly on farming and its associated industries. Generally soils are considered to be good but there is

variation from among some of the best in the country in the north and the coastal areas, to much poorer soils in the western part of the county. Annual rainfall also varies substantially being very high towards the west and lower than the national average in eastern areas. As a result, the standard of agricultural activity and production is good in most areas and very good in many.

The major trend in agriculture as in other parts of the county is its relative decline in importance to the economy. Output continues to rise but employment is falling steadily. Inheritance is also a major problem in many parts of the Area. One result of this is that consolidation is taking place. This has immediate effects, but the most important changes will be longer-term as the proportion of the population living on farms from which they derive their main income will fall considerably.

Teagasc's longer term predictions for agriculture in Ireland suggest that increasingly there will be a divide between large scale intensive farming, which will provide the bulk of food produce, and a smaller, but significant, organic and other niche sector, amounting to perhaps 15% of the total. This sector would be far more labour intensive and would comprise smaller units. The EU organic food market tripled in value between 1990 and 1997 to £2.8 billion. The market is growing at a rate of 22% per annum, compared with less than 1% per annum for conventional food. In keeping with this trend, the age profile of those engaged in organic farming is very much younger than in the non-organic sector.

Fresh fruit and vegetables and dairy products are the most popular organic products, but the organic meat market is also starting to grow. Sales of organic food are projected to overtake sales of conventional food in Denmark and Austria in the next 10-15 years. Community Appraisal has indicated that the local population places a high priority on retaining a significant number of

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livelihoods based on the land and also a wish to produce high quality, non genetically-modified foods. Recent studies by the Western Development Commission and East Cork Area Development suggest that there is good potential for organic production, particularly in those parts of the Area which have been managed as small farms.

Organic and part-time modes of farming are likely to be increasingly important. Educational and training supports for these types of farming are inadequate as Teagasc only supports full-time farmers. There is a need for experienced, specialist organic farming and marketing advice on the ground if the sector is to develop to its potential.

Industry

Three broad sectors of industrial activity are concentrated in County Cork. These are: Food and Drink; Chemicals and Plastics; and Computing, Electrical and Communications equipment. In this respect, County Cork would appear to be a leading area for the sectors that have been credited with driving the Irish economic boom. The exception is the food industry where the experience has been quite different. This sector has had a difficult period throughout the country and it is widely accepted that further consolidation and rationalisation is likely in future years.

This sector distribution, points towards the importance of IDA sponsored firms and their offshoots in the county, and this is indeed the case. Cork has a cluster of computer manufacturing firms and the strongest cluster of chemical and pharmaceutical firms in the country. However, neither of these is in the Area. Larger employers in the Area are predominantly in the food sector, with a small number of dairying co-operatives dominant within the sector. Munster Joineries in north west Cork is another very large employer.

Employment in firms sponsored and supported by national development

agencies accounted for 27.8 per cent of total employment in the study area in 1996, compared to 18.6 per cent nationally. However, while employment in agency sponsored firms nationally grew by 23.6 per cent in the years 1995-99, it grew by only 4.1 per cent in the Area. Also, this employment is concentrated in a small number of very large firms. The Area suffered only 2.9 per cent of all losses in agency firms in the period 1995-99 but acquired only 1.9 per cent of the new jobs that were created. Total losses in the period 1995-99 in the Area were only 17.7 per cent of the total in 1995 compared to national losses equal to 29.6 per cent of the national total.

"Over 500 new jobs eligible for support in the micro enterprise sector have been assisted in North and West Cork during the period 1995-1999. This sector continues to grow in importance and is a consistent provider of new job opportunities."

This data indicates a relatively stable past population and high importance of these firms. However, the sector distribution of Multi National Companies (MNCs) has changed considerably in the past decade or so and Ireland is now considered to have a much stronger economy as a result. The same does not appear to be the case in North and West Cork with the firms that exist today rather similar to those that were there in the past. The problem is that if these firms did not stimulate economic dynamism and spin-offs in the past, they are unlikely to do so in the future. In addition, as wages being paid in the county are not high by Irish standards they are not likely to provide the type of boost to incomes that has been achieved in other areas. Evidence from Community Appraisal is that outside the immediate commuting area of Cork City, wages in the county are average or low. A feature of the Area is the presence of small number of large firms each of which employs a high proportion of the local labour force, creating an over-dependency on a single employer and reducing the potential for

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diversity of employment. These firms are not in the high wage sectors which have brought significant increases in local prosperity.

Furthermore, they are in some instances in sectors currently affected by strong trends to restructuring and loss of employment. Community Appraisal showed a strong local priority in areas such as Dunmanway, Macroom, Mitchelstown and Kanturk for diversification of employment as a matter of urgency.

Tourism

The tourism sector in North and West Cork is particularly important. It provides the most ready means of drawing moneys earned outside the Area to be spent inside it, thereby correcting to some extent the strong trend illustrated in community appraisal for local expenditure to leak from the Area to Cork City. It is also important in the opportunities it presents for the female workforce and in particular the strongly growing self-employed female sector, who are themselves becoming employers. The services sustained by tourism are generally also available to local people and can make the Area more attractive and lively for the younger population. The positive impacts that can be achieved through tourism are further discussed in Part 7, Sustainable Communities. The Interim Report presented a detailed review of current tourism sector performance and trends.

However, the tourism sector within the county is very uneven, with some of it performing well, while other parts have suffered a worrying fall off in trade. Quality, location, access and marketing and value for money are the main criteria for success.

In its *Strategy for Growth Beyond 2000*, the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation argues that a number of underlying issues must be tackled if Ireland is to achieve its full potential in the global tourism industry:

- € Relative competitiveness must be maintained in a holiday experience that maximises visitor satisfaction.
- € The focus should be on increased tourism revenue rather than visitor numbers.
- € Season extension is necessary in order to accommodate growth without causing congestion in key tourist sites. There is potential for such extension in the development of short-stay city breaks, special interest activities and events.
- € Ensuring environmental appeal through the development and adoption of environmental and traffic management policies.
- € Balanced Regional Distribution in order to spread the benefits of tourism, minimise congestion at tourist sites and increase plant utilisation levels and profitability.

These objectives are relevant to the situation of North and West Cork.

Fisheries

Opportunities exist in the South West for continuous expansion in the fish processing sector. The constraining influence would appear to be a general lack of investment capital. In the Skibbereen/Union Hall area processing has grown dramatically since 1992. The shellfish/aquaculture industry is thriving in all areas of West Cork, as is further processing.



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Human Resources

There are two issues here. First, is the availability of numbers of people for employment. Second is the human capital endowment of the labour force.

If it is assumed that participation rates remain as they are, then projected population growth (see Section 2.3) implies a growth in the labour force of between 5,253 (M1F1 assumptions) and 1,912 (M2F3 assumptions) up to 2011.

However, these projections, which are based on population growth only, ignore the likely impact of a number of other variables that would tend to increase the rate of growth of the labour force relative to the population. The first is that an increase in economic activity would alter the structure of the population enabling the Area to retain some of the people in the 20-30 age group who currently leave to find work or education elsewhere. Female participation is another important issue. The trend in Ireland is towards higher participation and the North and West Cork Area is well below the national average. The rate is likely to remain below the national average due to the structure of the population and the effect of women assisting on farms.

If it were assumed that the 1996 participation rate for females increases to the 1996 national average by 2011, then this would imply an increase in the female labour force of between 3,128 (M2F3) and 4,412 (M1F1). This would mean an overall increase in the labour force of between 4,438 (13.2%) and 8,016 (23.9%) up to 2011. At a time when the economy is at full employment, this represents a considerable resource for the region. Educational attainment is a key determinant of the human capital that is available to an area for development. Typically, it tends to be lower in rural areas than in cities and it has been increasing rapidly in Ireland. There are a number of striking features in relation to educational attainment in the Area. First, it is lower than in the county as a whole - it is weighted towards the 'primary only' category. Second, the educational attainment of males is lower than females. This is particularly noticeable in the more rural areas of the west and coastal areas. Third, the west and north west lags other parts of the Area in terms of the education of its residents. Taken together, however, these findings indicate that there is a considerable education deficit in North and West Cork



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The County Development Plan (and its associated planning policies) is considered to be an appropriate instrument to develop settlements, capable of supporting community development and more effective provision of public infrastructure and services.

compared to other parts of County Cork. Community appraisal affirmed a strong wish for continuing education to be made readily available, particularly in those areas, which recorded lower levels of completion to Leaving Certificate. Strong interest in acquiring basic computer and internet skills were also evident throughout the Area in all age groups. The wish for continuing education opportunities in the north and west was also strongly expressed.

To some extent, the low proportion of the populations of these areas with higher educational attainment is a result of the emigration of the educated young population out of these areas. The lack of suitable employment for graduates was identified by a number of communities as the biggest long-term threat to their future.

Conclusions

The productive potential of the North and West Cork economy is weak. Measures to improve this situation must be at the heart of any strategy for development of the Area. The approach and measures for overcoming present weaknesses and threats are set out in Chapter 6.

5.3.2

OPTIMISING SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS: AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Much of the NDP is about the provision of public infrastructure and support services. These services raise the consumption possibilities of communities who can access them. Without them, or without easy access to them, it will be difficult to sustain vibrant rural communities, as people will tend to opt to live in larger urban settlements. However, it must be recognised also that where there are low-density settlement patterns the cost of providing infrastructure and public services becomes very expensive and threatens competitiveness. Therefore, securing optimal spatial development in rural settings is extremely important.

In principle, such development can be the external impetus that gives rise to sustainable community development, where the new entrants, while working outside the Area, become embedded in the local community for shopping, schooling, social and cultural activities, and general aspects of living. The new entrants benefit from structures already



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in place and they in turn add to the local community, enabling it, in turn to support a greater variety and range of services. However, this is most likely where new housing is attached to part of an existing framework. Where new housing is in isolated communities and one-off in nature the two-way flow described above is unlikely to take place. New entrants see the local area as a base, but employment and consumption patterns are located elsewhere. Thus, while the rural population might increase, social exclusion can deepen.

The *County Development Plan* (and its associated planning policies) is considered to be an appropriate instrument to develop settlements, capable of supporting community development and more effective provision of public infrastructure and services.

With appropriate physical planning policies and regulations it should be possible to take existing villages and small towns and encourage appropriately scaled housing development with restrictions on one-off housing and low-density ribbon development. This would bring new entrants to an area in closer contact with each other and with the local community and make other rural development objectives contained in the NDP possible e.g. social and affordable housing, improved water supply and waste management and environmental concerns. It could also provide the critical mass needed for the provision of other services, e.g. public library facilities, sports centres, improved shopping and perhaps create some local markets.

The weakness of economic life in villages in rural areas in Ireland is striking in comparison with some other EU countries, for example, France or Germany. In these, villages and small towns are plentiful, deriving their economic impetus from the rural community, serving that community, and also serving as a location for urban employment. It is possible that income levels in agriculture in Ireland were and

remain too low to support village and urban activity of this kind. However, the issue for rural development now is how to create this environment and to ensure that new entrants benefit from the local community and contribute to the local community.

This aspect of rural development- viz. arresting rural depopulation, and reducing physical isolation is extremely important and essential if economically viable communities are to be created.

A proposed strategy and recommendations to give effect to it are contained in detail in Chapter 7 below.

5.3.3

INCREASING RURAL ACCESS AND PROVISION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Even accepting the need for an external stimulus, North and West County Cork requires a range of public infrastructure, support services, and improved access to these, if rural communities are to thrive.

Rural Public Transport

This aspect of rural development is largely missing from the NDP. The emphasis is on regional and local roads, and the improvement in these as a means of improving access. Nationally, over one third of the population has no access to transport or serious difficulty with transport in rural areas. In rural areas transport is a mix of public and private. In the case of both the objective is to maintain profitability. Without this private companies would go to the wall, and in the case of Bus Eireann the subvention from Government to CIE is insufficient and is mostly eaten up by the rail network. It is evident that the negative externality associated with isolated rural living is not well recognised, as otherwise the amounts that could be provided for Bus Eireann would be higher. Again one is struck by the availability of public transport in isolated areas in other EU countries, meeting the needs of those without their own transport.

An Approach for Addressing Core Development Issues and Achieving Community Goals: A Strategic Model for Inclusive Sustainable Development



There are ways this could be improved in Ireland, for example, by granting public service contracts for scheduled services for remote areas, with direct payments to operators. It is not obvious that Government yet recognises the need for public subsidies for public service contracts, as they tend to favour cross-subsidisation within the overall budget constraint imposed by the CIE subvention. However public service contracts could attract private operators, and these have the potential to be more flexible and more responsive to local needs. This issue could be addressed in the details of the Regional Operational Programme, as there is allowance for pilot rural transport services.

Development of Other Public Infrastructure and Services Provision

Establishing appropriate physical planning policies and regulations and the instigation of rural public transport services are prerequisites for achieving cost effective and economically viable improvements in provision and access to many public infrastructure and services, like, water, sewerage, roads, education and social and recreational facilities in support of rural development. In addition, by overcoming isolation and creating a level of critical mass the basis would be established for sustaining local retail and other consumer and business services in rural communities.

