

Improved Cohesion Plan

between Local Development
and Community Development
Organisations in Fingal

2004 – 2005



Fingal Development Board

Forbairt Fhine Gall

MAP OF FINGAL



LEGEND	
National Primary Routes	
M1/M50 Motorway	
Secondary Routes	
Existing Development	
Proposed Development	
Rivers	
Railway Line	
County Boundaries	



Scale :- 1:165,000

Plean Feabhasaithe Comhtháthú

idir Eagraíochtaí Áitaiúla Forbartha
agus Forbartha Pobail i bhFine Gall

Acknowledgements

Fingal County Development Board acknowledges the effort, time and energy given by all who have taken part in this Cohesion Plan process. Throughout the first half of 2004, participants have approached this task with maturity, enthusiasm and recognition of the common goals. Tangible outcomes have already been realised and there is evidence of a willingness to deliver the real benefits that this process will produce.

This summary plan is based on the final version that was produced by Niall Sexton (Forum 15), supported by a small editorial team, who translated our discussions into the final document that reflects the consensus achieved by this process.

The Improved Cohesion Committee would also like to acknowledge the matched funding that has been made available by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, and by Fingal County Council in order to advance the identified actions within this plan.

Foreword

This plan represents the culmination of many months of creative and collaborative work by Local Development and Community Development Organisations within Fingal, facilitated by the Fingal Development Board, which led to the identification of joint areas of current and future co-operation.

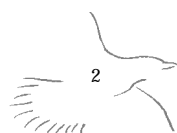
The development of an overall Improved Cohesion Plan for the Fingal area represented a challenge, given the geographical dispersal across the county and the diversity of relationships between all groups. The range of identified actions however illustrates a creative and supportive commitment by all participants to deliver services in a way that ultimately benefits their customers.

Many of the participating organisations have commented on the fact that the overall experience was enjoyable, challenging and ultimately productive. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in this process in such a positive and supportive manner, to the agencies who are providing support funding, to Ciaran Staunton for bringing the groups together and to everybody who contributed to ensuring that Fingal became the first CDB area to receive funding under this new initiative.

We look forward to implementing the actions and to the opportunities that this collaborative planning process will bring in the future.

Senan Turnbull

Director, Fingal Development Board
December 2004



Background

The emphasis on inter-agency co-ordination, integrated service delivery and the promotion of synergies is a stated policy objective in the Taskforce Report on the Integration of Local Development and Local Government Systems (1998) and 'A Shared Vision for City/County Development Boards' (2000). To date the Fingal Development Board has promoted this concept across all sectors¹ by the formation, publication and implementation of the ten-year strategy for the county. However, the extent to which Local Development and Community Development Organisations (LD&CDOs) are involved in this county strategy either as a lead or support agency is somewhat limited. This reflects a broad trend across the country².

These concerns have been translated into the instruction for each CDB to oversee what is known as the Endorsement Process. In Fingal the majority of the LD&CDOs presented annual plans for endorsement in April 2004. The endorsement process highlighted the extent to which each individual LD&CDO matched the County Strategy, and the Board accepted all plans. It also emerged that the majority of plans matched the county strategy along the similar themes, especially the following:

- Planning and Estate Management
- Health Services
- Community Facilities

During the Endorsement Process it was also noted that significant efforts were made in 2003 to formalise and further develop close relationships between the LD&CDOs as outlined below.

In the Greater Blanchardstown region of Fingal there is significant complexity in these relationships since along with the Partnership, there is also a Local Drugs Taskforce, four Community Development Programmes, a Family Resource Centre, a RAPID programme and a Community Forum of voluntary organisations. A document describing these programmes and setting out an initial plan for co-operation was produced in 2003³. The extent of co-operation has a long history with some of the organisations actually assisting with the task of forming the others. This is an ongoing process and the LD&CDOs have continued to meet and to continually update and evolve the range of issues in which they intend to co-operate.

Formal agreement for co-operation and co-ordination also exists between the two LD&CDOs in the North County, and Co-operation Fingal and Rural Dublin LEADER Company have a well-developed record of successful joint initiatives. Early this year it was identified by both LD&CDOs that a formalised framework agreement should be developed to reflect the increasing co-ordination of actions in the rural areas of North Fingal. The following groups are now actively participating in the cohesion process:

- Baldoyle Family Resource Centre
- Blakestown Community Development Project
- Blanchardstown Area Partnership
- Blanchardstown Local Drugs Task Force
- Blanchardstown RAPID
- Blanchardstown Traveller Development Project
- Co-operation Fingal
- Corduff Community Development Project
- Fingal County Childcare Committee
- Fingal County Council
- Fingal Development Board
- Forum 15
- Greater Blanchardstown Development Project
- Mountview Family Resource Centre
- Rural Dublin LEADER Company Ltd.



