



AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL INCLUSION IN WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY



Waterford Local Community Development Committee

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Acknowledgements

The production of this report was facilitated by the input of many people. We would particularly like to thank the Steering Group of Don Tuohy, Julie Somers, Catherine Power, Heather Kiely and Jimmy Taaffe who made many suggestions provide assistance over many meetings.

We would also like to thank all those who responded to the survey request. Their responses provided very helpful insights into social inclusion activity in Waterford City and County.

We would like to thank the LCDC for recognising the importance of social inclusion in its activities and for deciding to undertake this piece of work.

And finally we would like to thank Susan Whelan of Waterford City and County Council who acted as secretary to the Steering Group.

Ciaran Lynch
Community Engagement Partners

Social Inclusion Report for Waterford Local Community Development Committee

Executive Summary

In 2021, Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) decided to develop a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and others and the new Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in particular.

The objects of the project were –

- To develop a report encompassing a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan.
- To develop and present a report and recommendations to the LCDC on how best to embed social inclusion as a core principle in the new/reviewed LECP
- To carry out a desktop exercise to identify the main social inclusion/exclusion issues in Waterford and make recommendations in relation to the major social inclusion/ social exclusion issues to be addressed in the new/reviewed LECP.

Following a competitive tendering process, Community Engagement Partners Ltd. were appointed to carry out the work. The process of developing the report was over seen by a Steering Group of Don Tuohy of Waterford City and County Council, Catherine Power of Waterford Area Partnership, Jimmy Taaffe of Waterford LEADER Partnership, Julie Somers of Tusla and Heather Kiely of Sacred Heart FRC.

The report consists of a number of parts –

1. A review of the concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion as set out in national, European and international documents
2. A review of social inclusion activity in Waterford and its needs including a survey of relevant organisations and a summary of the reports on SICAP activity
3. The development of a model of social inclusion
4. Recommendations regarding the application of social inclusion considerations to the development and implementation of the LECP
5. Recommendations to the LCDC regarding the incorporation of social inclusion considerations in all its activities and those of its constituent bodies and the outline of a process through which that might occur
6. A proposed statement of purpose regarding social inclusion which would be adopted by the LCDC

1. Review of concept of social inclusion and social exclusion.

It was proposed and accepted by the Steering Group that the question of social inclusion could not be fully addressed unless the question of social exclusion and its causes and components was considered. A number of different reports and studies were consulted, and it was concluded that social exclusion is a multi-factored concept and that, while it is something which can be assessed with regard to particular groups and segments in a society it is also something which is a lived experience for the excluded individual. It was noted that poverty, unemployment, lack of access to services and poverty are often considered together and closely aligned with the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion but it is suggested that a focus on these matters alone will not address all the factors which may be implicated in the experience of social exclusion.

The connection between the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and social inclusion is noted and the fact that these goals are included in the LECP Guidelines is also considered to be of relevance.

The definition of Social Inclusion which is included in the LECP Guidelines is noted. That definition states that it is

The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.

This is considered to be broad-ranging and multi-faceted, but it is suggested that, nevertheless, the concept needs to be further developed and operationalised so that a framework can be agreed for the consistent application of the concept by the LCDC and its constituent organisations.

This part of the report concludes with a statement from the United Nations in its *Leaving No-one Behind: the imperative of inclusive development* which states that –

Exclusion is, after all, a personal experience, and the views of those affected by it or at risk of being left behind cannot be disregarded. Relational issues, such as the presence of discrimination, the level of personal safety or the extent of participation in political processes or social life, must also be factored into key dimensions of inclusion and exclusion processes.

2. A review of social inclusion activity in Waterford and its needs including a survey of relevant organisations and a summary of the reports on SICAP activity

This part of the report includes the outcome of a survey of social inclusion organisations in Waterford City and County, the location and nature of their work and their experience of the extent to which the needs of those they work for and with were considered by policy-makers other than when those groups were the direct focus of the policy.

A total of 28 organisations which were considered to have a direct social inclusion remit responded to the survey and, while this does not represent the full range of social inclusion services in the county, it is likely to provide a reasonable cross-section of such organisations.

Amongst the most important findings of the survey are the following –

1. There is a substantial spread of social inclusion issues which are being addressed and, in most cases, numbers of organisations are addressing each issue.
2. There is a wide spread of target groups will again be noted with only rural households and ex-prisoners having small numbers of organisations who see them as target groups.
3. A large percentage of organisations report themselves as providing soft supports as opposed to the more physical supports such as finance, accommodation, equipment and personal services.
4. Most organisations work in both the city and county with no organisation working in all of Waterford county only, while many respondents indicated specific areas of coverage and a number mentioned a regional coverage.
5. The responses indicated high levels of collaboration within the county with all organisations mentioning at least one collaborator while many organisations referred to multiple collaborators
6. Most organisations were satisfied with the range of services which they provided with fewer satisfied with the availability of services and fewer still satisfied with the coverage
7. Service development was the future goal most mentioned by respondents, far exceeding references to other goals
8. Respondents perceived the need for a very wide range of requirements to achieve their goals including personnel and finance but also improvements in national and local policy
9. A very large range of policies impacting on their work was mentioned by respondents which shows the extent of the policy framework which is in place
10. Less than half of the respondent organisations had a strategy in place though another third were in the process of preparing a strategy
11. Respondents indicated that economic and social exclusion were most prevalent for their target groups with political exclusion somewhat less prevalent and cultural exclusion significantly less so
12. Respondents were of the view that, other than when the policy was specifically addressing the needs of their target group, the needs of those the work for and with were taken into account to a small extent or not at all by policymakers

A short review of the SICAP programme, the principal broad-based social inclusion intervention in the county was included in order to demonstrate the broad geographic coverage which it has, the range of interventions which it provides and the number of target groups which it addresses. Any future social inclusion interventions must be cognisant of and include this programme and those who deliver it.

3. The development of a model of social inclusion

As noted above, while the LECP Guidelines definition of social inclusion may well be acceptable for many purposes, there is still a need to develop that definition into a model which can be used to inform operational activity. This section of the report develops a model based on an approach suggested by Simpican et al.

The model proposed includes five levels and reflects the lived experience and group identify elements of social exclusion.

The levels included are –

- The individual level
- The organisational level
- The inter-organisational level
- The community level and
- The socio-economic level

A range of factors which may be relevant at each level are identified in the main report. The kinds of intervention which may be appropriate at each level are then outlined as follows, though they do not purport to be exhaustive.

Level	Interventions
Personal	These interventions are primarily aimed at enhancing the capacity of the individual who is a member of an excluded group in society. These interventions will increase their ability to engage with those whose support they need, will enhance their motivation and goal-focused approach, will seek to mitigate any personal factors which are compounding the exclusion and, where necessary, will provide them with the advocacy and personal support which they need in order to have their societal rights vindicated
Inter-personal	Depending on the nature of the exclusion, this could include family supports and training for assisting individuals who are excluded, diversity and inclusion training for the staff of various agencies and, indeed, for other private-sector organisations, training for the excluded in how to engage with the various service organisations in a positive and productive way, promotion of inclusivity and anti-discrimination amongst the population at large, approaches such as restorative justice and opportunities for groups and individuals who usually have no opportunity to engage to do so.
Organisational	This can include organisational level training and development, bringing issues such as social inclusion and diversity into the consciousness of organisations during strategic and operational planning processes, consciously developing a culture of accommodation and inclusiveness within organisations, developing a citizen-focused rather than regulatory approach within organisations, developing a consciousness of the impacts of policies, procedures, and processes on marginalised groups and seeking to mitigate those impacts.
Community	This can include actions which facilitate the excluded individuals and groups in engaging with communities and actions which make communities more responsive to the needs and situation of excluded groups. The word community in this sense can include communities of place, communities of interest and virtual communities. The activities can include opportunities for different parts of each of those types of community to come together, to exchange views and culture and to develop mutual respect. It can also involve community training in

Level	Interventions
	diversity and inclusion and actions which typically fall under the remit of SICAP. It can include the promotion and facilitation of pro-active actions by community organisations to seek to attract and retain members who are part of groups which are often socially excluded. It also includes a focus on including excluded groups in the decision-making processes which affect their communities and, in particular, taking steps to include the views of the non-organised, those who have no voice to represent them and who are unable or unwilling to represent themselves.
Socio/political	This heading includes all the large-scale actions which are normally considered to be the core of social inclusion. Therefore, access to employment, programmes for the reduction of poverty amongst particular groups, anti-discrimination laws and regulations, provision of access to a range of social and public services, mechanisms for removing the barriers which exist to accessing those services, providing socially and culturally appropriate services and so on. It will also be noted that this area can also include intervention in the marketplace to encourage inclusive behaviour on the part of private sector actors either through the use of regulation or encouragement.

The report then considers mechanisms for addressing issues of social exclusion and, in particular,

- Initiatives targeted at groups
- Initiatives targeted at issues
- Inclusion of considerations of social inclusion in initiatives where social inclusion is not the principal objective
- Consideration of impact on social exclusion of initiatives where social inclusion is not a significant objective

The report then proposes an overall model as follows.