Much of the NDP, is about the provision of support services. An effective strategy for development requires that the local agencies and the local agents of national support services commit to participating in a rural development strategy for the county. In many cases it is only these agents and agencies which can access the funding contained in the various Operational Programmes and Sub-Programmes. Accordingly, it is vital that these agencies should be involved in the implementation of measures to secure the maximum improvement in services. Only in these circumstances can the full potential for increasing access to

improved public services in support of rural development be realised.

Chapter 8 contains an assessment of infrastructure and recommendations for improvements.

5.3.4

INCORPORATING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In Chapter 4 the priority attached by communities to environmental quality was noted at the outset. Environmental concerns have become mainstream in County Cork and are no longer seen as the preserve of fringe groups and experts. There is a local recognition that we are part of the environment and dependent on its highly complex natural life support systems. This understanding provides a solid foundation in the Area from which



There are many unique and distinctive cultural characteristics which form an integral part of the people of North and West Cork and which are highly valued. In addition, it is evident that access to a variety of social and recreational services is a key factor to retaining a higher proportion of young people in the Area

An Approach for Addressing Core Development Issues and Achieving Community Goals: A Strategic Model for Inclusive Sustainable Development

to address issues of sustainability in a realistic and effective manner.

An environmental profile of the Area was presented, which highlighted a number of areas of pressure. Clearly, any strategy for development needs to incorporate environmental sustainability and improvement. As is discussed below in Chapter 9, many actions and policy initiatives are underway, which will have positive environmental effects in the North and West Cork Area. These should be incorporated within the present proposed approach. In addition, certain additional actions are recommended.

5.3.5 PROMOTING ACCESS TO SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

The problems of poverty and social exclusion in rural areas have distinct features. Economic dependency, isolation, unequal opportunity and participation are compounded by the problems of distance from services and amenities. Furthermore, the absence of an adequate transport service and affordable child care services in many areas make it especially difficult for women to avail of training and education or to enter the labour force and retain employment.

The provision of improved public services and infrastructure and the creation of improved employment opportunities will greatly assist in reducing many aspects of social exclusion and deprivation.

However, in addition, it is considered that measures to promote greater access and availability of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services should be incorporated into a strategy for future development. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are many unique and distinctive cultural characteristics which form an integral part of the people of North and West Cork and which are highly valued. In addition, it is evident that access to a variety of social and recreational services is a key factor to retaining a higher proportion of young people in the Area. Therefore, specific proposals are contained in Chapter 10 below, in relation to this aspect, which is an integral element in the overall development Plan.

Expanding the Productive Potential of the Economy of North and West Cork

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Expanding the Productive Potential of the Economy of North and West Cork

6.1

INTRODUCTION

Analysis contained in Chapter 5 concludes that the competitive position of the economy of North and West Cork is weak. It is characterised by uneven sector development, with a very high dependence on agriculture. In addition, while potential labour force growth appears strong, there are constraints in terms of human capital endowment, which limits the scope for growth in high value added economic activities. Finally, the absence of high quality physical infrastructure, especially in terms of access and communications is a further impediment to economic competitiveness and the potential for growth.

This Chapter sets out the strategic requirements for strengthening the competitiveness of the economy of North and West Cork and raising its productive potential. An accompanying programme of human resource development is proposed. Finally, a number of measures to support and reinforce the developments already underway in both North and West Cork are proposed.



6.2

A SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL STIMULUS TO RAISE THE PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF NORTH AND WEST COUNTY CORK

North and West County Cork requires an external stimulus to foster development and growth – whether considered in a rural or urban context. In principle, this can come in a variety of ways. For example, there may be a resource base for which demand changes, as with the development of tourism in what were once considered poor backward areas of Mediterranean Coastal Spain. The region could be found to be rich in natural resources for which there is a market. Alternatively the region could be used as a physical location by overseas or national companies, which see the location as desirable, because of the availability of labour or perhaps the existence of some external economies, as with the location of pharmaceutical companies in the Cork City area. Furthermore, decentralisation of public service provision and administration can have the same effect. The region could also develop if individuals develop new products and services, and see the region as one where they want to remain.

In summary, an external stimulus to raise productive capacity can be achieved through a number of channels, namely:

- £ Foreign Direct Investment
- £ Indigenous Industry
- £ Tourism and
- £ Decentralisation of Public Service Provision and Administration.

This Chapter sets out the strategic requirements for strengthening the competitiveness of the economy of North and West Cork and raising its productive potential.

A central thrust of the Plan should be to pursue all of these potential avenues. In relation to the first two, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, respectively hold direct responsibility. In terms of this Plan, therefore, it is recommended that the aim should be to secure the commitment from these two organisations to incorporate the objectives for North and West Cork into their operational targets. In addition, it is considered important that both of these organisations should be represented on any Steering Group established to monitor implementation and progress in respect of the Plan.

As regards industrial development it is recommended that this should be focussed geographically in a number of areas. Firstly, it is proposed that Clonakilty should be designated as a centre for technology industries. A nucleus has been formed there already. The objective should be to capitalise on the initiatives that have been taken there and reinforce them by ensuring that there is adequate broadband telecommunications infrastructure and that other improvements to physical

infrastructure, such as improved access are commenced.

It is recommended that a development corridor should be designated and promoted along the N20 from Cork to Limerick in the section between Mallow and Charleville. Appropriate zonings for industrial development should be incorporated in the Development Plan and necessary infrastructure improvements in terms of water and sewerage should be commenced. Consideration should be given to designating the area as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) as provided in the Planning and Development Act 2000

Similarly, it is proposed that steps along the line proposed above should be undertaken to strengthen the Cork / Macroom / Killarney route as a potential development corridor. It is considered that Macroom has the capacity to act as a pivotal focus for industrial development and for providing linkage between the West and the North of the Area. Therefore, it would be worthwhile designating Macroom as an SDZ.



Expanding the Productive Potential of the Economy of North and West Cork

As regards tourism the main potential is considered to lie in:

- £ The potential for a coherent image for the Area as a whole and for a County plan for sustainable tourism development.
- £ The potential for united marketing (including internet presence) and for co-ordinated development of the product.
- £ Strong potential of walking routes.
- £ Eco-tourism potential.
- £ Strong potential to develop marine tourism.
- £ North Cork's presence in a high quality tourism niche (Country House, Heritage).
- £ Potential for cultural tourism and education based tourism – ecology, Irish language etc.
- £ The economic potential of arts and culture.

It is recommended that:

- £ Unified linked websites of tourism information for Cork City and County should be developed.
- £ Unified marketing should be promoted.
- £ Initiatives to promote and develop the likes of eco-tourism and cultural and educational tourism should be supported.

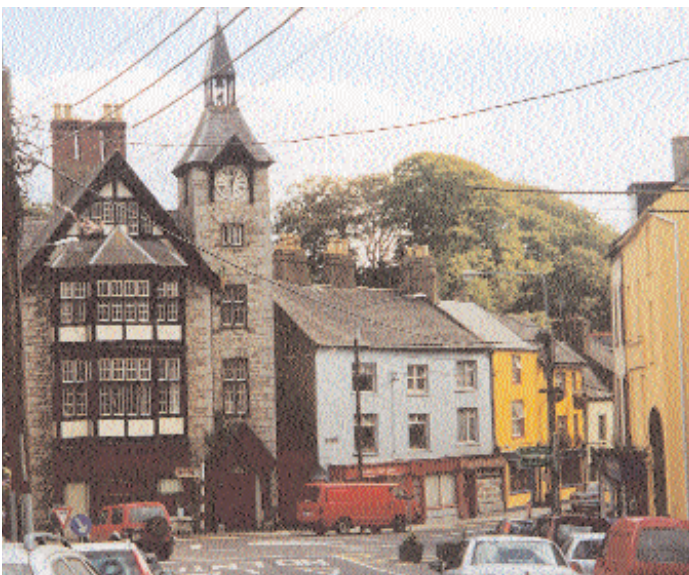
6.3.

FACILITATING ADJUSTMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Although the economic character of rural areas is no longer synonymous with agriculture, the sector, nevertheless, remains the single largest source of employment in North and West County Cork and prospectively it will remain so. Therefore, the economic well being of the sector will have a major influence on the vibrancy of rural communities.

Amongst the main tasks are to ensure that those farm enterprises, which are commercially viable, should improve their competitiveness and efficiencies of production. In order to do this, it is likely that scale will have to be increased, possibly significantly. The sooner the necessary process of consolidation to secure the competitiveness of commercially viable farm enterprises is completed the better. The other principal need is to ensure that the viability of part time farming is maximised. In order for this to happen there is need to increase accessibility to off-farm sources of employment and to provide necessary training so that part time farmers can take advantage of the many flexible employment opportunities in the technology and information age sectors.

The issue of farm diversification, into such areas as horticulture, organic production, and quality consumer food also has a limited role in providing niche opportunities, which can help to secure farm income.





6.4

RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The low level of educational attainment in North and West Cork has been referred to earlier. While it is recognised that this may reflect migration, as the most educated leave, it should be possible to improve the educational level of existing people by programmes of continuing education and outreach programmes. It may be possible also to raise the age at which people leave school, and to widen the range of courses available to people. Realistically, the stimulus for this can come only from the providers of educational services.

Education is doubly important, as it not only provides people with the ability to absorb new information and to accept change; it also has direct consumption benefits. The NDP has a vast range of programmes, so that a willingness to push programmes for local development is necessary. Hence the importance of getting agencies to commit to the concept of local development and to consider the range of potential programmes available. The County Development Board is the natural vehicle for this, but there may be a need to involve private agencies, e.g. schools, local Chambers of Commerce, ICA, Macra na Feirme in this process.

It is recommended that these various organisations should undertake initiatives and provide supports across a range of areas including initiatives which:

- ƒ Develop and foster a culture of learning and expertise;
- ƒ Improve access to education and training and create lifelong learning opportunities;
- ƒ Improve access to "second chance" learning;
- ƒ Extend and vary literacy programmes and make them available to peripheral areas;
- ƒ Develop niche third level education (international quality) including fine arts – traditional culture – Irish language and culture – and business studies;
- ƒ Develop Higher Education and research sector – ecology, fine arts, the marine, organic agriculture, business studies, Irish cultural studies, Irish language, music, new communications media;
- ƒ Encourage private third level initiatives;
- ƒ Provide virtual access to Universities;
- ƒ Provide "non-standard", innovative agricultural and farm training - organic, permaculture, horticulture etc.
- ƒ Make I.T. literacy available to a wide population – e.g. internet access for all through libraries and schools;
- ƒ Increase use and distribution of I.T. to facilitate learning, and communication;
- ƒ Make home and village-based education through I.T. available to all; and
- ƒ Promote flexible working and educational arrangements;
- ƒ Improve the availability of Crèche facilities and other supports for child-care to support education;
- ƒ Increase in-service training opportunities;
- ƒ Deliver training / education at work places.

Expanding the Productive Potential of the Economy of North and West Cork



Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy



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Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

7.1

INTRODUCTION



The average population density in County Cork is 39 persons per square kilometre. The densities in the areas to the north and west of the 'ring towns' decline to an average of 23 persons per square kilometre. This compares with the EU average population density of 115 persons per square kilometre (most of which is situated in urban areas).

North and West Cork is a predominantly rural and agricultural area with small towns and villages and a dispersed, very low-density population. The Area comprises over two thirds of the total area of the county, but contains only 35 per cent of its population. Almost half of the population of the Area lives in a narrow coastal belt. A very small number of people live in towns and villages, with a corresponding very large proportion of the population of the Area residing in unserviced agricultural areas.

The average population density in County Cork is 39 persons per square kilometre, (Map 7.1). The densities in the areas to the north and west of the 'ring towns' decline to an average of 23 persons per square kilometre. This compares with the EU average population density of 115 persons per square kilometre (most of which is situated in urban areas). The map below indicates the variation in population density across the county, as an average across each D.E.D. (C.S.O, 1996). In spite of increases in the population in many parts of the county since 1996, this general pattern of densities continues to prevail. Extensive areas of sub-urbanisation are evident around Cork City. The relative underdevelopment of the villages and towns of the county is also an important feature.

Cork, Ireland's biggest county, has no towns of more than 7,000 population, (Map 7.2). The largest town in the North and West Cork Area is Mitchelstown, with a population of just over 3,000. A number of towns in the county showed a decline in population in the 1996 census: the towns of the north and west of the county were particularly effected but so also were less isolated towns like Fermoy and Mitchelstown. Conversely, the area around Cork City experienced strong growth.

Town and village populations in County Cork make up 52 per cent of the county's population. The North and West Cork Area towns make up less than 8 per cent of the total county population.