Profile of Fingal

Fingal County covers a large area of 450 sq. km. The 2002 Census of Population measured Fingal 197,000, giving the county a high population density compared to other counties. At present (2004), Fingal County Council estimates the population to be in the region of 210,000 and a conservative estimate places the population of the county in 2011 at about 293,000 people. This would represent a rise of 33% on the 2002 population⁴.

However, this hides the great diversity that exists within Fingal, which has a number of areas of urban development as well as established rural communities throughout the county. The largest population centre is Blanchardstown to the west of the county, while the North County communities of Swords, Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush and Lusk have experienced considerable growth recently. Very little can be assumed about the needs or level of social disadvantage of the projected rise in population. However, it is likely to mean that services run by LD&CDOs will be much more in demand, particularly ones which are directed at the younger population since a lot of the new growth will be the result of a baby boom.

The geography of the County will provide a challenge for co-operation and the scope of each action will be affected by location. Essentially LD&CDOs will cooperate within three regions depending on the nature of the specific action:

1. Actions that are coordinated across the entire county
2. Actions that are coordinated only in the Blanchardstown region
3. Actions that are coordinated only in the North County region.

This will allow the LD&CDOs to develop and implement actions that respond to the specific local conditions in their area while still being able to take advantage of the synergies and economies of scale that will exist when co-operation across the entire county is appropriate.

(See inside front cover for Map)

Developing the Plan

The process to respond to the Improved Cohesion Initiative was planned during a sequence of meetings to advance the endorsement process. Six countywide meetings were held between March and June to advance this process. To supplement this a series of meetings was held by Greater Blanchardstown LD&CDOs only and these were matched by a series of bi-partisan meetings held by the North County LD&CDOs.

Many other discussions and comments on various drafts took place throughout this process, which identified significant opportunities for improved co-ordination as well as building a strong sense of cohesion among the participating organisations. This process clearly identified areas where the greatest improvements in service delivery could be achieved. Gaps were also identified in the system where targeted resources could have a significant effect by facilitating greater co-ordination. The availability of funding from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs provides a timely opportunity to continue the process of cohesion and improved co-ordination that LD&CDOs in Fingal have already begun to progress.

¹State Agencies, Social Partners, Local Government and Local Development Agencies

²Fitzpatrick Associates for Department of the Environment "Review of the County/City Development Board Strategies"

³Rourke, S. "Local Development & Community Development Structures in the Blanchardstown Area", 2003. For copies of this document, please contact Niall Sexton at forum15@eircom.net

⁴This is based on known data like 'future expected households', 'persons per house', 'age of house', 'migration and fertility rates' and 'cohort survival'.



Principles

All participating organisations agreed that the following principles should underpin all actions developed through this process.

1. Community Representation

Ensuring community residents are actively involved in local development is a key principle of this process. LD&CDOs in Fingal will facilitate real participation and consultation with community residents in the development, implementation and evaluation of the programmes delivered under this plan.

2. Valuing Staff

Staff members are the most important resource available to LD&CDOs in Fingal. In many cases, staff will take on a broad range of roles with administrators in particular being called upon to act as welfare rights workers, service co-ordinators and technology consultants. LD&CDOs are committed to identifying opportunities to maximise the resources available throughout the system and this may involve some re-training and changes in job descriptions for individual workers. LD&CDOs are committed to developing this option, which will only happen following consultation and agreement with staff and prior agreement from all parties. Organisations are also committed to ensuring that nobody is made redundant as a result of this process and will support re-training when necessary. The participants in this process will seek clarification on this issue from major statutory and funding agencies such as the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Fingal County Council etc.

3. Autonomy

While working together in a collaborative process, LD&CDOs will maintain their individual autonomy. Representatives of each organisation in the process will still need to report back to their Boards of Management and secure formal agreement of their boards before committing to any new structures or practices. This will result in a stronger collaborative structure in the long term, as the agreement will be based on the organisation rather than the individual personalities involved.