	Targeted at Groups	Targeted at Issues	Opportunities within non-targeted initiatives	Mitigation of impacts of non-targeted Initiatives
Personal				
Interpersonal				
Organisational				
Community				
Socio-political				

Each cell of the model indicates a node of consideration by all those delivering economic and community services as regards the extent to which social inclusion considerations are being taken into account in the design and delivery of the intervention.

4. Elements of a social inclusion assessment approach.

In developing this approach it is suggested that the overall objectives of the social inclusion elements of service delivery should be -

- To maximise access
- To minimise barriers
- To facilitate engagement
- To promote respect
- To develop capacity

It is then proposed that when a new project, policy or programme is being considered, the potential impacts and the potential opportunities are considered under each of the five factor headings and in the context of the five objectives. In considering the impacts and opportunities, these might be categorised as follows –

- No impact/potential
- Little impact/potential
- Significant impact/potential
- Major impact/potential

It is proposed that where no or little impact is identified, the project can proceed without further consideration.

Where significant impact or potential are identified, the policy, programme or project should be amended to mitigate or eliminate such impacts and to allow such opportunities to be availed of. It would be a matter for the body concerned to decide as to the level of consultation with others which would be required in these cases.

Where major impact or potential is identified, the policy, programme or project should also be considered for amendment as in the previous case. However, in this case, where mitigation cannot be identified which would reduce the impact to an acceptable level, consideration would be expected to be given to radically amending the proposal or to its not being proceeded with. At a minimum, a detailed cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to indicate why the proposal is justified notwithstanding the impacts. In cases such as this, it would be expected that the body concerned would consult with others with a particular insight into the group or issue involved.

This part of the report also includes the process by which such an approach might be put into effect. The principal elements are as follows.

1. Agreement on the nature of the actions to be considered. This will take some time to finalise, but it is proposed that the following factors be taken into account –
 - a. The scale of the action in terms of the resources being devoted to it
 - b. The number of groups or issues on which it may impact with the greater the number leading to a greater likelihood that it should be included
 - c. The number of instances in which it is likely to have an impact, Therefore, a specific action with regard to a specific location may be less worthy of extensive consideration than an action such as a funding programme which will have many instances in which it will be applied
 - d. The geographic spread of the action with the wider the spread leading to a greater

likelihood that it should be included

2. Agreement as to the stage in the process when this evaluation should take place. It should not be so late in the process that those involved are committed to a particular course of action and will be reluctant to change; nor should it be so early in the process that the broad outline of the action is not discernible.
3. Agreement on the priority issues and groups to be included. This recognises the limitations of resources which exist within relevant organisations and the fact that it is better to have some issues and groups considered well than all potential issues and groups not considered at all. Some suggested groups and issues are set out in the table below
4. Agreement on the factors which will be considered. Some suggestions are set out in the table below and under the headings of access, participation and respect
5. Agreement on the process to be used. The stages are set out in the diagram below. These remain to be developed further but include the following –
 - a. An initial scoping to determine if the action is likely or not to have a social inclusion relevance
 - b. An evaluation of the potential negative impact if the scoping suggests that such might exist
 - c. An evaluation of the potential for positive impact if the scoping suggests that such might exist
 - d. Incorporation of amendments or mitigations into the design of the action where necessary In all cases the preparation of a report setting out the rationale for the decision
6. Provision of training to relevant staff in a number of areas.
 - a. Training in diversity and inclusion awareness so that unconscious as well as conscious biases and responses can be addressed
 - b. Training in the use of this model so that there is a common understanding of its purpose, procedures and parameters for judgement

5. Recommendations regarding the application of social inclusion considerations to the development and implementation of the LECP

The LECP will be a very important focus of the work of the LCDC over the next number of years and it is likely to influence other plans and programmes also. Four phases of the LECP process are identified and commendations are made with respect to social inclusion considerations at each stage –

Some steps which might be considered in this regard include –

Consultation

1. Identify those categories of social inclusion which should be specifically targeted
2. Engage by specific invitation with the organisations which advocate for or provide services to people in those categories
3. Use those organisations as gatekeepers to directly access individuals, households and groups who are in those categories
4. Consider the barriers to engagement which may exist in terms of means of engagement, locations, times and contexts and specifically seeking to overcome those barriers
5. Tailor the consultation to address the specific situation of those individuals, households and groups who are in danger of that form of exclusion
6. Consult on a broad range of issues where systemic exclusion may exist (e.g. employment) as

well as on any direct or deliberate discrimination which may be experienced

7. Put in place mechanisms to ensure that what is being communicated is understood and that significant misunderstandings do not arise.
8. Involve marginalised groups and those in danger of exclusion in both the initial consultation phase and the final phase of consultation on the Draft Plan.
9. Ensure that social inclusion is specifically referred to in the report on consultation which is required as part of the process

Plan preparation and adoption

1. Agree that a certain percentage of the goals both in the community and economic aspects of the plan will have a social exclusion/inclusion focus
2. Include in the process of plan development a step where consideration is given as to how a social inclusion objective or objectives can be included in respect of those goals which do not have social inclusion as their primary focus. These objectives might particularly consider issues such as barriers to access and participation, mechanisms for motivating those who feel excluded to engage, ensuring that the means of communication of opportunity are appropriate to marginalised and excluded groups and individuals.
3. Consider each of the five levels of social inclusion in the model referred to above – personal, inter-personal, organisational, community and socio-political – and consider ways in which each of these can be addressed throughout the LECP. This is proposed on the basis that the model suggests that to truly address the issue of social exclusion as a felt experience, each of these areas needs to be addressed.
4. Consider whether the issue of stigma is likely to be a barrier with regard to any action with a social inclusion focus which is being considered and ways in which the barriers to access which stigma creates might be addressed.
5. Since climate change is likely to be a significant element of the LECP, examine any climate action proposals from the Just Transition perspective to ensure that climate action does not lead to or exacerbate social exclusion.
6. Specifically seek to identify and address newly emerging categories of social exclusion which are not based on the normal categories of discrimination, but which can create major barriers to engagement in society, nevertheless. Isolation, lack of transport, digital exclusion, low literacy levels and lack of opportunities to influence are amongst the areas which might be considered.
7. When Goals, Objectives and KPIs are being identified, relevant organisations, and not just those in the LCDC, should be asked to indicate the areas of social inclusion where they will intend to participate. This, ideally, should be done at the level of the Objectives and the KPIs rather than the Goals as the latter are too high-level, all-inclusive and in a sense aspirational to allow for specific commitment.
8. Ask each of the participant organisations to consider the extent to which their processes, systems of communication, staff training and development, means and times of access, level of assistance provided amongst other matters, helps or hinders those in danger of exclusion from accessing their services.
9. When KPIs are being developed, make sure that amongst them are indicators which measure the impact of social inclusion actions and not merely their existence. Consider whether tailored KPIs may be necessary to achieve this outcome.
10. At least one person from an organisation with a specific focus on a broad range of social inclusion issues should be included on the Advisory Group for the reparation of the LECP.

11. The social inclusion proofing which is included as a process within the Guidelines should be a substantial and significant process, it should include consideration of the potential for both negative impacts and additional positive impacts and should include recommendations for amendments to the Draft.
12. Proofing should be carried out at both the plan preparation stage and in respect of each implementation plan.

Plan implementation

1. Each organisation which has indicated a commitment to contributing to a social inclusion objective or KPI should be asked to include in its annual operational plan some actions which will be directed towards the achievement of those objectives and the improvement in the relevant KPIs.
2. Particular efforts should be made to identify collaborative actions between organisations which are addressing the same objective or KPI. These need not be identified during LCDC meetings but in direct engagement between organisations. This will build on the existing significant level of collaboration which the organisational survey suggests exists at present in Waterford. Organisations would be asked to consider the extent to which collaboration might be possible with regard to any action which they are planning to undertake.
3. Where an action is being considered by an organisation, the social inclusion evaluation process referred to above should be undertaken and mitigation or opportunity embracing elements included as appropriate.
4. Each relevant organisation should give a short annual report as to the extent to which its actions contributed to the achievement of the social inclusion or exclusion goals to which it committed. Where progress was poor the reasons for this should be outlined and the ways in which the challenges might be addressed considered by the LCDC.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Identify at an early stage a set of indicators which would be a real measure of progress in respect of the reduction in social exclusion and the improvement in social inclusion. Such indicators could include –
 - Input indicators – Whether the actions committed to undertaken
 - Output indicators – The proximate results of those actions
 - Outcome or impact indicators – The effects on the social exclusion status or experiences of those who were the targets of the actions
 - Process indicators – Whether the way things were done gave rise to positive or less positive experiences for those involved

Each of these has its place but, in many ways the outcome or impact indicators are the most important as they provide evidence of the effectiveness of the actions which are being taken.

2. All organisations should be asked to provide ongoing monitoring data whether or not their focus is on social inclusion. Provided they have relevant data it should be provided, and all should contribute to the actions outlined below.
3. Indicators should include subjective as well as objective measures. Since, as indicated above, social exclusion is a lived experience, how that experience is changing for those in danger of experiencing social exclusion should be included in the measures.