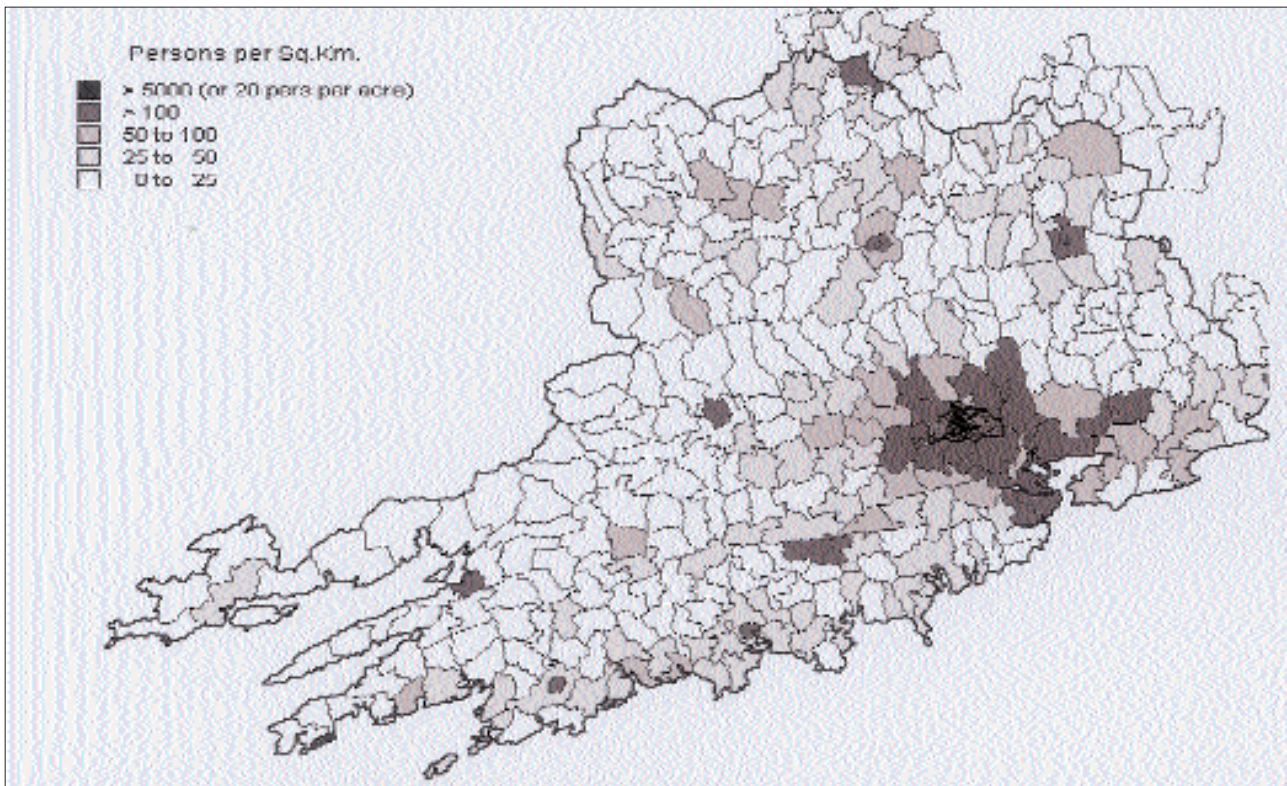


Towns in the area with a population above 1,000 (categorised here as urban) are Buttevant (1070), Newmarket (1150), Millstreet (1226), Dunmanway (1427), Kanturk (1666), Skibbereen, (1926) Macroom (2574), Charleville (2667), Bantry (2936), Clonakilty (2950) and Mitchelstown (3123) (1996 Census of Population, CSO).

The county has a large number of smaller villages and "village nuclei" – small clusters of service functions such as schools, post offices or pubs, with very small numbers of adjacent houses. In a period when young populations are strongly attracted to the employment and social advantages of larger urban areas, the weakness of the county's urban fabric represents a threat to the future sustainability of communities in the Area, whether rural or urban. Research has confirmed that proximity to a large urban area gives critical advantage to surrounding rural areas in terms of population retention, as a result of access to more varied employment opportunities and services. Whilst this "glow effect" was found in some parts of the area closer Cork City, much of the Area, without the presence of any substantial towns, experiences disadvantage in term of access to a full range of urban employment and services, with consequent loss of young population. This disadvantage stems from the very weak urban structure of the Area. This Chapter is concerned with articulating objectives and policies aimed at overcoming this source of disadvantage. Such policies are essential to the effectiveness of many of the recommendations contained later in this Report, regarding the improvement of infrastructure and services in North and West Cork.

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

Map 7.1: Population Density County Cork



Map 7.2: Cork Towns Population



Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

7.2

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS FOR NORTH AND WEST CORK IN A SPATIAL CONTEXT

Population and household projections, by geographic area to the year 2020 are summarised below in *Table 7.1*. These projections do not constitute targets as such. It is recommended that action should be taken by stakeholders,

including community bodies to stimulate additional growth in towns and villages over and above current trends. The Plan aims at additional growth in some towns, such as Skibbereen, Macroom, Dunmanway, Kanturk and Mitchelstown. However, even the higher projected rates of growth would not support the reasonably strong urban growth considered necessary to make services and local economies sustainable in some

Table 7.1: Projected Future Population and Household Formation Trends

Area	Total households 2001	2021 - MIFI (high) Estimated households (estimated)	Additional households	Estimated % inc. in housing stock	2021 (low) total estimated population required	Estimated Increase in Population	Estimated % increase in population
Bantry Rural District	2489	3819	1330	53%	10311	1849	22%
Castletown Rural District	1420	1890	470	33%	5346	985	23%
Clonakilty Rural and Urban Districts	3752	5453	1701	45%	14723	2431	20%
Dunmanway Rural District	2330	3314	984	42%	8949	1415	19%
Kanturk Rural District	4925	6429	1504	31%	17357	2290	15%
Macroom Urban and Rural Districts	4686	7090	2404	51%	19144	3184	20%
Mallow Rural District (not including Mallow Town)	5762	8252	2490	43%	22281	3443	18%
Millstreet Rural District	1957	2597	640	33%	7012	994	17%
Mitchelstown Rural District	2276	3143	867	38%	8487	1306	18%
Schull Rural District	1384	1768	384	28%	4773	829	21%
Skibbereen Rural and Urban Districts	4100	5507	1407	34%	14868	2390	19%
Total	35081	49262	14181	40%	133251	21116	19%

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy



parts of the Area. Moreover, without inward migration, which is assumed in these projections, many more parts of the Area would lose population and also households.

The substantial increase in the projected number of houses that will be needed in the Area is one of the most important trends to be provided for in the 20-year period of the strategy. The factors that will determine numbers of households and the numbers of new houses needed are far more complex than those that determine population.

The need for more houses is generated by a wide number of factors including:

- £ Household formation at a younger average age.
- £ More single person households.
- £ Fewer inter-generational households.
- £ Separation of married people.
- £ The demand for second homes, including a continuing demand for holiday homes.
- £ Student accommodation, as third level objectives come to fruition.
- £ Movement of people into the Area.
- £ Natural increase of population in the age group which is at household formation stage.
- £ The reduction of shared occupation patterns such as lodging, shared dwellings.
- £ Higher standards of housing: obsolescence of substandard or very small houses, relief from overcrowding.
- £ Accumulated need: the need for good homes for travelling people, for homeless people and for people in unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation.

Demand, rather than need, for housing is affected by the economy in so far as increased spending power makes it possible for more people to become heads of households. Young single people, younger married people and older people who might previously have

lived as a part of an extended family are now able to rent or purchase a separate dwelling. Economic cycles of growth, stagnation and decline can lead to "bottlenecks" in supply as demand, which has accumulated in poor economic conditions, suddenly enters the market when conditions improve. Over the long term it is likely that these cycles may delay, rather than prevent, entry to the housing market.

The housing market is cyclical and periodic economic stresses result in an accumulation of unmet need. Greater prosperity associated with increased employment opportunities is, as has been seen dramatically in the past five years, the strongest driver of demand for new housing, as it brings ownership within reach of greater numbers of people and allows for a higher standard of housing overall. By and large, demand for new housing is concentrated closely around employment centres. The exception is when the attractiveness of an area, such as the coastal parts of West Cork, combines with the financial ability of people to maintain a second residence for holiday or retirement purposes. Another attractant can be availability of low cost land or housing, which some people are willing or able to trade off against distance from employment and services.

Table 7.2 shows additional household and population projections for 2021, based on a scenario of likely natural increase and inward migration associated with continued economic growth. Firstly, it should be noted that without further inward migration many parts of the Area would continue to lose population, with consequent deterioration of services and community life for those remaining.

The projections assume a stronger than average natural increase and household size, partly based on an assumption of a continuing and increasing migration into the Area of people in their early 30s as "ready made" families.

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

Table 7.2: Household Formation Projections Based on Alternative Trends

Area	2001	2021 (high)	Additional households	% inc. in housing stock required	2021 (low)	Additional households	% inc. in housing stock required
Clonakilty Urban	844	1318	474	56%	1174	330	39%
Macroom Urban	789	1156	367	47%	1030	241	31%
Skibbereen Urban	740	874	134	18%	778	38	5%
Bandon Rural District	4849	7502	2653	55%	6680	1831	38%
Bantry Rural District	2489	3819	1330	53%	3402	913	37%
Castletown Rural District	1420	1890	470	33%	1765	345	24%
Clonakilty Rural District	2908	4135	1227	42%	3680	772	27%
Dunmanway Rural District	2330	3314	984	42%	2950	620	27%
Kanturk Rural District	4925	6429	1504	31%	5716	791	16%
Macroom Rural District	3897	5934	2037	52%	5283	1386	36%
Mallow Rural District	5762	8252	2490	43%	7343	1581	27%
Millstreet Rural District	1957	2597	640	33%	2310	353	18%
Mitchelstown Rural District	2276	3143	867	38%	2797	521	23%
Skibbereen Rural District	3360	4633	1273	38%	4123	763	23%
Schull Rural District	1384	1768	384	28%	1574	190	14%
Total	39930	56764	16834	42%	50605	10675	27%

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy



7.3

SETTLEMENT STRATEGY - PLANNING FOR BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The settlement strategy proposed for North and West Cork is opportunity-based. It recognises the historic reasons for the low population levels in the Area, some of which are no longer relevant (political and military instability) and others which are changing or can be changed (e.g. over dependence on export of unprocessed produce, poor access). It endorses the view expressed in many communities that planned growth of the county's towns and villages can help to bring a sustainable future and quality of life benefits. It also aims at supporting a sustainable rural population in the wider rural context.

Planning for future populations in North and West Cork, both in terms of location and future numbers, whilst having regard to the probabilities indicated in population projections, should be decided on the basis of strategic goals and targets rather than solely on the basis of population projections.

This strategic plan proposes integrated access, economic, environmental and settlement-development measures that taken together aim for sustainability and for a high quality of life. An increase in population and changes in the geographic distribution of households are material to success in attaining these goals.

Measures should:

- £ **Have regard to the cumulative, long-term, social and environmental impacts of housing location decisions**
- £ **Take into account that the location of housing can help to shape and promote local economic opportunities**
- £ **Be based on principles of environmental sustainability**
- £ **Recognise that complex issues affect housing outcomes in rural areas**
- £ **Address the issues with practical**

approaches which have been tested and proved successful in Cork and elsewhere

- £ **Involve new processes of team-based service delivery with community participation and local decision-making**
- £ **Involve a changed perception of rural areas.**

The key spatial development measures recommended are to support and enable a significant increase in town and village populations across the Area, whilst stabilising and sustaining the populations based in agricultural areas, as far as practicable.

It is proposed that a major programme of town and village renewal and development should be undertaken and that a much greater proportion of overall new housing should be located in villages. Fiscal and other monetary incentives have a key role to play in achieving this outcome. So too do Local Area Plans.

In order to achieve community goals for the economy, services and for population profile, a significant increase in town populations is essential. Based on today's projections and some distributive shift in favour of towns, the scope for consolidation and growth would appear insufficient, without proactive policies. If towns are to achieve their goals and secure this growth, they will need to target additional population, based on inward migration and on successful economic and environmental strategies.

Table 7.3 overleaf sets out three scenarios, one based on the study population projections and existing settlement patterns, the second based on the same projections, but with a proactive approach to town and village regeneration and growth. The final scenario, illustrated in the last three columns, sets out a possible targeted approach to securing strong, viable town populations through seeking additional growth over and above current projections.

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

Through town and village development, the overall rural population would be sustained at around 67 per cent of total population. The total population living in towns, which is at present very small, would double if the targets proposed above were met.

Town development, as depicted in this table, would involve determined and energetic local efforts to revitalise and extend attractive urban centres, to develop local third level education and training, to attract decentralised posts, develop e:business and to increase tourism-based livelihoods and other inward investment. These measures are considered essential if a young, educated population is to remain living in the Area and if local services and employment are to be sustained.

The full range of Economic, social and planning measures proposed in this Plan will need to be implemented in an integrated fashion to realise the potential benefits of this strategy.

Village development should be promoted not only in existing villages with populations of over 140, but also in smaller settlements with development potential.

The Area has many potential village nuclei with schools, churches, public houses and other facilities. These locations would benefit from additional housing: village development programmes should be initiated where there is local demand for housing with a view to land release for development. In these locations indicative village plans should be prepared to provide for in-depth mixed development in character with the Area.

Some additional housing is allowed for in agricultural areas, to allow for some natural increase and to sustain local communities. There is also allowance made for a period of transition in the first 2-3 years of implementation, as infrastructure and planning work is needed to achieve a shift to village based rural development.

7.4

SETTLEMENT QUALITIES

From the extensive data collected from communities regarding settlements and housing, the following criteria are found to be key issues:

- f Communities should have a real say in planning for their own areas.
- f Communities want to work with the Council to ensure suitable village lands are released for housing.
- f More village housing should be built - both private and local authority.
- f People in the Area are experiencing real difficulties in obtaining housing: access to affordable housing is needed by all age groups.
- f Growth of villages should be controlled by phasing and should not be out of scale.
- f Densities should be suited to the place.
- f New development should be in character with existing towns and villages.
- f A good social mix and balance of age groups should be maintained in villages.
- f New people should be welcomed and integrated.
- f Infrastructure should be provided in towns and villages and the Islands to provide for additional housing.
- f Coastal and other landscapes should be carefully managed.
- f Holiday home estates should not generally be permitted in rural areas.
- f Derelict and vacant buildings should be refurbished and brought into use.
- f Houses should be accessible, linked to services by footpaths and lighting.
- f Buildings should be energy-efficient and eco-friendly.
- f Parks and walks should be a part of every settlement: open spaces should be central and shared by all.
- f Farming families should be able to live on their own land when they work on the farm.
- f Traffic should be calmed.