4. Co-ordination with existing systems

It is essential that any new agreement for collaboration be developed in partnership with the larger funding and management system already in existence to ensure co-ordination with existing reporting and financial management systems. The move to closer co-ordination may require significant change in how LD&CDOs do business and may require approval from funding agencies before organisations can agree to participate. An example is the new reporting system that Community Development Programmes are now required to use. The Strategic, Planning, Evaluation and Knowledge network (SPEAK) requires CDPs. to report on the extent to which local, voluntary organisations can access the resources of the CDPs. This information must be shared with Fingal Development Board to adequately reflect the full range of co-ordination and sharing of resources that already happens in the community.



Actions & Budget

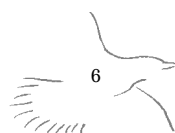
Following guidelines from the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs four key areas were identified which will enable LD&CDOs to achieve closer co-operation and co-ordination. These are:

- Action 1: Sharing of Facilities
- Action 2: Sharing of Administrative Supports
- Action 3: Agreement on Co-operation in Delivery of Service:
 - Section A: Health Care
 - Section B: Estate Management
 - Section C: Enterprise Development
- Action 4: Agreement on co-ordination within a geographic area
 - Section A: Community Planning
 - Section B: Community Representation
 - Section C: Improving County Coverage

The following actions therefore represent the areas where the greatest benefit will be achieved through the careful targeting of resources, taking into account the current set of resources, skills and facilities currently in place in Fingal County.

Overall Budget

	Cohesion fund: D/ CRGA	Local matching funds	TOTAL
Shared Facilities	€10,000	€2,500	€12,500
Shared Administrative Support	€10,000	€2,500	€12,500
Health Services	€27,500	€10,000	€37,500
Estate Management	€7,000	€25,000	€32,000
Enterprise Development	€15,000	€30,000	€45,000
Community Planning	€15,000	€7,500	€22,500
Community Forum	€10,000	€39,000	€49,000
County Coverage	€20,000	€5,000	€25,000
TOTAL	€114,500	€121,500	€236,000



ACTION 1: SHARING OF FACILITIES

1. Comprehensive review of existing buildings and available resources at both a local level and for the County as a whole (See section on Sharing Administrative Supports for parallel action).
2. Each organisation will nominate a dedicated staff member to advance this process in their organisation.
3. Development of business plan for each of the specific projects listed above. This plan will identify
 - (a) The current cost of developing and maintaining property and facilities for the participating organisations and
 - (b) Projected costs of sharing space and the potential savings for each organisation.
4. Based on this business plan, each organisation will commit to implementing the necessary actions to consolidate their activities in shared space.
5. In addition to developing shared space and facilities, LD&CDOs will work to improve the community's knowledge of how services are coordinated in central facilities to ensure that the public can easily access the full range of services available to them in their own community.

USE of FUNDS⁵

Audit / analysis of current resources	€7,500
Development of Business Plan	€5,000
Total	€12,500

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€10,000
Fingal County Council	€2,500
Total	€12,500

⁵Actions related to Shared Facilities and Shared Administrative Support will happen in tandem and costs are spread evenly across both actions. Total costs are anticipated at €25,000



ACTION 2: SHARING OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS

1. Completion of an audit of current resources at a neighbourhood, community and county level. This will require research and analysis to be conducted by a company / consultant familiar with business consolidation and mergers resulting in the completion of the template of Potential Cost Savings (See Appendix 2)
2. Investigation of the opportunities for cohesion and shared structures for coordinated administration particularly those outlined above.
3. Development of collaborative agreements between participating agencies.
4. Tender for joint purchasing etc.
5. LD&CDOs will explore all potential resources including the Chamber of Commerce, Public Bodies Insurance etc.

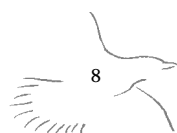
USE of FUNDS⁶

Audit / analysis of current resources	€7,500
Development of Business Plan	€5,000
Total	€12,500

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€10,000
Fingal County Council	€2,500
Total	€12,500

⁶Actions related to Shared Facilities and Shared Administrative Support will happen in tandem and costs are spread evenly across both actions. Total costs are anticipated at €25,000



ACTION 3: AGREEMENT ON CO-OPERATION IN DELIVERY OF SERVICE

Section A: Health Care

1. Set up a steering committee to co-ordinate NAHB/FDB and LD&CDOs
2. Gather together all the various needs analyses, reports and plans
3. Develop a co-ordinated local development health action plan
4. Organise a conference to promote community development in health initiatives
5. Make recommendations on the mainstreaming of the various services and future relationships between LD&CDOs and the NAHB.