4. Consideration should be given to the commissioning of targeted pieces of research in collaboration with WIT (or the TUSE) about the effectiveness of specific actions which have been taken. It is difficult to ascribe specific outcomes to specific actions in the absence of such research and by carrying out such projects a body of specific knowledge in this regard will be built up over time.
5. Consideration should be given as to how the community and voluntary sector might be involved in the development of a longitudinal measure of perceived social inclusion over time. By recruiting such organisations to provide an ongoing set of data an ongoing picture similar to the TILDA study, for example, might be put in place.
6. Consideration should be given to the carrying out of baseline studies with regard to social inclusion where the information which will be used to monitor progress is not available but is planned for the future. Backward-looking estimates by a survey population are notoriously problematic and unreliable. Real-time data collected at a point in time is far more reliable.
7. This approach to monitoring and evaluation will require resources and each relevant organisation should be asked to make some resources available for this purpose.

6. Recommendations to the LCDC regarding the incorporation of social inclusion considerations in all its activities and those of its constituent bodies and the outline of a process through which that might occur

A short number of recommendations regarding the overall approach to social inclusion in the work of the LCDC is also included as follows.

1. Each relevant organisation should formally commit to the Statement of Purpose as set out below, or to a similar undertaking and such a statement should be signed by all relevant parties.
2. A five-element model of social exclusion which helps to capture the multi-faceted nature of the process and of the experience should be adopted and each of these should be considered when issues of social exclusion are being addressed. These five elements incorporate various factors and are –
 - a. The personal
 - b. The interpersonal
 - c. The organisational
 - d. The community
 - e. The socio-political
3. All significant actions taken by any actor, and especially by those who are members of or engaged with the LCDC, should adopt an approach to action development and implementation which consciously considers the questions of social inclusion and exclusion, take steps to address any impacts identified and report the process of consideration and its outcome within the final project proposal.
4. A mechanism should be developed which will allow the processes set out at 3 to take place in an agreed and similar manner across all organisations. An outline of an approach is contained in this review.
5. Each relevant organisation should commission a review its own processes and procedures with a view to considering the extent to which they inadvertently contribute to social exclusion and should take remedial action where the need for such is identified.

6. The development and application of a mindset which recognises and seeks to address issues of social inclusion and exclusion will not arise automatically. It is recommended that a programme of training and education for relevant staff be developed and implemented. Such a programme would include training in the process of action evaluation referred to here as well as awareness training in diversity and inclusion. This training should be delivered on a multi-organisational basis so that peer learning and shared understandings would be maximised.
7. To the extent that the guidelines allow, the approach to the consideration of social inclusion and social exclusion in the development of the next LECP should follow the recommendations set out above.
8. Collaborative protocols should be developed between organisations so that timely support can be provided to disadvantaged communities and organisations to enable them to avail of funding opportunities including those provided by the LEADER programme.

7. A proposed statement of purpose regarding social inclusion which would be adopted by the LCDC

Finally, a statement of purpose regarding social inclusion is included for consideration for adoption by the LCDC as follows. It would also be hoped that the constituent bodies of the LCDC would adopt the same statement.

All parties to this statement recognise that social exclusion and social inclusion are contested concepts with no agreed international definition. Notwithstanding this, for the purposes of their work, they declare that they believe and commit to the following.

1. Social exclusion is both a process and an outcome.
2. Social, cultural and economic factors make certain parts of society more likely to suffer from social exclusion
3. While macro-level factors increase the likelihood of social exclusion, social exclusion is a personal and family lived experience with major implications for an individual's or household's quality of life
4. Poverty and unemployment are major contributors to social exclusion within society and seeking to address these issues will make a major contribution to eliminating social exclusion.
5. Poverty and unemployment are not, however, the only factors which drive social exclusion. Other factors are both drivers and act as determinants of how social exclusion is experienced.
6. Some actions of the state, the private sector and civil society are specifically targeted at addressing issues of social inclusion and these actions are of great importance.
7. Such actions are not, however, of themselves sufficient to achieve the outcome of a society with few instances of social exclusion.
8. Most actions taken by the state, private sector and civil society do not have social inclusion as their purpose. However, many have implications for social exclusion either inherent in the nature of their purpose or in the way in which they are implemented.
9. Other actions, though not targeted at social exclusion and though not giving rise to negative consequences, have the potential to promote the social inclusion agenda with a small amount of remodelling.
10. Ensuring that social exclusion and inclusion issues are considered when such actions are being developed and implemented are critical in addressing the issue of social inclusion.
11. Ultimately, the active consideration of social exclusion and inclusion should become part of

the ethos of all organisations; vindicating the citizens' rights should be an objective of all working in service delivery; and processes which achieve this objective should become part of the normal way of working of all relevant bodies.

12. If widely adopted, the approach set out here would make a significant contribution to the development of a just and fair society in which no group or individual would experience the trauma of exclusion.

1. Purpose and structure of report from Request for Tender

In 2021, Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) decided to develop a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and others and the new Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in particular. This was determined on the basis that it was agreed that a key focus of LCDC work over the next five years would be to highlight opportunities to strengthen the social inclusion agenda in the City and County.

The aim of the project was

1. to develop a report encompassing a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan in particular. The document will be used to inform the work of the LCDC member agencies and other agencies tasked with a social inclusion remit as they prepare to roll out plans and actions over the next 5 years, commencing in January 2022.
2. To develop and present a report and recommendations to the LCDC on how best to embed social inclusion as a core principle in the new/reviewed LECP and to ensure - in as much as is possible – that projects and actions under the remit of the LCDC for the new/reviewed LECP are social inclusion proofed.
3. To carry out a desktop exercise to identify the main social inclusion/exclusion issues in Waterford; identify the gaps in meeting the needs identified and make recommendations in relation to the major social inclusion/ social exclusion issues to be addressed in the new/reviewed LECP.

In the response to the tender request, the tenderer indicated that Social inclusion is a very broad field addressing –

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Those with a disability
- Childcare
- Rural exclusion
- Lone parents
- The Traveller community
- Non-Irish nationals
- Health and mental health
- Gender-based issues
- Roma
- LGBTI

In addition, social exclusion and marginalisation can be addressed through actions targeted at a particular group; actions targeted at a particular issue; and through the design and application of actions the primary purpose of which is not social inclusion.

Given the range of potential social inclusion issues and the number of ways in which these issues can be approached, this project cannot address all matters in depth, given the time and the resources available.

It is, however, understood that it is important that the LCDC and other local development organisations and agencies are aware of the basic policy framework within which social inclusion needs to be pursued, the principal local strategies and programmes which address the issue and how,

major gaps in the ways in which social inclusion is addressed, some basic facts regarding the issues which social inclusion seeks to address and some approaches to the application of these considerations particularly within the LECP process.

Some other contextual matters worth considering are the following.

(a) Climate change

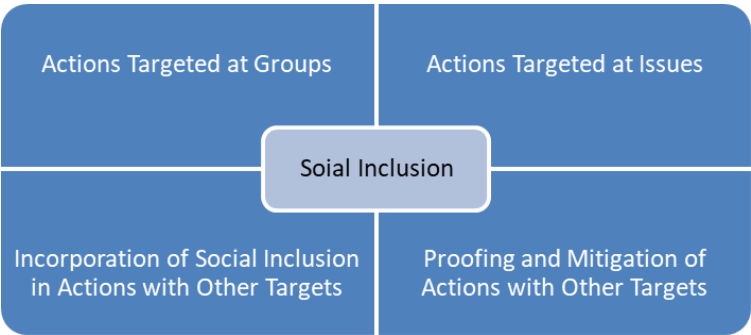
Climate change and climate action will be focuses of all policies from now on, including the LECP. Climate action can have implications for marginalised groups and one of the matters to consider is how social inclusion considerations are going to be taken into account in the LECP and other strategies which are also considering climate change actions.

(b) The LECP approach

It is likely that the LECP approach this time around will be in two stages – a strategic stage which will be the actual LECP followed by annual implementation plans. It will be important that the social inclusion considerations are incorporated at both stages of the process.

Two other aspects of the process are of importance in the development of this report.

- Consultation. This is an important part of the LECP process. Consideration needs to be given as to ways in which marginalised groups, those which advocate for them and those who provide services to them are given the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the LECP-making process.
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Review. This is another important part of the overall process and consideration needs to be given to ways in which meaningful social inclusion data is gathered as part of the process. Using readily available data may not be enough. This report will not identify exactly how information should be gathered but it will provide pointers in this respect.
- (It should be noted that, prior to the completion of this report, the LECP Guidelines were, in fact issued. The overall approach is generally in line with what was anticipated and has been taken into account in the part of the report which deals with LECP processes and social inclusion)
- The submission also suggested the following as an initial model for consideration of social inclusion issues.



Finally, the submission identified the following as outcomes. The comment on each is also included here.

- **Provide a Summary of National and EU Policies relevant to Social Inclusion**

This will essentially be a desktop exercise and will involve a brief review and summary of the principal policies at national and EU level which are relevant to social inclusion. This will not be an exhaustive exercise but will focus on the policies which have most relevance at an operational level.