Columns 1 and 2 of the table show housing and population as recorded in the most recent Census of Population (1996). Column 3 shows the projected total additional population for the Area to 2021. Column 4 shows the outcome if the additional projected population was distributed between town, village and agricultural area-based housing in the same proportions as prevail today. Column 5 shows a possible outcome if recommendations on rural development are carried out, with increased land-release and housing opportunities being achieved in towns and villages. A suggested target of 30 per cent of all additional houses in villages is suggested. Column 6 shows the projected total population in 2021 of the Area. The last three columns (9 -11) show additional population and households targets (over and above projected increases) in order for the growth and consolidation of towns recommended in this report to be achieved. This entails a recommended 50 per cent of additional housing in towns.

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

Table 7.3: Alternative Scenarios for Urban and Rural Development

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Study Area		Population 1996	Households 1996	Additional Projected Population (to 2021):	Additional Projected Households (to 2021) by current locational patterns	Additional Projected House-holds with pro-active town and village development	Total Population in 2021 (projected)	Total Projected Households (to 2021) using current locational patterns	Total Households 2021 with pro-active village development	Additional targeted household growth in towns and villages	Planned distribution of total households –achieving additional growth in towns and villages	Approximate Distribution of Population (at 2.7 persons per household) including additional targeted growth
URBAN	Towns	22578	7814		2996	4793		10810	12607	3,500	16107	43489
		23%	25%		25%	40%		25%	29%	70%	33%	33%
RURAL	Villages	9817	3126		1198	3595		4324	6721	1,500	8221	22197
	10%	10%	10%		10%	30%		10%	16%	30%	17%	17%
	Agricul-tural Areas	65772	20316		7789	3595		28105	23911		23911	64559
		67%	65%		65%	30%		65%	55%		50%	50%
Total		98167	31256	18583	11983	11983	116750	43239	43239	5,000	48239	130245
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total Rural		75589	23442		8987	7190			30632		32132	86756
Total Rural%		77%	75%		75%	60%			71%		67%	67%

Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy

- ƒ Rural houses should be well-designed and sited.
- ƒ The old buildings and street patterns should be followed for future development.
- ƒ Heritage and landmark buildings should be conserved.
- ƒ Design guidelines for development are needed.

These criteria are compatible with sustainable development objectives. The question arises as to what strategy will best achieve these community goals and secure sustainable communities.

Having regard to social, economic and environmental factors, the following approach to settlement patterns is recommended:

- ƒ **An active role for communities in the development of their areas.**
- ƒ **Consolidation of populations in agricultural areas: improvement of rural housing stock.**
- ƒ **Growth and enhancement of rural villages.**
- ƒ **Improvement of infrastructure and public transport links.**
- ƒ **Growth and development of towns with strong service sectors – locally set growth targets.**
- ƒ **Pro-active integration of new populations into existing communities.**
- ƒ **Encouragement to maintain local culture and traditions.**
- ƒ **Increased proportion of housing development in towns and villages rather than open countryside - the key to reaching this goal is a shift of resources into integrated, community-led, development of villages and continued enhancement of the urban environment of towns.**
- ƒ **Restriction of holiday homes development where it may prejudice local access to housing through inappropriate use of infrastructure or land.**



7.4.1

TOWN DEVELOPMENT

The advantages of expanding existing settlements over new towns or dispersed dwellings include the fact that

- ƒ **some services already exist;**
- ƒ **new services will have ready-made customers and existing facilities can be more fully utilised; and**
- ƒ **the new population can become part of a community with a sense of history and local culture.**

The existing towns within the Area are important material and social assets in spite of their small size. The towns, which have evolved mainly as market centres, are well located to serve their agricultural hinterlands and to develop as self-sustaining settlements.

The location of new development, housing, employment and services should be facilitated and designed so as to support the balanced growth of North and West Cork's towns. The settlement strategy proposed rests on a policy-based approach along with pro-active measures to promote well-designed town and village extensions and to improve connecting routes between towns so as to encourage genuine synergistic and co-operative polycentric development. The strategy aims to cultivate niche strengths of towns, building on their existing resources and activities, so that complementarity will replace competition and duplication of measures.

In North and West Cork, where it is highly desirable for reasons of social and economic sustainability and for the survival of communities that towns and villages should grow, it should also be remembered that falling household size will rapidly erode local urban populations if more dwellings are not constructed. In the UK, which has a household unit size indicative of future trends expected here, the Department of Environment and Transportation has found that settlements of approximately 5,000

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The location of new development, housing, employment and services should be facilitated and designed so as to support the balanced growth of North and West Cork's towns.

Targets for growth of these towns should be set in conjunction with residents and the towns' representative bodies. High quality urban design has been prioritised locally in appraisals and Development Programmes should incorporate relevant objectives in this regard.

households are necessary to make a reasonable range of services, including secondary education, viable.

Map 7.3, Urban Spatial Strategy, indicates two groups of towns which lend themselves to closely linked and complementary development. One group is in North Cork and comprises Charleville, Fermoy, Kanturk, Macroom, Mallow, Millstreet, Mitchelstown and Newmarket. For development purposes it is recommended that Kanturk, Millstreet and Newmarket should be viewed together in order to provide a focus for strategic development in the North West of the Area. The other group is in the South and South-west and comprises Bandon, Bantry, Castletownbere, Clonakilty, Dunmanway, and Skibereen.

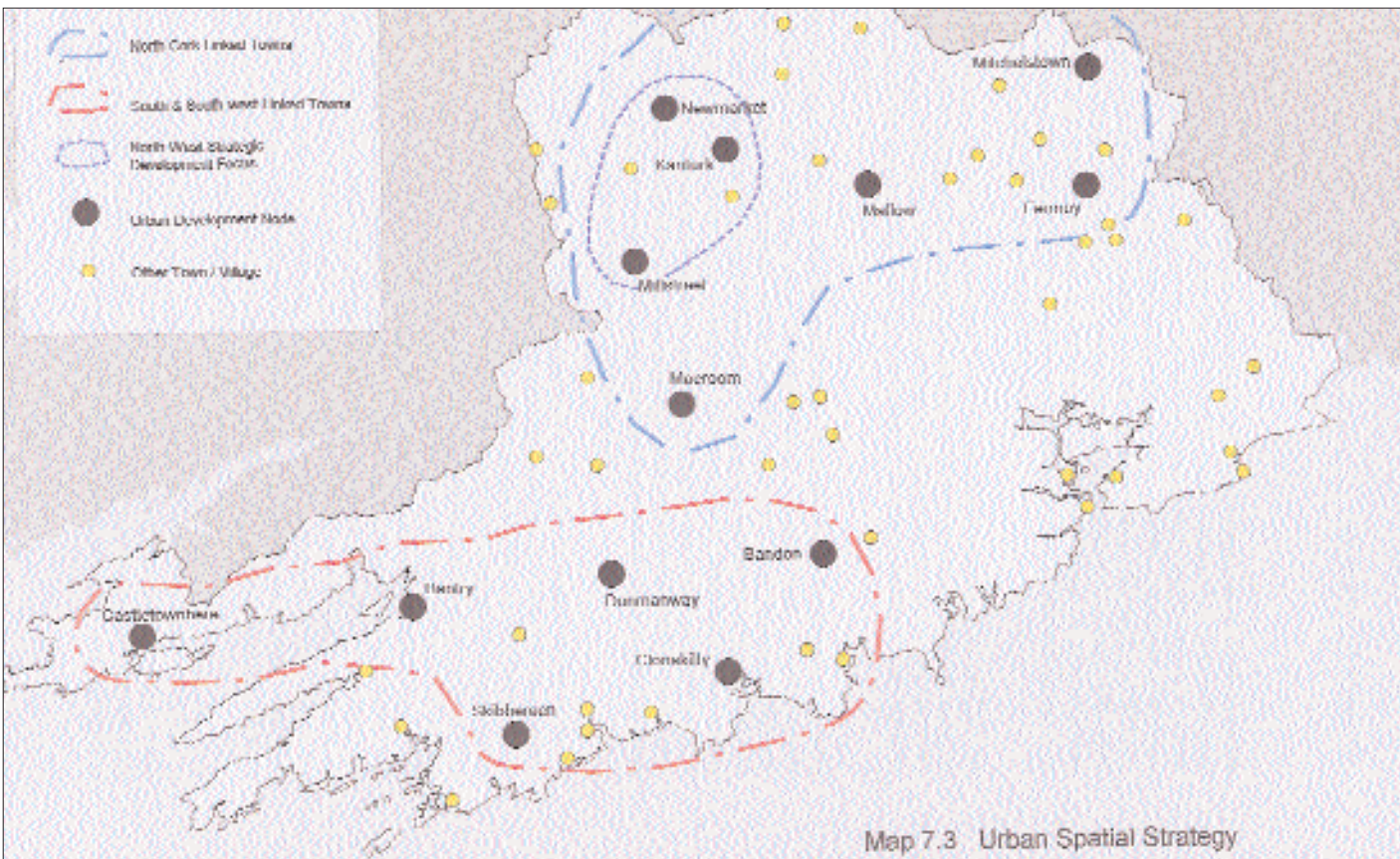
These two groups of towns could be characterised as 'urban development nodes', capable of (or with the potential in the future of) carrying an important

range of services and employment so as to sustain their immediate population and the rural-based population in their hinterlands. A focused and co-ordinated approach to the development and enhancement of these towns will be required.

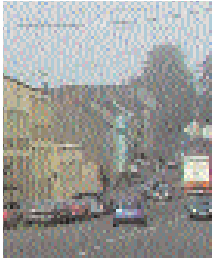
Targets for growth of these towns should be set in conjunction with residents and the towns' representative bodies. High quality urban design has been prioritised locally in appraisals and Development Programmes should incorporate relevant objectives in this regard.

The emphasis of the access strategy, associated with the proposed settlement pattern is on linking these towns with good connecting roads and with public transport and promoting the development of small towns and villages along these public transport corridors. It is recommended that there should be an emphasis on concentric rather than radial routes, which would support

Map 7.3: Urban Spatial Strategy



Achieving Sustainable Settlement Patterns: An Essential Requirement of A Successful Future Strategy



A central proposition is that the potential for village development in north and west Cork offers the best opportunity for sustainable rural communities in the changing economy.

complementary and co-operative development between towns and villages and enhance the viability of local services.

The growth and consolidation of these settlements should not be seen as an end in itself but as a stepping stone to the wider consolidation of the Area.

Feasibility studies and action plans should be put in place to ensure that local objectives for balanced, high quality, sustainable development are reached.

It is recommended that a target to double the household numbers of each of the above towns by 2020, on average, in a planned, incremental fashion, should be considered. (This will not involve a doubling of population, due to decreasing household size). In order to achieve these targets they will have to obtain substantial outside economic impetus through measures including decentralisation of posts, inward investment in industry, tourism development, educational or other services development. In the case of the North West towns, the feasibility of this growth will be largely dependent on winning additional supports to arrest the current serious cycle of decline. Attaining these targets is a challenge that will mean exceeding the higher growth projections based on current trends shown in the table above. With this level of growth the intrinsic character of the towns would not be changed, but the capacity of both individual towns and linked towns to hold a thriving complex of diverse services and employment would be enhanced.

Fewer than 2 in 7 new houses in the Area in recent years have been located in towns and villages. Without a serious approach to control of dispersed dwellings, an effective urban development strategy for North and West Cork is not achievable.

7.4.2

RURAL HOUSING - VILLAGES

A central proposition is that the potential for village development in North and West Cork offers the best opportunity for sustainable rural communities in the changing economy. Villages can support diverse local economies and essential services, which also benefit the surrounding agricultural areas. They provide conditions where new residents can integrate and contribute to the local economy. Through eco-labelling projects, village communities in partnership with the local authority and other agencies can minimise their environmental impacts. Village development can encompass a wide variety of housing forms and because of small settlement size does not need to attain high urban residential densities.

The strategic actions recommended focus on proactive measures to increase the accessibility, affordability, variety and quality of various types of housing in villages. The villages will act as 'robust service centres, supporting the social and economic success of the surrounding area and providing an excellent quality of life for their inhabitants.

