

SECTION 6 - IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Poverty Proofing

Poverty Proofing is defined as 'the process by which government departments, local authorities and state agencies assess policies and programmes at design and review stage in relation to the likely impact that they will have or have had on poverty and on inequalities which are likely to lead to poverty'. As a requirement of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy all government departments must proof the impact of policy and programmes against poverty. A model has been developed by the NAPS Unit of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The primary aim of the poverty proofing process is to identify the **impact** of the policy proposal on those in poverty so that this can be given proper consideration in designing policy. Poverty Proofing is recommended at a number of stages:

- Development of Corporate Plans and Annual Operational Plans
- Preparation of the Annual Budget
- In the design of significant policy measures
- When conducting expenditure reviews and programme evaluations

The proofing model requires policy makers to assess the impact of the programme against a series of measurable indicators. The model being used by Government examines the policy against the following criteria:

What is the primary objective of this policy/programme/expenditure proposal?

Does it . . .

- i) *help to prevent people falling into poverty ?*
- ii) *reduce the level (in terms of numbers and depth) of poverty ?*
- iii) *ameliorate the effects of poverty ?*
- iv) *have no effect on poverty ?*
- vi) *contribute to the achievement of the NAPS targets ?*
- v) *increase poverty ?*
- vii) *address inequalities that might lead to poverty ?*
- viii) *as proposed, reach the target groups ?*

And what is the rationale and basis of the assessment (data/information) behind each of these proposals?

If the proposal has the effect of increasing the level of poverty, what options might be identified to ameliorate this effect?

If the proposal has no effect on the level of poverty, what options might be identified to produce a positive effect?

A recommendation from NAPS is that local authorities adopt a poverty proofing model / mechanism to assess the impact of policy and programmes on poverty and social exclusion in the county. A number of important policy documents / schemes are prepared by County Galway Local Authorities each year that directs resources and investment into certain communities and impacts on different target groups, for example:

- Water Services Investment Programme
- Allocation of Arts, Heritage, Conservation, Amenity and Economic Grant aid
- Housing Grants / Disabled Persons grant scheme / central heating programme

The annual Budget of the local authority also sets the parameters for expenditure within an overall policy framework, guided by the Corporate Plan, annual Operational Plans, County Development Plan etc..

The proofing model would require all Units to consider the impact of allocating resources, implementing programmes and policy on poverty and NAPS target groups. This approach will ensure that additional consideration is given to the needs of certain communities and target groups.

Measuring Performance

There are a number of methods of measuring the performance of the Council in delivering on the objectives outlined in this Strategy.

Corporate Plan 2005 – 2009

The County Galway Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2005 – 2009 contains a specific Theme in relation to Maximising Social Inclusion and Social Capital. It is a requirement to monitor the progress of the strategies under this Theme and to report this progress in the Annual Report.

Annual Operational / Business Plans

These annual plans outline the variety and nature of activities to be undertaken by each Unit over the period of a year. The detail of initiatives to be undertaken by each Unit will reflect the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan. It will be possible to extract the nature of social inclusion delivery as reflected in these plans on an annual basis.

Indicators

Under *Better Local Government – A Programme for Change (1996)*, local authorities were asked to set service standards against indicators and publish details of their progress against these standards. As part of this process in 2000 the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, published 21 national service indicators for local authorities. These were subsequently revised and amended in 2004 and there are now a total of 42 service indicators by which local authorities are expected to measure and report on their performance within the context of their annual reports.

Of the total of 42 service indicators only 4-5 provide a measure of the performance of local authorities in relation to the promotion of enhanced levels of social inclusion. Local authorities are, however, encouraged to develop their own individual local indicators, some of which could be used to monitor progress on social inclusion objectives.

The Combat Poverty Agency has developed a series of social inclusion performance indicators for local authorities. It is proposed that the County Galway Local Authorities

Social Inclusion Strategy would be measured against this proposed list in order to facilitate comparison with other local authorities. The Performance Indicators include:

Housing:

- Number of new local authority housing unit starts
- Percentage of the Housing Strategy implemented
- Percentage of the Traveller Accommodation Units delivered by type a) Standard Housing b) Halting bays c) Transient sites
- Number of local authority tenants involved in estate management training

Roads:

- Percentage of the total County Councils Non National Roads budget spent on works pertaining specifically to the needs of Vulnerable Road users¹ (e.g. tactile paving, dished kerbs, etc.)
- % of newly approved public parking spaces specifically provided for disabled drivers / passengers

Planning & Building Control:

- Total No of Social Housing Units provided through Part 5's
- Total No of Affordable Housing Units provided through Part 5's
- % of Social Housing Units provided on site² through Part 5's
- % of Affordable Housing Units provided on site³ through Part 5's

Corporate Issues:

- Percentage of total local authority staff attending poverty/equality/diversity training
- Percentage of key⁴ forms and associated guidance notes that are in accessible⁵ formats and plain language

Social Inclusion Focus:

- Number of policies/actions approved, revised and/or amended by the SPC's that make specific reference to the NAPS/NAPS target groups
- % of total number of policies/actions approved, revised and/or amended by the SPC's that make specific reference to the NAPS/NAPS target groups that have been implemented by the local authority
- Percentage of actions (identified in the CDB Strategy) implemented by the County Development Board that relate to either the NAPS targets and /or the NAPS target groups

¹ Vulnerable Road Users would include: disabled people: older people, children, mothers with small children, etc.

² Percentage of Social Housing Units completed on site = No of Social Housing Units completed on Part 5 sites/Total number of social housing units completed * 100

³ Percentage of Affordable Housing Units completed on site = No of Affordable Housing Units completed on Part 5 sites/Total Number of Affordable housing Units completed * 100

⁴ The number and exact selection of the Key Forms should be defined by the individual local authority

⁵ Accessible formats include: Audio Tape; Braille; Electronic Format – HTML, Plain Text; Large Print; High Contrast Print and Easy-to-Read and information for people whose first language is not English/Irish

Quality of Services:

- No of Customer Surveys conducted that explore the needs and experiences of the named NAPS target groups⁶
- Satisfaction levels of the NAPS target groups with the overall service provided by the local authority.
- The overall conformance level of the local authority website with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines⁷ (WCAG)
- The % of total documentation available on the web that complies with WCAG guidelines

Community Service and Facilities:

- No of existing / new community facilities funded with support from the Development Levy
- Number of Arts and Culture Projects that involve⁸ members of the NAPS target groups⁹
- Numbers of children's play spaces per 1,000 population.
- Percentage of children's playgrounds in local authority estates
- Percentage of play spaces in local authority estates

Community Participation and Co-operation:

- Percentage of the NAPS target groups represented by organisations on the community fora.

Inclusion in the Workplace:

- Number of procedures/practices/processes that have been changed/introduced as a result of the Workplace Partnership.
- Percentage of changes that relate to either the NAPS targets and /or the NAPS target groups.
- Percentage of local authority staff with a disability.

⁶ NAPS target groups are defined as Vulnerable Groups, Children and Women; Young People; Older People; People with disabilities; Travellers and Migrants and Members of Ethnic Minority Groups

⁷ See <http://www.w3.org/WAI/> for full details

⁸ 'Involve' could include participation in the design and/or selection process and/or construction, and/or activities and or special events/programmes of work

⁹ NAPS target groups are defined as Vulnerable Groups, Children and Women; Young People; Older People; People with disabilities; Travellers and Migrants and Members of Ethnic Minority Groups