- **Reference and make recommendations in the context of the Government's Social Inclusion policies**

It is not totally clear what is meant by this, but it is assumed that any recommendations which are made in the document will be linked to Government policies and strategies with regard to social inclusion. If this is what is meant it is an appropriate approach as it will ensure the linkage between the policies and actions at local level with Government policy in this area. It should be noted in this regard that, in Ireland, social policy of this nature is generally developed at a national rather than a regional or local level.

- **Identify and outline key policy recommendations to inform development of and implementation of the LECP**

It is anticipated that the new LECP Guidelines will be published shortly. There will be a focus on Goals, Objectives, KPIs and an Annual Action Plan. Recommendations will be developed which link with the priorities which are identified in national policy and from local data with regard to goals, objectives and KPIs and reference will also be made to the type of actions which might be included in the annual implementation plan. This will not be exhaustive as it will be a rolling process from year to year.

- **Provide examples of best practice in terms of opportunities to use existing programmes available in Waterford to promote the social inclusion agenda**

Some examples of good practice will be identified and reported, and recommendations made as to how these can be applied in Waterford. Given the time and resources available this will, of necessity be somewhat limited in scope but will, nevertheless, be beneficial.

- **Provide examples of effective Social Inclusion focused initiatives that can be scaled within LEADER funding**

This is linked to the previous outcome and the same comments apply

- **Carry out an audit of social inclusion services in Waterford city and county identifying the agencies responsible and listing agencies and their responsibilities in relation to same**

This will use a survey-based approach. The survey will be developed with the guidance of the Steering Group. The effectiveness of the survey will rely on the co-operation of the bodies involved and the tenderer will require that a list of organisations and e-mail contacts is provided by the LCDC

- **Carry out an assessment of social inclusion services in Waterford and identify gaps in provision**

This is a very open-ended and broad deliverable and could easily require a project with far greater time and resources to deliver. What may be possible is to identify the various groups requiring social inclusion services and to assess whether any services are being provided and the accessibility of those services

- **Reference existing strategic plans/actions in operation in Waterford that have or may have a social inclusion focus, e.g. CYPSC Plan / Migrant Integration Strategy.**

Again it is not fully clear what is meant by this deliverable. However, that consideration will be given to the role of existing plans and strategies which have are specifically focused on social inclusion and that role will be referred to in the final document.

- **Provide a toolkit and /or checklist for organisations in Waterford to assist them in social inclusion proofing their organisations, activities and strategies**

The development of a toolkit for a purpose of this nature is challenging within the time and resources available. The development of a toolkit assumes that there is already agreement on a decision-making process regarding proofing for social inclusion or, indeed, for any purpose. A proposal will be included as to what such a process might be and as to how it might operate, and an indication will be given of the factors which might be taken into account when such a process is being undertaken and how mitigations might be identified and applied.

- **Collate findings and draft a Statement providing a direction of travel for social inclusion measures including identification of key strategic themes**

The precise nature of what this should be, will be agreed with the Steering Group but it will be based on the various outputs referred to above.

This report is set in the context of the above and in response to the RFT.

2. What is meant by social inclusion?

The literature and reports on social exclusion and inclusion is far too extensive for a short review of this nature. In an interim discussion document produced for the Steering Committee of this project, it was suggested that in approaching the question of social inclusion, it would be appropriate to start with a reflection on the issue of social exclusion on the basis that social inclusion policies and actions are likely to be more effective when the aspects of social exclusion they are trying to address are clear and stated.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSRDC), England which is a partnership of research institutes, think-tanks and consultancy organisations and which provides advice and policy support to many public and commercial organisations states that -

Social exclusion has been defined by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) as 'a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live. Discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household.'

The concept of social exclusion arose in response to dissatisfaction with approaches to poverty that focused on income alone. However, the term remains contested and there is no agreed definition. Most commonly, social exclusion is seen to apply to groups, involving the exclusion of individuals due to their membership of particular groups that suffer discrimination. Different understandings of social exclusion emphasise different aspects: the groups at risk of being excluded; what people are excluded from (e.g. employment, education, citizenship, respect); the negative impact of social exclusion (e.g. low income, poor housing); the processes driving exclusion; and the agents involved.

A UN document on social inclusion and exclusion states that Although there is no universally agreed definition or benchmark for social exclusion, lack of participation in society is at the heart of nearly all definitions put forth by scholars, government bodies, non-governmental organizations and others Overall, social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state.

Participation may be hindered when people lack access to material resources, including income, employment, land and housing, or to such services as education and health care — essential foundations of well-being that are captured in Agenda 2030. Yet participation is also limited when people cannot exercise their voice or interact with each other, and when their rights and dignity are not accorded equal respect and protection. Thus social exclusion entails not only material deprivation but also lack of agency or control over important decisions as well as feelings of alienation and inferiority. In nearly all countries, to varying degrees, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and sexual orientation and gender identity have been grounds for social exclusion over time.

The Irish Government's Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 states the following –

However welfare or 'well-being' is not something that can be measured by a single income- related metric, although income poverty measured in relative terms can be a strong indicator of a person's welfare. Education, health, housing, employment and social integration (i.e. a person's sense of "connectedness" with their community) are all factors that contribute to a person's overall sense of

well-being or welfare. These are also factors that can help compensate for income deficiencies. Equally, high levels of income (low levels of income poverty) may not be associated with higher welfare if these are accompanied by poor quality or high-cost services, low levels of social integration, or a diminution in the sense or value of community.

It goes on to quote approvingly the definition of social exclusion set out in the Partnership 2000 Agreement –

“Social exclusion can be succinctly described as cumulative marginalisation from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision making and from an adequate quality of life”

It also quotes the “European Platform Against Poverty” initiative, which describes poverty in the following terms:

Poverty in its multiple dimensions includes a lack of income and sufficient material resources to live in dignity; inadequate access to basic services, such as healthcare, housing and education; labour market exclusion and poor-quality work.

There is, therefore, in principle at least, an emerging understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of exclusion and that economic interventions alone will not resolve the issues. However, it is also clear that the concept is still contested with different emphases by different bodies. In that context it is appropriate for the Waterford LCDC to consider what definition it wants to adopt as the nature of the definition will have implications for the focus of the interventions which it wishes to pursue and support.

In considering that matter, the LCDC may wish to adopt the definition which is set out in the LECP and is as follows –

The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.

This definition has the advantage of allowing for a large number of intervention types and for the issues of social inclusion to be considered in all contexts and by all public bodies, agencies, support organisations and communities.

This definition is somewhat different from that in the Social Inclusion Roadmap 2020 – 2025 which states that

Social Inclusion is achieved when people have access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable them to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for people in society generally.

As will be noted later, while this is also a broad definition, it does carry the danger of not considering issues which give rise to social exclusion, and which are not concerned with income, resources or access to services and also does not specifically reflect the identity factor referred to in the LECP Guideline definition.

Forms of exclusion

In a 2006 book on Poverty and Social Inclusion in Britain by Pantazakis et al, Ruth Levitas, in a chapter on the concept and measurement of social exclusion and which involves an extensive review of approaches in Britain and Europe, concludes the following –

In some cases, these results are tentative. Three broad conclusions can, however, be drawn.

The first is that indicators of social inclusion need routinely to include some that directly address the fabric of social life. The agreed indicators at both UK and European level are overly concentrated on employment and poverty. Without appropriate indicators, the complex relationships between different dimensions of social exclusion cannot be explored.

Second, there is a need for more research, probably of a qualitative kind, to explore the impact of poverty and worklessness on social relations.....

Third, the policy emphasis on paid work as a mechanism for delivering social inclusion is a double-edged sword. Paid work may reduce poverty (although that depends on the level of income it generates) but it simultaneously can create acute problems of work–life balance, reducing the time necessary for social participation and social support.

This suggests that, from a measurement perspective at any rate, it is important to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and that while poverty is both a major result and a driver of such exclusion, it is not sufficient to focus on that matter alone.

The quote from the GSRDC incorporates a number of different aspects and components of social exclusion as follows –

- The groups at risk of being excluded – the target population focus
- What people are excluded from – the areas where specific interventions may be required
- The impacts of exclusion – often seen as poverty, low levels of education, poor health outcomes and high levels of unemployment
- The processes driving exclusion – these can be formal and informal, explicit and implicit, direct and indirect, processes of commission and of omission, stand-alone or combined
- The agents involved – these can include state agencies, commercial organisations, civil society, specific individuals

The same organisation identifies a number of different causes and forms of social exclusion as follows.

- **Political exclusion** can include the denial of citizenship rights such as political participation and the right to organise, and also of personal security, the rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity.
- **Economic exclusion** includes lack of access to labour markets, credit and other forms of ‘capital assets.’
- **Social exclusion** may take the form of discrimination along a number of dimensions including gender, ethnicity and age, which reduce the opportunity for such groups to gain access to social services and limits their participation in the labour market.
- **Cultural exclusion** refers to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected.