This strategy involves a decisive shift away from dispersed development to more substantial and coherent rural development in villages with schools, shops, churches and other facilities within walking distance. It is envisaged that the majority of new permissions for houses in rural areas should be village based. The strategy is focused on the need to increase the accessibility, affordability and quality of housing in rural areas (defined as all of the Area except towns of 1,000 or more inhabitants) and to enhance the social mix, age balance and sustainability of villages. **The key measure is a shift to the integrated development of villages offering rural living with an excellent, sustainable, quality of life.**

Table 7.3 (p81) illustrates the consequences of a shift to higher levels of

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house construction in villages in the Area over a twenty-year period, compared with existing trends. Thus, the outcome, if projected increases in households are distributed on the basis of present trends, is shown i.e. the village population amounts to 10 per cent of the total, as at present (Column 7). Next a redistribution of prospective household growth to towns (40 per cent compared with 25 per cent on the basis of current trends) and villages (30 per cent compared with 10 per cent at present) is considered (Column 5). In these circumstances, the proportion of households living in towns and villages in 2021 would be 29 per cent and 16 per cent respectively (Column 8), compared with 25 per cent and 10 per cent on the basis of current trends (Column 4). Finally, the effects of achieving *additional* household growth of 5,000 over the period, distributed 70 per cent to towns and 30 per cent to villages is considered. With this incremental growth the proportion living in towns and villages rises further to 33 per cent and 18 per cent respectively (Column 10).

Without village development, many parts of the Area would be likely to decline in population throughout the twenty-year period. At the same time the coastal belt would become seriously environmentally damaged due to the very limited carrying capacity of unserviced lands and the negative economic and environmental consequences of large scale dispersed housing.

The Area has a large number of well-distributed and established villages. Most of these require infrastructure investment in the form of sanitary services, traffic safety measures and environmental improvements. These works could be carried out through combined resources of the local authority, developers and local communities. There are also large numbers of very small settlements termed here as "village nuclei": i.e. small settlements characterised by one or more services such as post office, public house, bus stop, shop, school, church, clinic, creamery or community hall, for example. Many of these settlements also have the potential to beneficially accommodate an increased residential component. Infrastructure investment is essential to support the development of these settlements into viable village communities.

It is possible to identify, analytically, a hierarchy of settlement types – e.g. towns (some of which have the capacity to be urban development nodes), villages and village nuclei – all of which terms are used above. However, in the dynamic and forward looking context of the Plan it is considered that it would be inappropriate to determine a priori and in a rigid and inflexible way which particular settlements should be included in each of these categories. The dynamics of growth and development should be the main factor influencing this outcome.

7.4.3

URBAN FORM AND HOUSING ESTATE DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Communities taking part in community appraisal expressed a wish that new development in towns and villages should conform to the urban character of the existing town. This means that it should be based on new streets integrated into the existing street layout, with a good level of permeability i.e. linkage and freedom of movement. A

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wish for the creation of communal "town parks" as places where the whole community can meet was also strongly expressed. Inwards-facing suburban type housing estate layouts, with integral semi private "open spaces" of limited utility were considered inappropriate and damaging socially and visually to the settlements of the Area. Several communities suggested that new public spaces should be designed to link, and to be shared by, new and established residents. The people of the Area identified their built heritage and the street layout of their towns and villages as an important aspect of local heritage and identity. They propose that new development should respect this character and form. Within this approach heritage structures should be safeguarded and conserved.

Experience of urban and rural regeneration in all parts of the world has shown that a locally distinctive, high quality built environment, human in scale and pedestrian friendly, lends itself to an enhanced quality of life and to the development of service employment of all kinds. Conservation of the built heritage of the Area, including stone-built vernacular dwellings and agricultural structures, is important to quality of life.

The regeneration and extension of visually and experientially rich architectural and landscape settings can itself promote economic development and is in itself an enhancement of quality of life.

7.4.4

ZONING OF LAND AND LAND RELEASE

In the past, a practice of under-zoning has tended to be pursued in Ireland, with an area of land reserved to precisely match household formation estimated on the basis of past trends – which were often trends of decline. The rationale for tightly budgeted zoning is that it may, in theory, encourage compact development which can be economically serviced and which will reach an early "critical mass", thus



The Area has a large number of well-distributed and established villages. Most of these require infrastructure investment in the form of sanitary services, traffic safety measures and environmental improvements.

providing early viability for new local services including schools and shops. However, without public ownership or control of lands, underzoning can lead to virtual collapse of planned development as, if the zoned land is not released immediately for development, the only options are for no development or for unplanned development. Furthermore, the construction of housing on zoned lands has not in every case been followed by provision of services where, for example, adverse social or environmental conditions made them non-viable. Zoning as a sole policy instrument, without supporting investment and design input, has singularly failed to deliver a high quality planned environment.

Zoning provision has not always allowed sufficiently for the reality that a number of factors can prevent or delay use of zoned lands for building purposes. The need for a wide variety of housing types and locational choice in small as well as larger settlements has not been sufficiently taken into account. The ready availability of rural lands for one-off housing has also undermined strategies based on tight rationing of housing land. The need for social mix and housing choice within each settlement, no matter how small, should be acknowledged and allowed for.



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8.1

INTRODUCTION

A safe and efficient public and private transport system, with a choice of modes of transport and integrated transport and development corridors, can address community goals across the study spectrum of environment, community and economy.

A good telecommunications network is a primary requirement for future improved cohesiveness and increased development potential for the Area and its communities.

Changes in the sources and consumption of energy are also a central issue for sustainable development.

The size of County Cork and the remoteness of its north and west boundaries from the main urban area pose a fundamental challenge. County Cork, with its extensive, diverse territory and peripheral location, is experienced locally as an isolated and fragmented space with poor access and communications. The quality of physical and telecommunication linkages with regional, national and international networks varies, with South and West Cork in particular experiencing acute disadvantage, North East Cork being much better placed.

Internal linkages between the different parts of the Area are weak: social and economic constraints and barriers result. The road system is not so much a network as a collection of radial routes to Cork City. This weakens the cohesiveness of County Cork as a social and economic entity.

The Area nevertheless contains some important infrastructure assets. This part of the report indicates aspects of existing infrastructure which can be wisely used to gain maximum economic and environmental advantage for the Area and points to key improvements needed.



8.2

THE INFRASTRUCTURE ENDOWMENT

There is no part of Ireland more disadvantaged in terms of access to urban-based facilities than west and north west Cork and the islands. North and West Cork is at the periphery of a region which is itself peripheral within Europe. This region (the Republic of Ireland) is, since the opening of the Channel Tunnel, the only significant European economy not linked by road and rail to the European mainland.

The Area includes the most extensive area within Ireland which is 45 kilometres or more distant from the nearest town of 5,000 or more population. The urban structure of the Area, with no towns of 4,000+ population, is very weak: consolidation and growth of key settlements is virtually unachievable without improved access.

8.2.1

ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE

The west of County Cork is disadvantaged in terms of straight-line distance to the nearest city and town of 5,000 or over population. The poor road structure within the west of the county exacerbates this disadvantage. This represents a serious disadvantage in terms of access to regional services. It presents a constraint

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The main road transport network in County Cork is a radial system providing access to and from Cork City. Concentric linkages between County towns are generally poor, constraining the economic development potential of these small towns and increasing their vulnerability by isolating them.

on the long term development of the small towns in the Area.

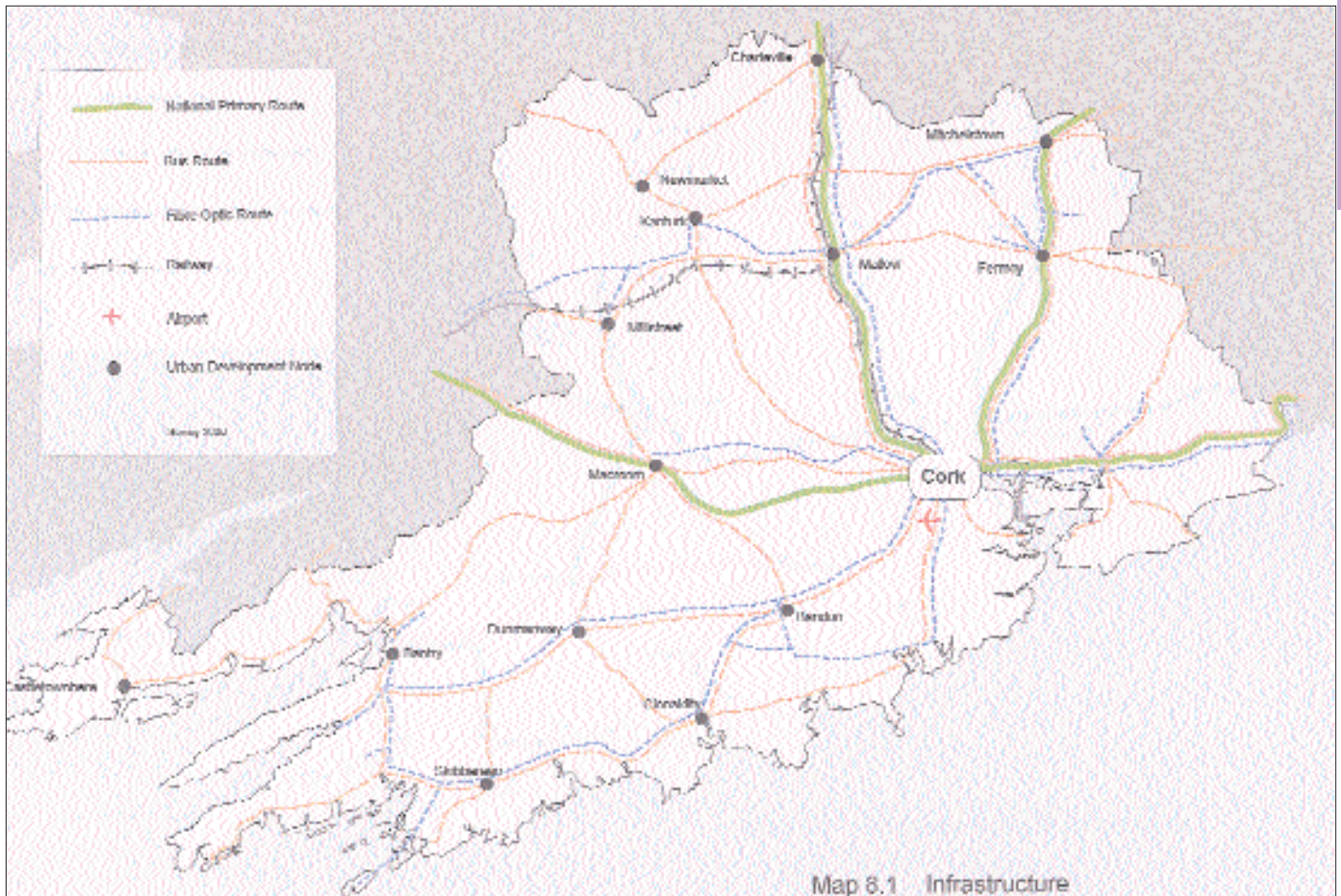
West Cork, an area larger than many Irish counties, has no national primary roads. Map 8.1 shows the main infrastructure networks of County Cork. Whilst the Cork City area has a strong complex of infrastructure, the area south of the N22, which comprises the southern half of the county, has virtually no first class 20th century infrastructure with the exception of a fibre optic telecommunications line. Local survey has shown a strongly perceived need for the Bandon-Dunmanway-Bantry regional route to be substantially improved.

The original Cork Land Use and Transportation Study in 1978 focused on the functioning of the road network within the Cork urban area, rather than on the development of a regional

network. Consequently the LUTS viewed Cork City as "a terminus of the national road system" accessed by National Primary routes and rail from the east and north. The by-passing of the City for through traffic was not a priority of the LUTS study. The function of the southern ring road was viewed mainly as "a local and City Centre distributor route rather than as a major through route (LUTS 1978)."

The main road transport network in County Cork is a radial system providing access to and from Cork City. Concentric linkages between County towns are generally poor, constraining the economic development potential of these small towns and increasing their vulnerability by isolating them. An example is Dunmanway, where employment losses would be locally less damaging if better

Map 8.1 Infrastructure



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road and public transport links with Macroom and Skibbereen existed.

The constraints on the development of North and West Cork which result from peripherality and from isolation from major transport networks present a main opportunity of the Strategic Framework. As the economy of the Cork urban area continues to "spill over" is likely to replace "siphoning out" as the predominant relationship between rural and urban Cork. Growth of the towns of North and West Cork also offers the potential for more balanced development but depends to some considerable extent for its sustainability on improved access. If rural Cork and Cork City are to fully benefit from this shift then there must be proper access via a range of transport and communications modes.

8.2.2

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

Public transport has been identified as a key requirement in community appraisal. Lack of public transport impacts particularly seriously on elderly people and young people without cars. Public transport in the Area in the main does not consist of regular, all day scheduled services, but of a few routes with one or two services a day or even fewer. In the



Lack of public transport impacts particularly seriously on elderly people and young people without cars.

south-west there are a number of summer-only tourist based bus services. Timetabling of existing services, both bus and rail, was identified as a central issue as timetables rarely accommodated either commuter journeys or shopping/business trips. Because of the sparse and dispersed population of the Area, it will be a challenge to build up the viability of public transport routes.

Rail

The current context for the rail network in County Cork is one of substantial investment after an extended period of shortage of funding. The *DKM Review of Transport Infrastructure Needs* and CIE's plans indicate an investment of a minimum of £1.2 million is required over the next seven years to bring the existing network up to standard. Substantial works were funded to main routes including Dublin to Cork under the last National Plan. The next phase of investment concerns lines, which are at present less used and present issues of viability.