USE OF FUNDS

Policy Research	€10,000
Public Consultation Meetings	€5,000
Conference	€10,000
Programme Evaluation	€5,000
Administration	€7,500
Total	€37,500

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€27,500
Northern Area Health Board (Potential)	€10,000
Total	€37,500

Section B: Estate Management

Aims

1. To develop a co-ordinated support programme for estate management groups
2. To develop a mechanism for effective, meaningful and sustainable involvement of residents in estate management
3. To increase inter-agency working in estate management
4. To agree an estate management strategy among local development agencies, the local authority and the Gardai in Fingal.
5. To agree a cross county support plan for estate management groups including targeted support for Travellers groups as well as the settled community.



Actions

1. LD&CDOs in Fingal will implement a facilitation process to meet the above aims. A part-time facilitator working on a short term basis will lead a process involving the LD&CDOs, residents groups, Fingal County Council, Garda Siochana etc resulting in the development and implementation of an agreed estate management strategy.

USE of FUNDS

Facilitator part time, short term	€7,000
Programme budget	€25,000
Total	€32,000

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Fingal County Council (committed)	€25,000
Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€7,000
Total	€32,000

Section C: Enterprise Development

In light of the current emphasis on sharing of resources, and better co-ordination across the county, it is proposed that Co-operation Fingal will extend its enterprise service to cover the whole of Fingal. This will ensure that enterprise services are made available to clients in the North County and Blanchardstown areas from a base in Balbriggan.

By extending the current service, and utilising existing secretarial/admin support, it will be possible to ensure that this service is made available to all three organisations and their clients within a relatively short space of time.

The shared enterprise service will ensure that target groups and clients of all the LD&CDOs operating within County Fingal are provided with support as required on an agreed basis.

The action will also explore the possibility of joint employment programmes, such as JI, LES and the Rural Social Scheme, and also the provision of an LES scheme in the North County.

USE of FUNDS

Shared advisory service	€45,000
Total	€45,000

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€15,000
BAP (Committed)	€15,000
Rural Dublin LEADER (committed)	€15,000
Total	€45,000

ACTION 4: AGREEMENT ON CO-ORDINATION WITHIN A GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Section A: Community Planning

To develop this project concept more fully the following will have to be carried out:

1. Research the needs of communities with regard to planning issues
2. Determine the exact composition of the Forum
3. Clearly define the objectives of the Forum
4. Establish the key functions of the Forum.

The proposed project is a new concept and represents a first attempt for a joint rural / urban initiative of this nature in the country. Funding is sought to research and develop the project concept and use this piece of research to lever more funding into the county to develop this project to its full potential.

The implementation of this project will require substantial funding. A possible source of funding for this project is the INTERREG IIIB programme which has a special emphasis on spatial planning.

USE of FUNDS

Skills Transfer / Training	€7,000
Community Planning Research	€11,000
Establishment of a Forum	€4,500
Total	€22,500

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€15,000
LEADER	€7,500
Total	€22,500



Section B: Community Representation

Actions

1. Formation of thematic structures bringing together groups from throughout the county on a variety of issues.
2. Development of realistic policy platforms with key goals and aims.
3. Leadership development and capacity building of community representatives on local and regional planning bodies.
4. Training and technical assistance of community and voluntary organisations in Fingal

USE of FUNDS

Facilitation / Programme Expenses	€49,000
Total	€49,000

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Cohesion Fund (CRGA)	€10,000
Fingal County Council	€39,000
Total	€49,000

Section C: Improving County Coverage

The terms of reference will include:

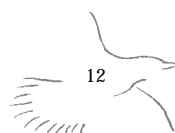
1. Completion of a base-line study, including an audit of any existing groups and activities
2. Access to all relevant information in areas currently without access to LDSIP
3. Identification of areas of the North County requiring support for community development activities
4. Potential to work with Blanchardstown LD&CDOs to develop a county-wide action plan

USE of FUNDS

Research Project	€18,500
Programme budget	€3,500
Administration (Co-operation Fingal)	€3,000
Total	€25,000

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	€20,000
Fingal County Council	€5,000
Total	€25,000



**Fingal Development Board
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