The UN Report *Leaving No-one Behind: the imperative of inclusive development* published in 2015 stated the following:

*For the purpose of the present report, social inclusion is defined as **the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to***

resources, voice and respect for rights. Thus, social inclusion is both a process and a goal. In the present report, it is contended that promoting social inclusion requires tackling social exclusion by removing barriers to people's participation in society, as well as by taking active inclusionary steps to facilitate such participation. As a political response to the exclusion challenge, social inclusion is thus a more deliberate process of encompassing and welcoming all persons and embracing greater equality and tolerance.

It goes on to state that

Social inclusion processes require both addressing the drivers of exclusion, including certain policies and institutions as well as discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and actively "bringing people in." To the extent that policies and institutions define the "rules of the game" for social interactions and the distribution of power, status and control over resources, they can drive social exclusion or, alternatively, mitigate its impacts. As discussed in chapter V of the present report, some institutions systematically deny particular groups of people the recognition which would enable them to participate fully in society. Discriminatory attitudes and behaviours further drive exclusion, although they are not its only cause. People living in remote areas may not be able to fully participate in social, cultural or political life, for instance, without being discriminated against by law or by the rest of society discrimination can hinder access to and enjoyment of goods, services, justice, opportunities and culture, discourage the efforts of social groups to advance their interests, all of which results in spatial segregation. Norms, policies and institutions can also result in participation in society but on adverse terms (Hickey and Du Toit, 2007). For instance, participation in the labour market may be imposed or engaged in voluntarily but under precarious conditions.

These various statements point to the multiple aspects of exclusion, not all of which are associated with poverty and employment. Each of the types referred to by the GDSC is an important form of social exclusion and in developing a model for adoption by the LCDC, each of these should be considered and reflected on.

It might be considered, for example, that in Ireland, political exclusion is limited. This may be true at the formal level but as Transparency International found some years ago in its report on Ireland, networking and informal decision-making are a significant threat to transparency and accountability. It is worth reflecting on the extent to which excluded groups and individuals have, for example, the opportunity to directly impact on decisions through informal means. In addition, participation in political activity often requires levels of literacy and insight that may not be shared by all and are likely to be less present among excluded groups and individuals.

There are other emerging forms of exclusion today which arise from rapid technological change and which impact, particularly, on capacity to engage meaningfully in society. These forms of exclusion give rise to discrimination without any doubt but are only sometimes referred to in exclusion literature or discourses. Factors such as low literacy, low levels of IT skills, low access to transport and so on can significantly impact on a person's capacity to engage in society in a fulfilling way.

Some of these exclusion factors are directly associated with poverty (access to transport for example) but not all are, and some are related both to poverty and other factors such as age.

It is also worth considering the fact that some people experience multiple forms and cause of exclusion at the same time. This is an even more complex situation to address and would require tailored services for the individual in an ideal world.

Finally, in this part, it must be noted that there are major difficulties in measuring social exclusion due to variations in definition, absence of some data, the intermittent nature of some data-gathering

exercises and the under-estimation of the situation of hard-to-reach groups. In this context, the UN report referred to earlier stated –

In taking into account these challenges and based on a review of the empirical literature, the present report contains an examination of three sets of indicators: those that measure access to opportunity, namely education, health services and infrastructure; those that measure access to employment and income; and those that measure participation in political, civic and cultural life.

The third set of indicators should be particularly noted.

The European Pillar of Social Rights

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit. The Pillar sets out 20 key principles which represent the beacon guiding us towards a strong social Europe that is fair, inclusive and full of opportunity in the 21st century.

So states the website of the European Commission. The 20 key principles which it refers to are as follows, grouped under a number of priority areas.

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market

1. Education, training and life-long learning
2. Gender equality
3. Equal opportunities
4. Active support to employment

Fair working conditions

1. Secure and adaptable employment
2. Fair Wages
3. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals
4. Social dialogue and involvement of workers
5. Work-life balance
6. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection

Social protection and inclusion

1. Childcare and support to children
2. Social protection
3. Unemployment benefits
4. Minimum income
5. Old age income and pensions
6. Health care
7. Inclusion of people with disabilities
8. Traveller and Roma Community and ex-prisoners
9. Long-term care

10. Housing and assistance for the homeless

11. Access to essential services

It is acknowledged that these are all important areas and that they are necessary to ensure social inclusion. However, it will be noted that they very much focus on access to services, to the labour market and to social protection. As such, they address the financial, economic and, to some extent, the social aspects of social inclusion. However, they have little to say about cultural exclusion or to political exclusion and, to that extent, are limited in their extent.

The Sustainable Development Goals

Since the UN Sustainable Development Goals have gained a wide currency and are reflected in many policy documents, it is worth considering the extent to which they are relevant to the issue of social inclusion and will provide guidance in the development of the LECP. It should be noted that they are included as part of the guiding principles in the recently-issued LECP Guidelines. This is the list of the SDGs.

1: No Poverty

2: Zero Hunger

3: Good Health and Well-being 4: Quality Education

5: Gender Equality

6: Clean Water and Sanitation 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 10: Reduced Inequality

11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

12: Responsible Consumption and Production 13: Climate Action

14: Life Below Water 15: Life on Land

16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions 17: Partnerships to achieve the goals

It will be noted that many of these goals are directly associated with issues of social inclusion.

However, there are many specific targets associated with each goal and when these are examined, the link between the goals and social inclusion becomes even clearer.

Social Exclusion and SICAP

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is the governments national infrastructure for addressing social exclusion in Ireland with 49 local development companies implementing programmes within each local authority area. The SICAP Programme defines social inclusion as follows:

*Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and **social** exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights. Social inclusion works for a fairer future that benefits everyone SICAP Programme Requirements 2018-2022 Pg. 10*

It will be noted that this definition is broad ranging and emphasises the importance of participation in social, cultural and political life as well as in the economic life of society.

The key aims of SICAP is to address high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted and

innovative, locally led approaches. It targets and supports those who are disadvantaged in Irish society and less likely to use mainstream services. This is achieved through

- a) Supporting Communities - To support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of Local Community Groups, and creating more sustainable communities*
- b) Supporting Individuals - To support disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports.*

Social Inclusion Interventions in Practice

The UN document referred to above states the following –

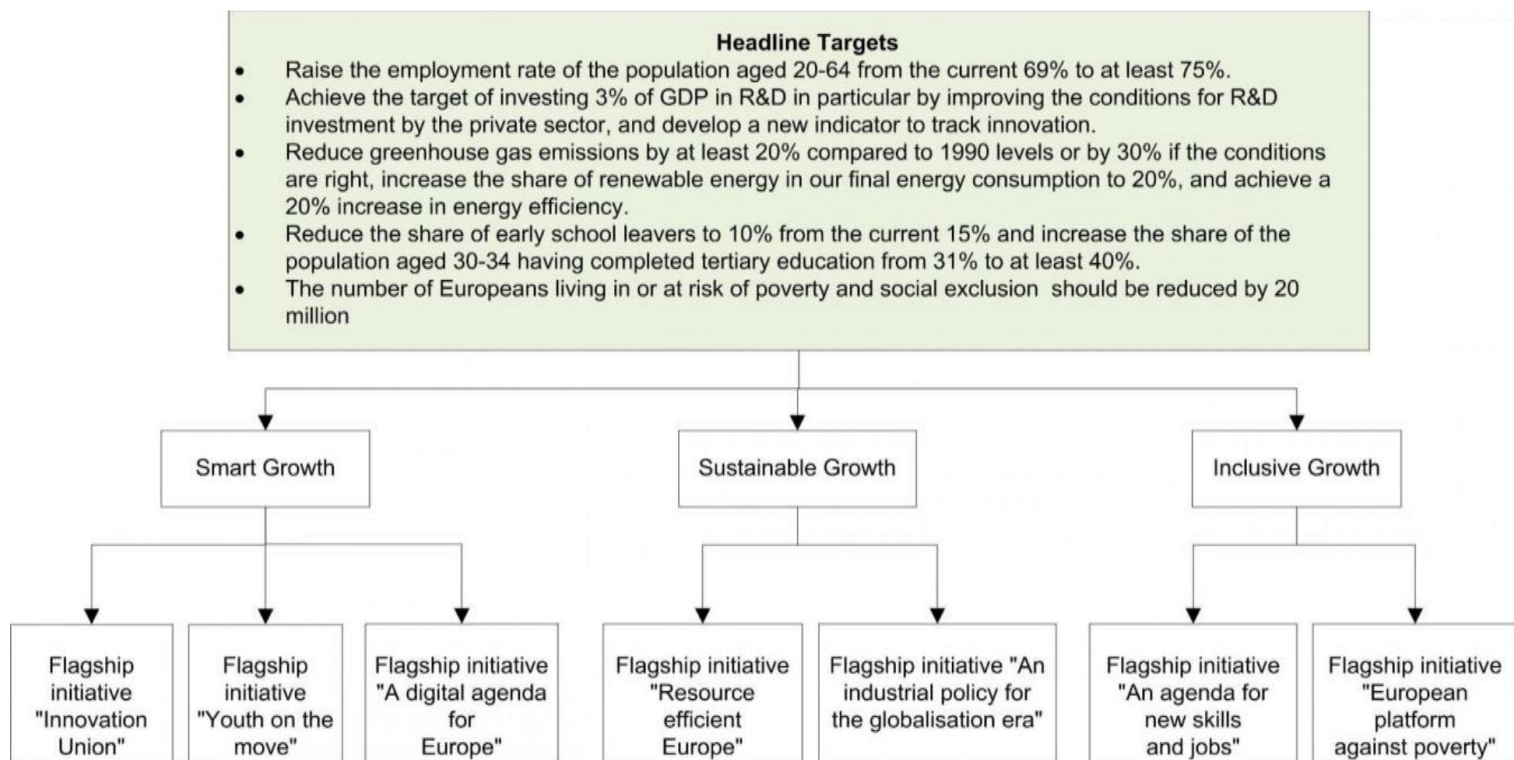
It should be noted that fostering social inclusion may or may not increase the capacity of people to live together in harmony. Societies that are otherwise cohesive may exclude some sectors of the population. Similarly, social inclusion is not the same as social integration, even though the two terms are at times used interchangeably. Social integration and social inclusion should, however, contribute to making societies more cohesive. Although the present report touches on some aspects of social cohesion and social integration and examines indicators that are relevant to both concepts, its focus is on the elimination of social exclusion and the promotion of social inclusion.