The investment proposed is focused mainly on areas in the immediate hinterland of Cork City. Rail infrastructure in the North and West Cork Area consists of a section of the primary line from Dublin to Cork and a secondary line branching from the primary line from Mallow via Killarney to Tralee. The *Review of Rail Safety in Ireland*, commissioned by the Department of Public Enterprise in 1998, investigated the condition of routes



Improving Access and Communications: The Actions Required

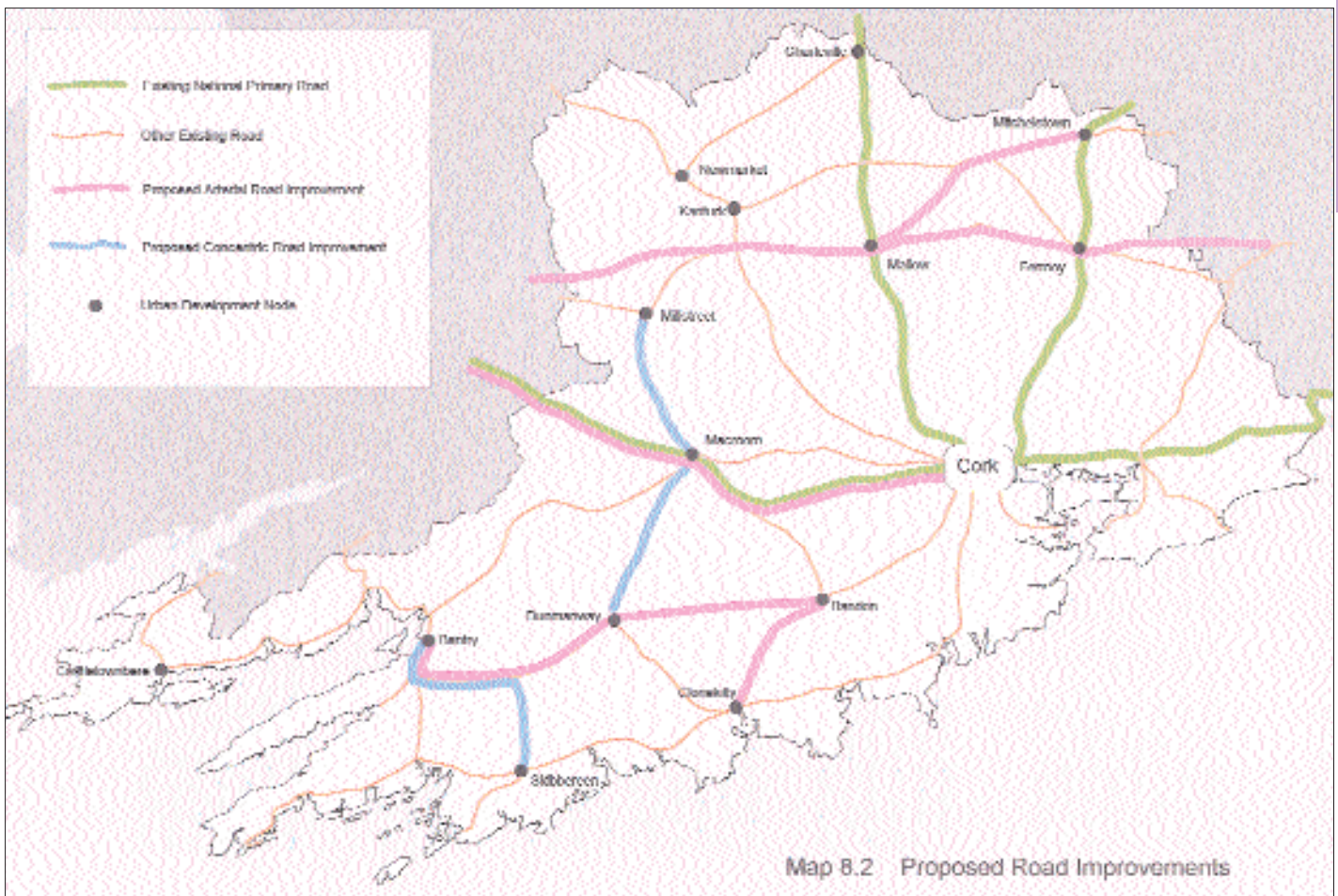
throughout the State and found multiple deficiencies. The report concluded: "Risks are unacceptable and must be reduced irrespective of cost considerations." The review found inadequacies in signalling, including telecommunications and level crossings, permanent way, including track condition; bridges and other structures and electrification. The condition of the Tralee route was noted as poor. Upgrading of the entire network to Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) is deemed to be a priority. Bridges, fencing, level crossings and new rolling stock are also a priority. These works are necessary for safety, but also present the opportunity for reduced journey times. Current plans for rail at national level are not ambitious and are mainly aimed at remedying existing gross deficiencies in the existing network.

Bus services

Bus Eireann has an extensive network of routes in the county. A number of commercial operators also provide bus services and there are special student buses to Waterford, Limerick and Dublin. Most routes are radial routes from and to Cork City, with few concentric links between towns and villages. Some areas have little or no public transport, putting elderly and young populations and others without private cars at an extreme disadvantage in accessing services of all kinds. South Cork between Butlerstown and Ballinspittle, the area between the Bandon and Lee Valleys and North West Cork are such areas.

Timetabling is as big an issue as are routes, as some services do not offer suitable commuter journeys or do not permit people travelling to Cork City

Map 8.2 Proposed Road Improvements



Map 8.2 Proposed Road Improvements



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sufficient time to carry out tasks before the return journey. The National Parents' Council have made national representations for a community transport system based on the school bus service. Older people and teenagers are the social groups most dependent on existing bus services.

Community appraisal indicated that in many areas communities fear losing their existing bus services. Increased levels of car ownership erode the viability of these services. A safe, efficient and comfortable bus service is an essential for sustainable communities in North and West Cork. A number of Local Authorities and County Development Boards are carrying out full comprehensive audits of public transport within their areas. Given the size of County Cork and the social and economic characteristics of the County, an audit would provide a sound basis for co-ordinated initiatives to increase and improve public transport in the County. Standards of comfort, safety and convenience, both in terms of the quality and age of buses and the provision of well located bus shelters are also issues.

Privately operated taxi services are also important in rural areas and should be seen as important support to public transport services. In parts of the Area, taxis are used to provide access to bus services to Cork City and other destinations. Taxis are an important "feeder system" in this respect as the dispersed character of development puts access to public transport routes out of reach to a high proportion of residents in the Area.

Air Services

Cork Airport, to the south of Cork City, presents an advantage to the coastal zone and to West Cork. Aer Rianta is an international airport management group, which manages the airport at Cork. Capital expenditure of £30m over the last ten years included expenditure on runway extension, overlay and widening of runway. The extension of the runway could be achieved to cater for long-haul

flights. The terminal was extended in 1994 to cater for 1.1m passengers per annum. Passenger numbers increased from 1.5m in 1999 to approximately 1.7m in 2000.

The current airport development plan (1999-2003) with £60m capital outlay is envisaged to include:

- £ **Redevelopment of the terminal to increase capacity to 2.5m;**
- £ **Multi storey car park;**
- £ **Air bridges;**
- £ **Pier;**
- £ **Extension to apron.**

It is a disadvantage to the airport that its extensive hinterland to the west is very sparsely populated. The presence of the airport is a major potential asset to the Area, the benefits of which are reduced by the poor quality of the connecting road network. It is noticeable that in spite of the apparent proximity of Cork airport to the Area, there were numerous community suggestions for direct air access into their area (particularly the south west). This is in probability a consequence of the poor road access and lack of public transport connections from South West Cork to the airport.

8.2.3

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The Irish Government is committed to the development of an inclusive Information Society. Initiatives undertaken over recent years have resulted in the provision of significant broadband infrastructure and services and in international broadband connectivity. These initiatives have been driven by recognition of the increasing importance of the Information Society in promoting economic and social development and cohesion in the future.

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2000 – 2006 recognises that the stock of public infrastructure in an economy is a

Improving Access and Communications: The Actions Required



It is critical that Ireland should not fall behind in the provision of advanced communications and e-commerce facilities and in the provision of the basic infrastructure capacity necessary to support the development of the Information Society.

major determinant of its competitiveness and of society's capacity to address some of its major social and environmental needs. This infrastructure includes communications networks. The development of communications and e-commerce infrastructure is a priority of the Plan because of the urgent need to expand the capital stock in this area both to sustain the level of activity and to enhance the potential of less developed areas.

It is critical that Ireland should not fall behind in the provision of advanced communications and e-commerce facilities and in the provision of the basic infrastructure capacity necessary to support the development of the Information Society. There is evidence that a competitive market alone will not ensure the provision of advanced communications services and networks to the extent required to contribute to national competitiveness and attract inward investment.

In order to leverage the benefits of the Information Society and to exploit its potential to contribute to economic development, the following objectives are being pursued in the NDP:

- £ **The development of the Irish communications sector so that it ranks in the top decile of OECD countries in terms of service range, quality, availability and price; and**



- £ **The establishment of a legal, regulatory and administrative framework which will create a favourable climate for the development of electronic commerce and digital industries.**

These objectives are being pursued through a range of Government led actions. In the area of promoting the development of advanced communications infrastructure and services priming funding can provide the stimulus to close the gap between the development of the information and communications sector in Ireland and that of the world's more advanced economies. To achieve this, a provision of £197 million has been made in the NDP to promote investment in advanced communications and e-commerce infrastructure in areas where it is clear the market will not deliver sufficient investment, and to support the acceleration of the Information Society and e-commerce. This investment is being provided in the regional programmes.

Within the context of the NDP, the Department of Public Enterprise is supporting the provision of advanced communications and e-commerce infrastructure and services in less developed areas of Ireland. This is with a view to securing a more balanced regional development and filling the services and infrastructure gaps, which the market is failing to provide for or is unlikely to provide within reasonable timescales. An additional important objective is to enhance social inclusion in the Information Society and to increase access to public services electronically.

At the time of writing, the need to improve Ireland's telecommunications network, from the point of view of both access and price, is becoming critical. Infrastructure and levels of internet use are now lagging seriously behind the U.S.A., U.K. and France. The necessary infrastructure is affordable high-speed, always on, Internet and data services. The North and West Cork Area will need



Improving Access and Communications: The Actions Required

affordable DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) and wireless local loop if it is to take full advantage of the potential clearly offered by the Internet to rural and isolated areas. ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) is a narrow band technology which allows a standard copper telephone wire to be upgraded to transmit and receive video and other data at high speeds. ADSL would facilitate uses such as home banking, high-speed "always on" internet and interactive



services in north and west Cork. It can effectively squeeze broadband speeds out of an ordinary telephone line. Currently Eircom has monopoly control over this local network and is proposing a high cost structure. ADSL is also restricted by distance from nearest telephone exchange – it works best up to 2 miles and tolerably up to 4 miles distant. Local telephone exchanges will require modification for an ADSL or equivalent service.

It has been estimated that the dispersed population distribution in Ireland will load an estimated 10-13 per cent additional cost in providing these services.

Currently there is no broadband telecommunications service generally available or being marketed to the public in Ireland. By contrast, for example, about 60 per cent of households in the UK have access to such a service, through DSL

technology. This technology is capable of being rolled out by Eircom. However, to date no such rollout has taken place. Liberalisation of telecommunications and other initiatives, including two earlier phases of assistance through structural funds have promoted competition and investment in telecommunications in Ireland. Nevertheless, there are significant time lags entailed in any rollout of infrastructure. In addition, it is likely that stimulating competition requires provision from a greater number of players. Thus, it may be some years yet before broadband telecommunications services are widely available in Ireland, as they are in other competing countries, such as the U.K., U.S.A. and many European countries.

Notwithstanding these delays, a significant number of projects in the North and West Cork Area – ranging from the provision of broadband backbone infrastructure, broadband access infrastructure and wireless local loop – have been proposed for co-funding through the structural funds or are already underway. It is critical for the Region and the North and West Cork Area that these or similar projects should proceed without delay. Wireless broadband access has been introduced to parts of Kerry and may have the best potential for more remote rural areas.

Currently there are 21 internet data centres planned in Ireland of which only 3 are outside Dublin (one of these is in Cork). Cork is constrained further by ESB limits – and the danger of unplanned power cuts resulting from weakness in generating capacity. The lack of DSL – high speed "always on" internet access (digital subscriber line) is a serious constraint on both educational and commercial use of internet facilities. SMEs and home-workers at the moment have to choose between dial-up connections (50 kbytes max), relatively slow ISDN lines (128 kbytes) or costly leased lines. ADSL, at speeds ranging from 256 kbytes to 2 Mbits

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would be the most cost efficient option for small firms and "home working".

Current delays in roll-out of ADSL and of broadband would pose a serious threat to the entry of the Area into the important future economic areas which will depend on first class telephony. Development agencies should monitor progress and take any appropriate action to support progress. In any event, a focus on access to and understanding of existing available services in the Area would be beneficial. SMEs can benefit from existing services if they can access clear, independent and technically expert advice on their telecommunications needs. Good, rapid, always-on internet access is essential if the Area is to capture the potential for remote working and indeed, if it is not to slide into increasing disadvantage in terms of business, educational and social development. These comments apply a *fortiori*, to the islands.

8.3

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are required to improve access to and within the North and West Cork Area:

1.

Recommendations to improve arterial roads network:

- £ Provide the planned upgrading of the N22 from Cork to Killarney, incorporating a two-lane bypass of Macroom as a first priority.
- £ Provide a quality standard improved two-lane carriageway from Bandon and Dunmanway to Bantry (incorporating the Bandon Relief Road).
- £ Provide a quality standard improved two-lane carriageway from Bandon to Clonakilty.
- £ Provide a quality standard, consistent improved two-lane carriageway between Tallow (West Waterford), via Mallow (incorporating Northern Relief Road) and Fermoy to Rathmore (County Kerry).