It is important to note, therefore, that social inclusion will not necessarily overcome all prejudice, stereotyping, profiling and the negative behaviours associated with such attitudes. However, even though full integration within a society may not be achieved, the targets of mutual respect and understanding, tolerance and accommodation should, it is suggested, be part of the social inclusion agenda. It is not sufficient that a society treats some of its citizens as ‘separate but equal.’ This was the model of equality followed (or not followed) in the USA for many years until outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1954 and by the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

While many of the definitions above include social, cultural and political elements in the definition of social exclusion and inclusion, the principal focus is, in practice, often on the areas of poverty and employment and the impact that access to education, health and similar services has on poverty.

There is no doubt that poverty and unemployment are significant drivers of social exclusion. However, for many the elimination of poverty will not alone lead to the elimination of all forms of social exclusion. In addition, non-economic forms of social exclusion can themselves be the bedrock on which poverty and unemployment are built.

Nevertheless, national and international policies often lay a heavy emphasis on these forms of social exclusion. A diagram contained in Social Justice Ireland’s commentary on *Ireland and the Europe 2020 Strategy* is the following –



This indicates that, while 'Inclusive Growth' is one of the focuses of the EU's agenda, the way in which inclusive growth is envisaged is largely focused on addressing poverty and the skills and jobs needed to address unemployment. It is emphasised that this is not considered to be unimportant but that it is not sufficient. The focus on addressing social exclusion needs to be wider and address more of the causes and mechanisms which are involved.

In addition to this, the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 of the Irish Government has seven high-level goals as follows –

1. Extend employment opportunities to all who can work
2. Ensure work pays – fair pay, fair conditions for workers
3. Provide income security for older people
4. Support families reduce child poverty
5. Reduce poverty among people with disabilities – help them to maximise their ability
6. Build inclusive communities encourage active citizenship
7. Ensure that all people have access to quality services

While these are all admirable objectives, however, it will be noted that five out of the seven goals are focused on poverty. Commitment 7 is also very much focused on poverty-related issues and the following are the commitments to building inclusive communities –

1. Develop an implementation plan to deliver on the objectives of tackling loneliness and isolation.
2. Set specific new targets which can inform the development of relevant Government policies

and strategies: increase the rate of Active Citizenship to 17% and Participation in Voluntary Work to 34%.

3. Finalise and publish the successor to the Action Plan for Rural Development.
4. Finalise and publish a National Volunteering Strategy.
5. Complete the review of Social Inclusion through Community Employment and implement any recommendations arising.
6. Implement the actions in the National Sports Policy, 2018-2027 (which contains a particular focus on addressing specific inequalities in participation (i.e. ethnic minority groups, people with a disability, etc.)).
7. Renew and refresh the system and level of engagement between Government bodies and the community and voluntary sector.
8. Ensure that reciprocal north-south entitlements to welfare benefits, the all-Island free travel scheme and access to education and healthcare are maintained following the implementation of Brexit.

The SICAP Programme referred to above, has the following areas of focus as indicated on the WAP website.

SICAP wants to impact the following areas;

1. Engage with those left out in society and in neglected areas.
2. Address youth unemployment.
3. Support disadvantaged members of society in getting mainstream services.
4. Improve citizen engagement.
5. The Programme is further divided into three subsections, or 3 main goals;
6. Strengthening Local Communities- To help underprivileged communities and target groups to engage with local stakeholders in addressing social exclusion and equality issues.
7. Promoting Lifelong Learning- To help individuals and target groups experiencing difficulty in education to progress through life-long learning opportunities.
8. Helping people become more job ready- To, once again, help individuals and target groups and residents of impoverished areas access employment opportunities. This may include self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities.

Again, it will be noticed that, while there is attention on a range of different exclusions, the issue of employment and access to services are prominent focuses. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the SICAP programme has a consciousness of political, social and cultural inclusion which is perhaps not as manifest in other programmes.

Conclusion

This discussion has reviewed a number of national and international policy documents on the question of social inclusion and social exclusion. It has noted that, in many cases, the question of social inclusion is very closely aligned to the elimination of poverty, access to financial and employment

markets and to social services. It is acknowledged that these are important elements in the field of social inclusion. However, as some of the documents have suggested, such a focus, while important, is incomplete.

Inclusion involves, together with access –

- Agency and self-determination
- Political engagement and influence
- Cultural rights and respect
- active engagement in policy development

It is also proposed that true inclusion means inclusion in all parts of society and being included in and by civil society by the state and its agencies.

Finally, it is proposed that the mechanisms through which exclusion can take place must be considered if a truly inclusive society is to be achieved. As noted above, lack of a particular capacity or competence in a rapidly changing environment can be an important contribution to exclusion. Lack of capacity to operate digital platforms is one example of such a competence in today's world. The lack of other, fundamental competencies can limit access unless steps are taken to address the limitations to which their absence can give rise. Low or marginal literacy, lack of a capacity to engage with bureaucratic structures and processes, lack of access to legal advice have significant implications for exclusion at a personal level.

As stated by the United Nations –

Exclusion is, after all, a personal experience, and the views of those affected by it or at risk of being left behind cannot be disregarded (United Nations, 2010). Relational issues, such as the presence of discrimination, the level of personal safety or the extent of participation in political processes or social life, must also be factored into key dimensions of inclusion and exclusion processes.

3. Social Inclusion in Waterford

There are many ways of considering the issue and the state of social inclusion in Waterford. This report includes information on a survey of social inclusion-engaged bodies in Waterford, a review of the SICAP reports relating to Waterford and a brief review of the social inclusion aspects of the LEADER programme based on the results of an interim evaluation of the programme carried out in 2019.

Survey Results

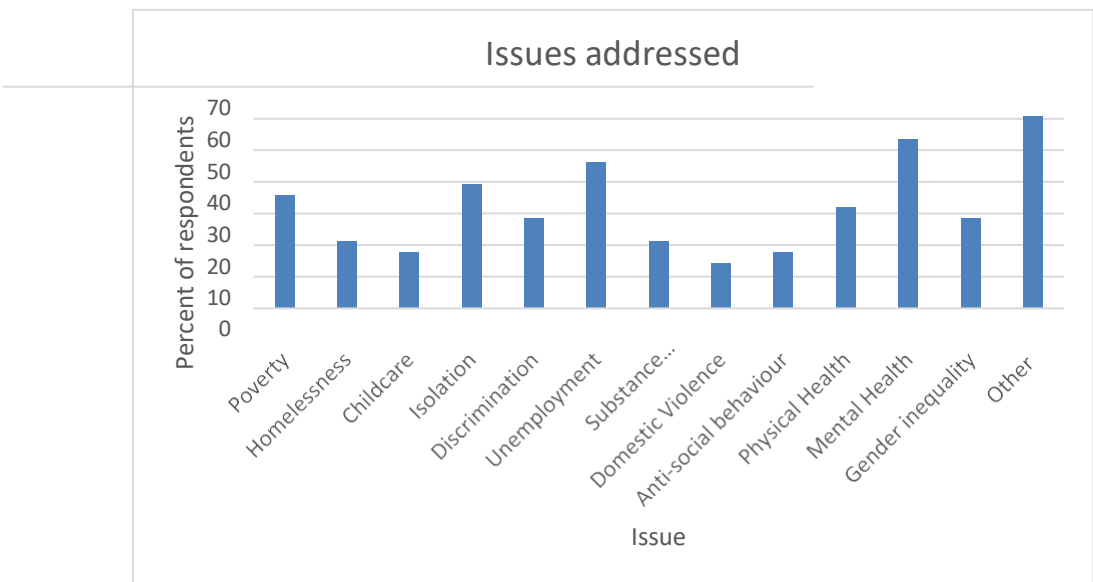
A survey of organisations involved in social inclusion was carried out between September 20th and October the 10th. This was an online survey using the Survey Monkey platform. The survey link was circulated through a number of different channels including the LCDC, LCDC member organisations and the PPN. As a result a somewhat eclectic response population emerged. A total of 40 organisations responded. However, 12 of these were considered not to have social inclusion as a significant focus, even though social inclusion actions were incorporated into their work. These were, therefore, excluded from the final analysis to not distort the findings.