- £ Continue the improvement of the N73 from Mallow to Mitchelstown.

2.

Recommendations to improve concentric transport routes within the Area.

In addition to improving arterial radial routes it is considered that the following actions should be taken to improve the concentric roads network.

- £ Provide a safe efficient route of consistent design between Skibbereen and Bantry.
- £ Provide a safe efficient route of consistent design linking Dunmanway with Millstreet via Macroom (to be bypassed).

Priority should be attached to securing improvements in the arterial routes ahead of the proposed improvements in concentric routes.

As a first step it is considered important that the *County Development Plan* should contain as an objective a statement of the recommendations above. This would allow planning policies in relation to zoning and development to be pursued within the context of an explicit access development framework. For example, spatial planning should encourage the location of additional development of villages and towns to one side of national and regional roads. In addition, it would be extremely important that the proposed access improvement framework should be contained as a high priority within the forthcoming *County Development Strategy*, being formulated by the County Development Board.

The *Roads Programme* of the County Council should be framed in the context of the proposed objective above and should set out the manner in which it is proposed to attain this objective.

Evidently, the recommendations above amount to a programme of considerable capital expenditure. As such it will have to compete with many other proposals for roads improvements that will be decided by the National Roads Authority (NRA). In this regard it will be necessary to engage with the NRA to explain the key



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role which improved access has to play in the strategic development of North and West Cork.

3. Recommendations for Improving Rural Public Transport

As noted earlier (see Section 5.3.4) the National Development Plan does not contain significant budgetary provision for development of these services. Against this background the proposed approach revolves around the development of Pilot projects.

To this end it is recommended that:

- ƒ In the light of results from current initiatives, the establishment of A Public Transport Development Task Force comprising representatives of Bus Eireann, private bus operators, school bus operators, Iaranród Eireann, local development agencies and local communities should be considered by the County Council.
- ƒ The objective of the task force could be to:
 - Review timetabling/schedules of existing public transport services with a view to achieving greater integration and overall improvement of services; and
 - Bring forward proposals for practical pilot assistance for the promotion of new services, linking into the existing system.
- ƒ The County Development Plan should support the development of public transport systems by articulating clear policies in relation to development along public transport corridors.

4. Recommended Actions to Improve Telecommunications Broadband Infrastructure and Services

As noted earlier several initiatives are underway by a number of providers, which have the capacity to improve broadband infrastructure and services in the Area. These are being supported under the National Development Plan. In addition, an initiative is being undertaken to establish the current status and adequacy of broadband infrastructure in the Area and to recommend the best course for redressing identified deficiencies. However, public information as regards these developments and their implications is poor.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

- ƒ The County Development Board should produce an information and promotional booklet (in conjunction, say with local Chambers of Commerce and development agencies such as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland and service providers) which would set out:
 - An inventory of investment in broadband infrastructure and services undertaken and approved for financial support under the NDP in the North and West Cork Area;
 - The impact of this investment in terms of the services that are available currently, will be available in the future, when they will be available and the cost at which they will be available;
- ƒ A Broadband Telecommunications Task Force comprising service providers, user representatives and local development agencies should be established to monitor the roll out of broadband infrastructure and services and to monitor and evaluate the competitiveness of service availability compared with the rest of the Country.

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9

Improving Environmental Quality: The Actions Required

9.1

INTRODUCTION

Environmental quality is a very high priority of communities in North and West Cork, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. Moreover, as shown in Chapter 4, there are a number of aspects of environmental quality, which are experiencing pressure. In Chapter 5, environmental sustainability was incorporated into the general approach of the strategy for development. This chapter sets out actions that are underway at present, which contribute to this Plan (Sections 9.2 and 9.3). Additional reinforcing measures are recommended in Section 9.4.

9.2

WATER: CURRENT RESPONSES TO PRESSURES ON WATER

Water quality is the top priority environmental concern in the Area (Community appraisal, environmental workshop, 2000). Properly functioning aquatic eco-systems with intact self-purification processes are the appropriate goal. The most common threat to water quality in the Area is eutrophication and organic pollution, whereas toxic pollution, siltation and

acidification are less common but should none the less be taken seriously.

Historically there has been a tendency to treat rivers as a receptacle for effluent and as the occasion for flood nuisance. Community appraisal shows that most towns and villages now view their rivers as a very important potential amenity. Many communities have developed or would like to develop riverside walks. Improved access to riverside amenities will bring increased awareness of the need to protect aquatic systems and is a worthwhile goal in its own right.

Responses are categorised here as concerning water quality, watercourses, and fisheries, always, of course, keeping in mind that the three are interconnected. The European Water Framework Directive was adopted on June 29th, 2000. It is designed to develop integrated and coherent water policies on the basis of River Basin Management Plans. It especially emphasises the need to establish a sound basis for the collection and analysis of a large amount of information on the state of the aquatic environment to provide the essential information on which the competent authorities can develop sensible and sustainable policies.

Water quality is the top priority environmental concern in the Area.



Improving Environmental Quality: The Actions Required



As concerns water quality and water monitoring in County Cork, the baseline document is the *Cork County Council Measures Report on the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977 (Water Quality Standards for Phosphorus) Regulations, 1998* which incorporates all relevant legislation up to 1999. The Measures Report sets out standards to be achieved by 2007 and 2013 and outlines a detailed list of short, medium and long-term measures to be implemented.

Standards to be achieved by 2007 are:

- £ No deterioration of existing satisfactory quality rated river/lake monitoring locations to be allowed.
- £ All existing unsatisfactory parts of rivers to be improved to reach targets set out by the Phosphorus Regulations.
- £ All existing unsatisfactory lakes to be improved to reach targets set out in the Phosphorus Regulations.
- £ Proposed new monitoring locations where considered necessary.

For various reasons, it was felt that an extension of the Regulation for the more difficult sites might be required for the maximum allowable period of six years, stretching the time to achieve the targets to 2013. The main pressures are identified as agriculture; industrial discharges and urban wastewater discharges and measures are outlined in detail.

Other responses to the pressures on the water quality include the following:

- £ The Geological Survey of Ireland, the Department of Environment and Local Government and the EPA have jointly developed a methodology for the preparation of Groundwater Protection Schemes. North Cork is successfully using such a scheme and one for south Cork is in progress.
- £ Byelaws under the Local Government (Water Pollution) (Amendment) Act 1990 in respect to the control of fertiliser application in the Lee, Gradogue and Funshion catchments, came into force in 1999.
- £ The designation of nitrate sensitive zones, where farmers will be obliged to produce a Nutrient Management Plan, which involves an assessment of amounts of manure, slurry or inorganic fertiliser that should be applied.

Aquatic habitat protection does not rely entirely on water quality but also on the physical nature of watercourses and their flood plains and on the rivers' hydrological regime. To date there exists no overall policy to identify, assess and address changes which are taking place. The Local Government Planning Bill, while providing for the adoption of many habitat regulations and other directives, does not address issues of waterways management and protection.

As regards waterways in urban areas, the South Western Regional Fisheries Board suggested in comments on the Draft Development Plan for Skibbereen to consider a *River Corridor Management*

Improving Environmental Quality: The Actions Required

Plan as an integral part of any urban development programme. It is considered that this would improve the aquatic and terrestrial habitats and thus benefit all wildlife species along these corridors and provide an attractive linear feature for amenity use.

In 1980, the Fisheries Act instructed that each fishery region prepare a development plan based on a five year span. The plan developed by the South Western Regional Fisheries Board states: "Our vision for the future is to deliver sustainable development to ensure that growth is achieved but not at the expense of the viability of the fisheries for future generations. We recognise that we are only entitled to the share of the resource that is in excess of its requirement for self-maintenance. Our goal is to maximise that surplus and to distribute it by agreement with the legitimate interests involved in that resource" (South Western Regional Fisheries Board, 1998).



9.3

WASTE: CURRENT RESPONSES TO WASTE

The most relevant recent response to waste pressures is Cork County Council's Waste Management Plan from 1999, which incorporates all current legislation. It is guided by the Department of the Environment and Local Government Policy statement of September 1998 entitled "Changing our Ways". Its declared aims are:

- £ A diversion of 50% of overall household waste from landfill.
- £ A reduction, by a minimum of 65 %.

The islands experience waste in a different fashion to other parts of the county. There is a direct and obvious cost of waste removal from the islands by boat. There is a much higher than general consciousness of problems of waste and a willingness (as in many other parts of the Area) to segregate waste for recycling.

- £ A diversion of 50 per cent of overall household waste from landfill.
- £ A reduction, by a minimum of 65 per cent, of the bio-degradable wastes consigned to landfill.
- £ Recycling of 35 per cent of Municipal Solid Waste.
- £ Development of composting and other feasible biological treatment facilities capable of treating up to 300,000 tonnes of bio-degradable waste per annum.
- £ 80% reduction of methane emissions from landfill.
- £ Recycling of at least 85% of Construction and Demolition Waste.
- £ Rationalisation of the country's 100 landfills to approximately 20 state of the art facilities.

These aims are mirrored in County Cork's own Waste Management Plan. Two of the main principles of the plan are the reduction of waste and the feasibility of

Improving Environmental Quality: The Actions Required

Composting of biowaste is a major factor in reduction of waste and composting bins have been sold to a large number of households already.

local recycling options. A number of projects are run to this effect. Composting of biowaste is a major factor in reduction of waste and composting bins have been sold to a large number of households already. 525 bins had been taken up in the City by June 2000, 1073 in the north and south. No solid data were available for West Cork. Collection of cardboard is considered on a small scale on trial.

Feasibility of small scale, regional recycling-plants is being investigated. Some kerbside collection, to involve the

Ameliorating action at landfill sites to deal with the pressures is underdeveloped. Only Rossmore has a weighbridge and a tank for effluent. However, all present landfill sites are due to close in the next two years and the new landfill site will be equipped with a weigh-bridge and an effluent tank. The new waste disposal system proposes to use first stage collection points in the different regions where composting and some sorting will take place. The remainder will be baled and trucked to the second stage collection points where more detailed sorting will take place. It is hoped to only dispose to landfill a small residue.

9.4

RECOMMENDED FURTHER ACTIONS

The following additional actions are proposed to protect and support environmental quality within the North and West Cork Area:

1. Recommendations in relation to Water and Coastal Zone Management
 - £ **Protect and improve water quality from both commercial and domestic sewage inputs by implementing effective effluent treatment facilities in line with the Urban Waste Water Directive, which demands more secondary and tertiary treatments to effectively remove a large percentage of nutrients from the waste water stream.**
 - £ **Maintain sustainable flow regimes through control of water abstractions.**
 - £ **Maintain and improve all natural water courses within towns as open waterways, and include them as features of any urban development.**
 - £ **Incorporate the forthcoming River Catchment Management Plan into the County Development Plan.**
 - £ **Adopt a groundwater protection scheme for the whole county as the**



consumer in recycling and separation of waste will be pioneered in smaller towns around Cork in the near future.

A pilot project is ongoing in Carrigaline where microchips in the individual bin assure that the householder pays per weight of generated waste rather than per bin or by volume. Black plastic used in farming is collected by the FRS and sent to Scotland for recycling.

The Green Flag project was started three years ago to raise environmental awareness in schools on the topic of waste and its management. The flag has been awarded to nine schools. To date it has been mostly a city project. Lack of resources, i.e. a serious staff shortage has made it difficult to reach the wider county. However, there was a very good response to a recent circular and the project seems to go from strength to strength.

9

Improving Environmental Quality: The Actions Required

most effective way to protect groundwater quality.

- f Continue and strengthen efforts to encourage farmers to apply Nutrient Management Plans.

In relation to *coastal zone management*, it is recommended that:

- f Management responsibilities between the different bodies, namely Cork County Council, the Department of the Marine and Dúchas should be co-ordinated more closely.
- f The needs and environmental obligations of different users, i.e. the off shore fishermen, the on shore fishermen, the fish farmers and shellfish producers and the recreational user of the coastal zone, should be acknowledged and these should be co-ordinated if the response is to be coherent.
- f A system of Marine Environment Protection Schemes (MEPS) should be implemented to encourage fishermen and fish farmers to develop voluntary environmentally sound techniques aimed at promoting stock improvements at local, national and trans-national level. Such schemes would be analogous to the Rural Environmental Protection Schemes.
- f A monitoring programme for all uses of the coastal zone to establish base line data on environmental changes should be initiated.

2.

Recommendations in relation to waste.

- f The Sludge Management Plan dealing with over 700,000 tonnes of sludge generated annually in the county should be endorsed.
- f New initiatives to increase the rate of packaging recovery should be promoted and supported.

3.

Recommendations in Relation to Energy and Transport

It is considered that environmental quality could be further supported by the following recommendations in relation to energy and transport use:

- f The work of the Renewable Energy Project in Mallow should be further supported with more resources and more area coverage in line with suggestions for sub regions as mentioned under the waste, and water sections in this report.
- f Energy requirements should be integrated into development plans, i.e. a mandatory energy audit to assess energy implications of various projects.
- f Major industrial proposals should be assessed as to their requirements for sustainable energy.
- f Initiatives to support alternative fuels and new technologies should be promoted and supported.