Nature of the respondents

The following are some of the characteristics of the remaining 28 respondents.

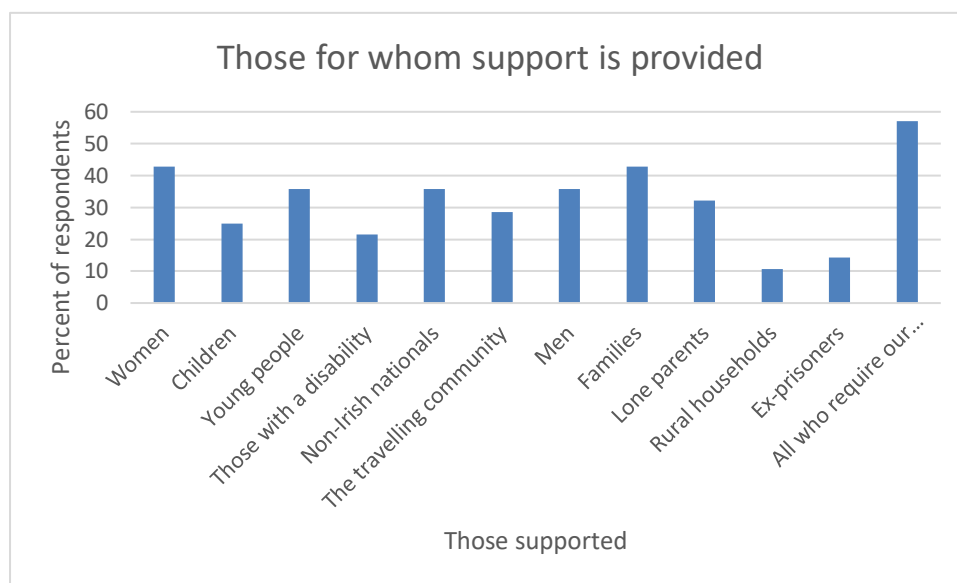
The person responding was asked to indicate their role within the organisation and, in almost all cases, a person with a senior role provided the responses. There can be some level of confidence, therefore, that the responses are reliable.

Respondents were asked to indicate the nature of the issues they addressed with the following results.



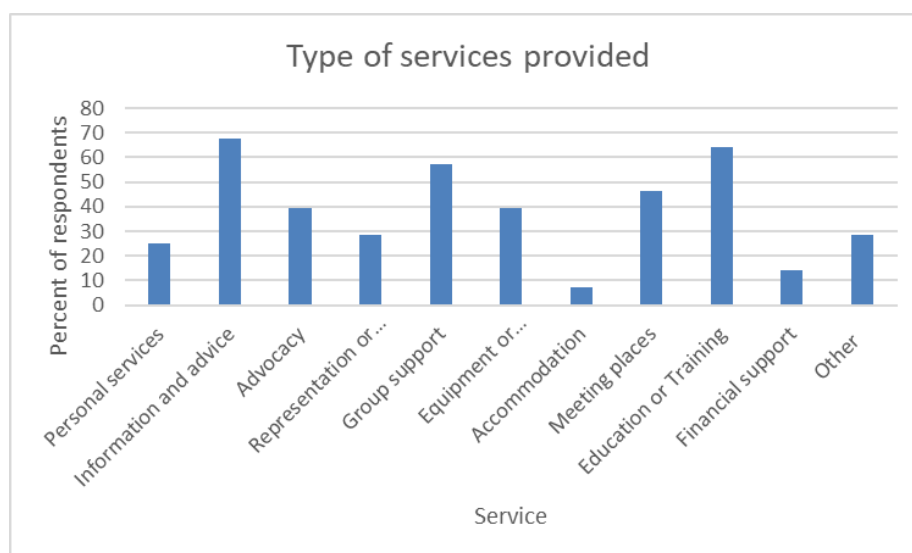
This shows a substantial spread of issues which are addressed. The size of the 'Other' category should be noted as should the size of the 'Mental Health' category. The results show that numbers of organisations are addressing each issue and that no issue has only one organisation which sees itself as engaging with it.

Respondents were also asked to indicate those for who they sought to work with the following outcome.



The wide spread of target groups will again be noted with only rural households and ex-prisoners having small numbers of organisations who see them as target groups. This may be something to reflect on for the future, as the rural-proofing of policies by all organisations might limit the need for organisations specifically addressing the needs of rural communities and it might be considered that the population of ex-prisoners is relatively small. Alternatively, the remit of other organisations might be extended to advocate on behalf of these groups.

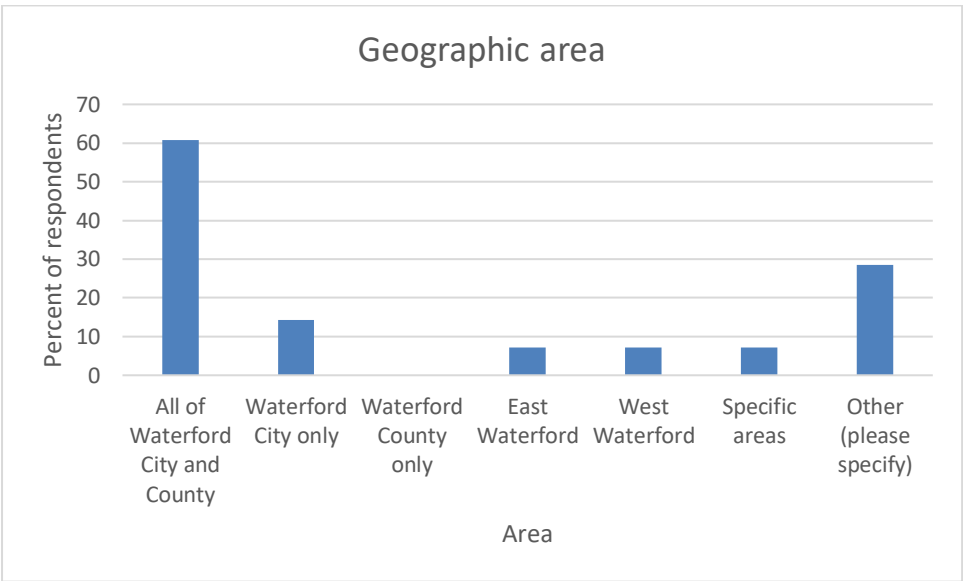
Respondents were asked to indicate the nature of the services they provide and that is show in the following diagram.



What is interesting in this diagram is the extent of the soft supports which are provided as opposed to the more physical supports such as finance, accommodation, equipment and personal services. The numbers citing accommodation as a service is low, but this may reflect the profile of respondents as it is likely that a greater number of organisations provide accommodation than is suggested by that

figure which amounts to 2 organisations. The number of Approved Housing Bodies alone in the county is likely to exceed this number.

Respondents were asked to indicate the area of the county in which they were active.



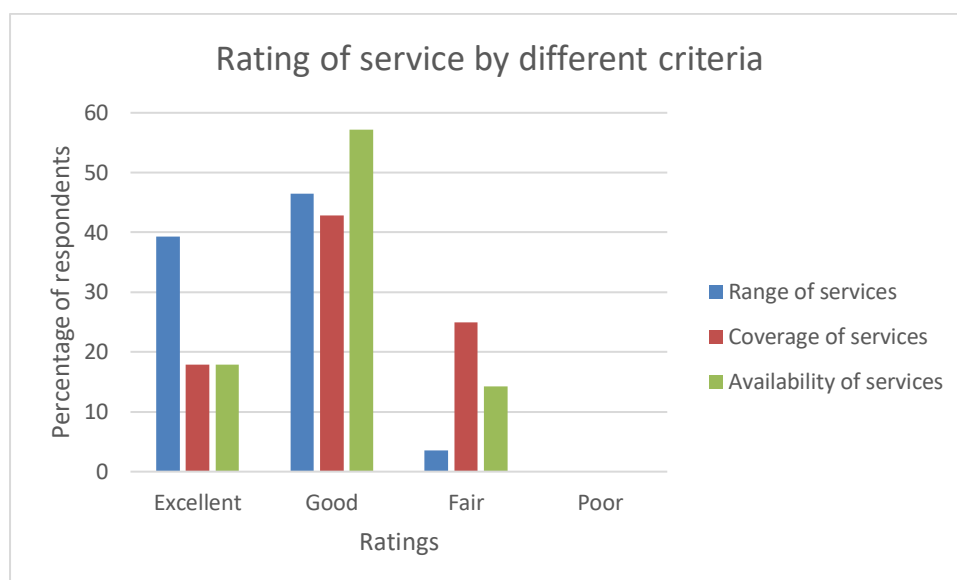
It will be noted that most organisations work in the city and county with no organisation working in all of Waterford county only. Under the ‘Other’ heading a variety of responses were received many of which indicated specific areas of coverage and a number which mentioned a regional coverage.