Improving Social, Recreational and Cultural Infrastructure: The Actions Required



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10

Improving Social, Recreational and Cultural Infrastructure: The Actions Required

10.1

INTRODUCTION

As discussed earlier in Chapter 5, the provision of improved public services and infrastructure and the creation of improved employment opportunities will greatly assist in reducing many aspects of social exclusion and deprivation.

However, in addition, it is considered that measures to promote greater access and availability of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services should be incorporated into a strategy for future development. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are many unique and distinctive cultural characteristics which form an integral part of the people of North and West Cork and which are highly valued. In addition, it is evident that access to a variety of social and recreational services is a key factor to retaining a higher proportion of young people in the Area. Therefore, specific proposals are contained below, in relation to this aspect, which is an integral element in the overall development plan

10.2

A CHANGING SOCIETY WITH CHANGING SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL PREFERENCES

Urban-generated development pressures, retirement and holiday home development, the search for an alternative life-style, along with increased economic opportunities in many parts of the Area, are resulting in immigration to the Area. Simultaneously, profound cultural changes are directly bearing on the Area through the print and electronic media. The young generation within the Area, in particular, is experiencing the globalisation of culture, with increased awareness and sharing of the cultural heritage of different parts of the world, alongside the intense commercialisation of popular culture and increasing international dominance of U.S.A. culture. Local media including newspapers, radio and television are also important influences.

The current cultural flux in Ireland as a whole, is bringing with it a heightened



awareness of the past, whilst the inevitability of cultural change is generally acknowledged. A very rapid transition is taking place from local music and pastimes to urban living dominated by electronic media.

10.2.1

MIGRATION TRENDS AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

The potential to integrate new immigrant populations successfully into existing communities is the critical opportunity for the Area. Population statistics mask the "turnover" of people in an area, as they only show the total numbers of people at any one day, not movements in and out of the Area which cancel each other out. Migration Charts drawn in the Community Appraisal show that some parts of the Area are experiencing substantial movement of new people into their area whilst others are leaving. People from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds have come to live in the Area in the last 10 years. Some immigrants have a strong interest in local culture and inject new energy into local traditions. Others are indifferent. All bring in fresh and unfamiliar ways of life.

Over-rapid population expansion, irrespective of the origin of the new residents, is identified by many people as a threat to cultural continuity and cohesiveness. This is because the natural

The introduction of new performing spaces such as the Briery Gap, Bruach na Carraige at Rockchapel and the Schoolyard Theatre opens up the potential for wider access to traditional, classical and modern performance arts throughout the County.

A very rapid transition is taking place from local music and pastimes to urban living dominated by electronic media.

rate at which newcomers can be absorbed into a community without social fragmentation can be exceeded. Communities also have recorded the positive benefits of immigration and indicated that they needed to take a proactive approach to integration of new people into existing communities.

In some parts of the county, particularly in areas where a unique local culture of great value is under threat due to emigration, and where the beneficial aspects of social and economic change are not being experienced, attitudes to cultural change are mixed or even negative. At the same time, there is a growing movement across the county to "capture" local heritage through heritage centre and museum development and through the conservation of historic buildings and townscapes, as people are aware that the structures, artefacts and practices belonging to their agricultural past are at risk of disappearing. In the face of rural decline, all participating communities have also acknowledged the positive benefits of immigration to the county and the cultural contribution that new residents can make.

10.2.2 CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM

Unique local cultures are strongly attractive to visitors: awareness of the demand for cultural and heritage tourism has led to a more complex attitude to local culture. Now, this is seen both as something inherently of, and for, the local community but is also increasingly seen as a commodity which the community can "sell" to secure economic advantage. A question for communities is how to provide some access to local culture for visitors without presenting it in the form of a false and stereotypical performance.

Elite arts such as professional theatre, opera, ballet, orchestral music, have not generally been performed in the County outside Cork City. The Liss Ard festival, run from 1997-9, successfully brought international rock and performance artists to West Cork. A classical music festival is also held successfully in Bantry. The introduction of new performing spaces such as the Briery Gap, Bruach na Carraige at Rockchapel and the Schoolyard Theatre opens up the potential for wider access to traditional, classical and modern performance arts throughout the County.

These venues are important spaces within which contact between people from different traditions and art forms, whether within the county or globally, can access and share their cultural heritage.



10

Improving Social, Recreational and Cultural Infrastructure: The Actions Required

10.3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

In making recommendations in this area it is considered that certain guiding principles should be followed. Firstly, social, recreational and cultural preferences are part of the set of consumer preferences. The market may be relied upon to meet these preferences in many instances. In these circumstances, the key focus of policy should be to facilitate meeting these various and changing preferences, rather than prescribing what those preferences should be. In addition public policy interventions in this area are warranted:

- ƒ To remedy a market failure, i.e. the body politic considers that certain services should be available, although the market finds it uneconomic to provide these services;
- ƒ To curb negative externalities (i.e. costs) such as where a market provided service results in the destruction or degradation of a publicly owned asset, such as a piece of cultural heritage.

Having regard to these principles a number of initiatives are proposed in relation to the provision of facilities for young people. The wider availability of and greater accessibility to recreational services in urban as compared with rural areas is identified as a factor in migration to urban centres. Therefore, public policy interventions are warranted as part of the strategy to retain a higher proportion of young people in rural areas.

As a first step and in order to determine precise criteria for establishing supports and indeed the character and nature of support, which would be provided to initiatives in this area it is proposed that a forum should be convened. This should comprise the relevant stakeholders such as the VEC, schools, youth services, youth organisations, community groups, local

development agencies, Macra na Feirme, sports organisations and business and tourism sectors, under the chairmanship of the County Council.

It is recommended that this forum should consider an agenda regarding the provision of facilities for young people comprising such issues as:

- ƒ Support for new and existing youth clubs.
- ƒ Support for active adventure sports facilities through tourism development.
- ƒ All-weather activities/sports facilities
- ƒ Improve and diversify sports facilities/female participation in sports.
- ƒ Ensure that indoor recreational spaces are available to youths.
- ƒ Provide/encourage provision of performance venues; facilitate festivals.
- ƒ Seek to provide evening transport to recreational/entertainment facilities.
- ƒ Support internet cafes and clubs.

Following its deliberation it is recommended that a detailed action plan should be proposed as regards the facilities that should be supported, the geographical catchment to be covered and the means and substance of support that would be provided.

As regards local heritage and customs it is recommended that the following approach to preservation and development should be pursued:

- ƒ Foster and celebrate all forms of local culture.
- ƒ Promote high quality festivals reflecting local and international culture.
- ƒ Promote knowledge of local traditions and pastimes.
- ƒ Protect the natural and built heritage of the Area.
- ƒ Promote accreditation of traditional skills.

Development of Partnership and Wider Community Participation: The Actions Required



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Development of Partnership and Wider Community Participation: The Actions Required

11.1.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with two issues. First is implementation of the proposed strategy. Second is the development of partnership and wider community participation in relation to the strategy.



11.2.

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY: SOME GENERAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

In advance of attempting to implement or even decide on the specifics of development policy for North and West Cork, there are a number of more general issues that should be addressed. The first is a reconsideration of the structure of local development areas as currently constituted. Area rather than sector development has dominated policy thinking and activity in Ireland since the mid-1990s. An exception is that certain sector development operations that were well developed prior to this time have been maintained. However, the rational basis for some of the structures within which this is implemented need reconsideration. There are at least two aspects to this. The first relates to the boundaries of the areas. Many of the

development agencies have overlapping boundaries, for example Leader groups and County Enterprise Boards. This is not necessarily a source of dispute but can mean that efforts are not applied in the optimal manner. After all, not all areas of a particular region require equal attention. A second issue is that some of these areas have been identified on the basis of pre-existing area definitions. A good example is the coincidence – by definition – of county and CEB boundaries. For example, much of the natural hinterland of Mitchelstown or Charleville is not in Cork. There is no prior reason to expect that county boundaries that are usually located by historical accident identify cohesive areas for development. This problem is also relevant in the case of many Leader areas although the problem does not seem to be as bad in Cork as in many other counties.

The second issue is that the relationship between formulating policy and implementing programmes on an area basis and sector programmes is complex and may not be fully thought through. Again activity appears to take place within lines of demarcation that may have been laid down on a fairly ad hoc basis. In advocating an area-based approach to development, NESCC (1994)⁷ noted that the advantages of this approach arise from its use in combination with other organisational characteristics. The NESCC was emphatic that the area-based approach should not be allowed to exclude the use of sector based approaches. This is a difficult balance to achieve and in many instances it may be impossible to identify an agency's terms of reference with respect to one of these variables without undermining its rationality in terms of the other. However, this difficulty does not mean that the issue should be avoided.

A third and related issue refers to the unit at which policy is implemented. Local knowledge is essential for local

⁷ NESCC (1994) *New Approaches to Rural Development*. Dublin: National Economic and Social Council.

Development of Partnership and Wider Community Participation: The Actions Required

development, particularly where the initiative is area based. Views expressed to the consultants indicated that much greater knowledge on local expenditure patterns and economic activity than is presently available is required. For example, the presence of local employment is not a problem for an area if residents can travel to work and spend a reasonable proportion of their income in the local area. However, many areas fear the influence of the Cork City suburbs as an economic drain on revenue. As one contact expressed it, local businesses do see each other as their major competitors. Their main competitors are the unknown businesses well away in Cork City. Even where local employment opportunities are available, this threat to the ability to capture the value generated in the Area is the greatest problem. However, in the absence of detailed information it is impossible for the agencies to identify the geographical area of such problems and opportunities.



It is recommended that local electoral areas should comprise an important "delivery" module for area implementation purposes at sub-county level.

emerges strongly in the *Future Search* process. Importing jobs into an area, while undoubtedly positive, is a difficult way to approach the problem, since a range of competitiveness related factors may make those jobs difficult to sustain unless they are low value employment. If, however, the services are provided to make an area an attractive place to live, then local expenditure will make for much more sustainable employment.

A final issue relates to the degree to which decision making is centralised or brought to the local level. There has been considerable progress in attempting to localise rural development in the past decade and the advantage of this approach over a centralised approach is well recognised. However, some important decisions will inevitably remain centralised and, where local structures are put in place, hierarchies will emerge. There is no reason to think that such developments are in any way disadvantageous. However, what it does mean is that the advantages of localisation are reduced unless there are strong vertical communications between the local levels and the centre. In some areas there would appear to be a perception that these may be inadequate, with the result that the local groups – who have the required local information and the ability to target initiatives – are unable to optimally influence centralised decisions. Again this issues crops up in the *Future Search* findings.



Another issue is that the inherent dynamic of economic activity is all too often not utilised in development policy. The fact is that economic activity and jobs will follow where the best opportunities are. Thus, they follow spending power creating a virtuous circle as more opportunities are created. The key to this circle is to provide spending opportunities in areas where people live. In general, and increasingly, people are willing to travel to work but wish to live in an area with a high quality of life. This

Development of Partnership and Wider Community Participation: The Actions Required

11.3.

DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIP AND WIDER COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It is recommended that local electoral areas should comprise an important "delivery" module for area implementation purposes at sub-county level. These areas have a democratic mandate and are building through expanded area committees a partnership approach to local service delivery. Delivery within these areas should be informed by understanding of the different socio-economic areas, which in some cases are dissected by electoral area boundaries. These latter areas broadly encompass cohesive geographical and social entities.

Cork has ten expanded area committees. Given the size of the county and the extent of the electoral areas themselves, these areas may be too large to function successfully as local delivery units. It should be noted that other, much smaller counties propose a similar number of area committees. **In terms of delivery of local services and strategic measures, better interaction could be attained in a smaller and more socially cohesive unit. Pairing of Bandon with Macroom electoral areas, two very different areas culturally and geographically, is unlikely to benefit either area in the longer term. It is therefore recommended that Cork should consider operating an area committee for each electoral area.**

Another key implementation area is the self-defined local community. Communities should be encouraged and supported in undertaking local development projects that support the strategy. Communities that put their own local action plans in place can act at local level as the co-ordinators of funding and other supports from a variety of agencies. At sector level, important stakeholder groups have their own local organisations (particularly farming and fishing), which can play an important role in implementing goals.

Their involvement should be encouraged both at local level for implementation purposes and at County Development Board level for policy development and liaison.

11.4

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION HIERARCHY AND RESOURCES

Successful implementation of the Plan requires political commitment to the proposed strategy and the recommendations proposed to attain its objectives. In the first instance this must come from locally elected Members of the Council. However, the scope of the recommendations contained in this Report is far reaching and their implementation would require a more broadly based commitment to the Plan, than the Council. Therefore, it is recommended that support from national political level should be sought. **It is considered that a sub-committee of elected representatives, including a relevant Government Minister should take overall responsibility for the Plan. A Steering Committee, comprising officials of the Council and representatives of national and local development agencies, should have a primary role in executing recommendations contained in the Plan and for monitoring implementation. This Steering Group should report to the proposed sub-committee of elected representatives. Finally, it is recommended that a small, dedicated secretariat should be seconded from the local authorities and relevant national development agencies to implement the Plan on a day-to day basis. The secretariat should report to the Steering Committee, through a dedicated Project Officer, who should have responsibility for the day to day management of the secretariat. The secretariat function should extend to liaison with local community groups and supporting approved initiatives from such groups.**