Organisations were then asked to indicate those with whom they worked collaboratively. The response to this question indicated that a large volume of collaborative activity takes place in one way or another. Some organisations mentioned just one key collaborator, but others mentioned multiple partners in the delivery of service. This does raise the issue of the mechanisms for collaboration which are in place and the resources which are made available to deliver such collaboration. Such activity does not come free, and its effectiveness may be reduced if the collaboration activity itself is not resourced.

Organisations were also asked to indicate if there were others with which they would like to collaborate in the future. A small number only indicated positive intentions in this regard which suggest that those organisations which are collaborating feel that either their collaboration is satisfactory or that they do not have the resources to pursue additional collaborations.

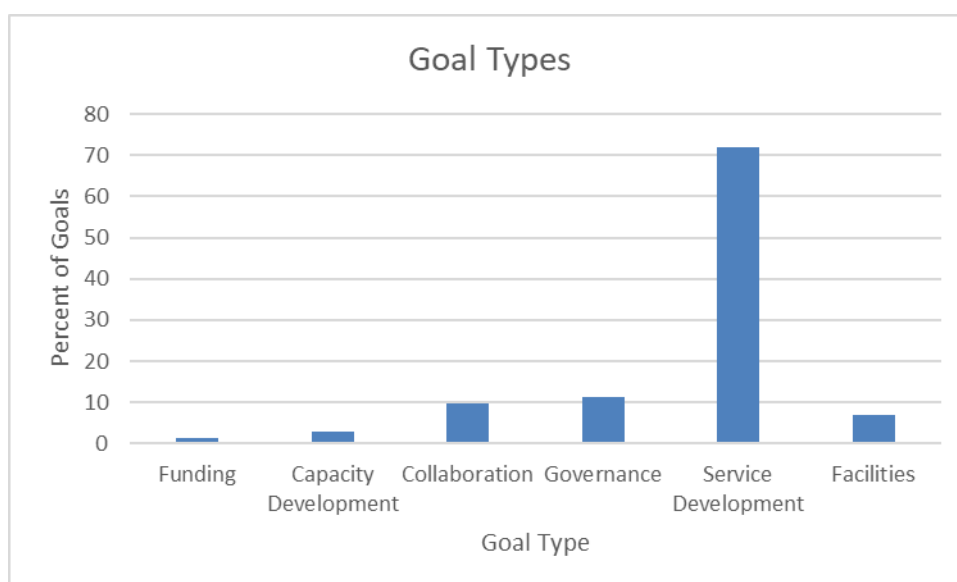
Self-evaluation of services

Respondents were then asked to rate their services under a variety of headings, with the following results.



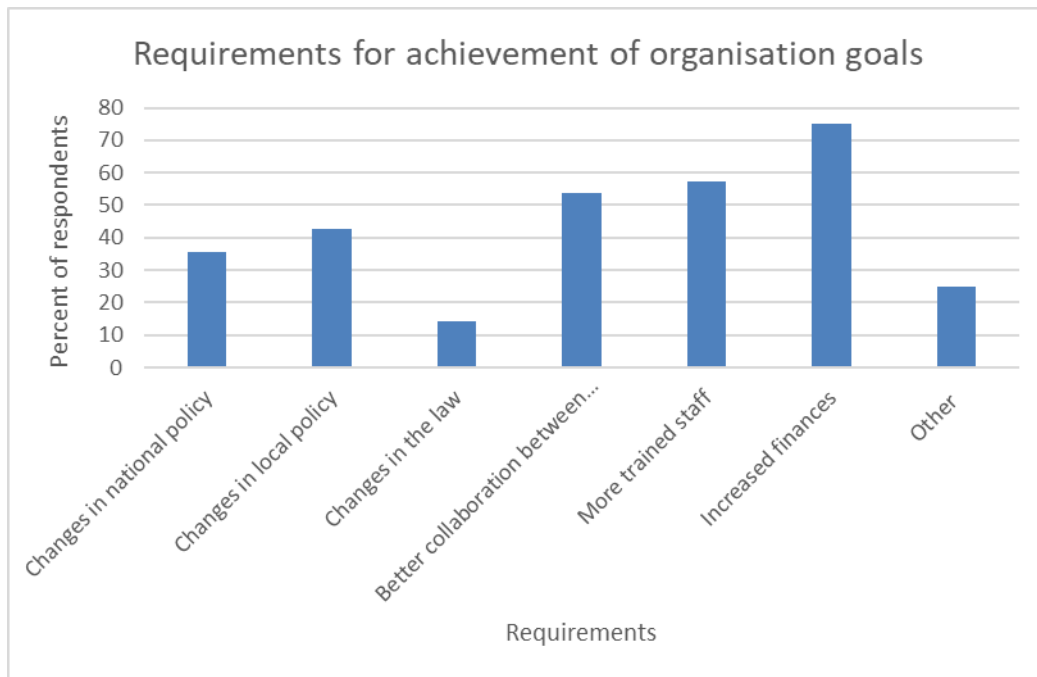
While it is a self-evaluation, a certain degree of comfort can be drawn from this diagram. It suggests that, overall, respondents feel that the range of services they provide is at least good, while, predictably, they would like to see more improvement in coverage and availability. It is interesting that no respondent rated any aspect of the service as 'Poor.' All this suggests, therefore, that there is room for improvement but that such improvement would be building on an existing solid base.

Respondents were asked to indicate their goals for the coming five years. As might be expected, a very broad range of response types was received. When these were categorised, it gave rise to the following.



This should be treated with caution, of course, because many of the service and facilities goals had funding implications even if these were not explicitly stated. It is interesting to note, however, that service development was a high priority for virtually all organisations.

Respondents were then asked about what they considered to be needed to enable them to achieve their goals. They responded as follows.



This is interesting in that it shows a broad range of requirements with, not surprisingly, finance and human resources at the top of the list. However, it also shows the importance of policies at both national and local levels which gives support for the carrying out of this review.

It is also notable that, while a large amount of collaboration already takes place, an improvement in this is also seen as an important factor in goal achievement.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the range of policies which primarily governed their work. with many of them mentioned a number of times. The following is the list with some references which are not policies, removed.

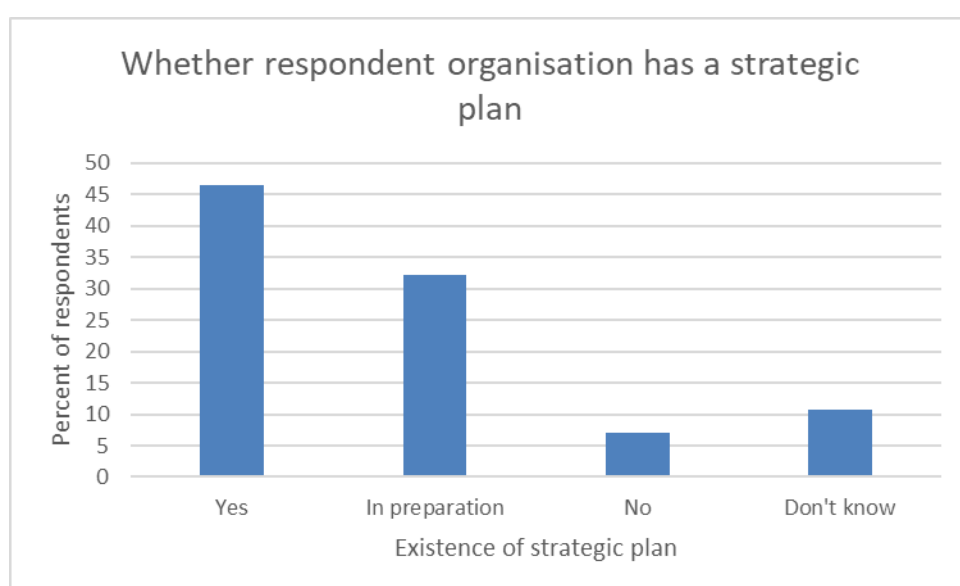
- Access & Inclusion Model (AIM)
- Aistear & Síolta (Early Learning & Quality Frameworks)
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures Children First Act
- Digital inclusion in Ireland by the NESC
- First Five - the Whole of Government Strategy for Babies & Young Children
- Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy
Transforming Learning 2020
- LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy
- Lundy's Model of Youth Participation
- National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR)
- National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals
- National Digital Strategy
- National Drugs Strategy

Future FET:

- National Social Enterprise Strategy
- National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making
- National Traveller Health Action Plan
- National Traveller Strategy Department of Education
- National Youth Strategy
- Pathways to Work
- Progressing Disability Services - Disability Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work
- Sharing the Vision - Mental Health
- The National Positive Ageing Strategy
- The National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
- The National Youth Strategy
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice of the Waterford Hungarian Cultural Organisation
- White Paper on ending Direct Provision
- Waterford Migrant Integration Strategy
- Youth Justice Strategy

This is certainly only a sample of the policies which are involved in social inclusion, and it demonstrates the complexity of the field and the challenges in deriving specific policies for specific social inclusion areas. It highlights the need for agreed approaches and processes which can be applied in all contexts in order to ensure a common approach and a better guarantee that the issue of social inclusion will be considered across as wide a range of public and community actions as possible.

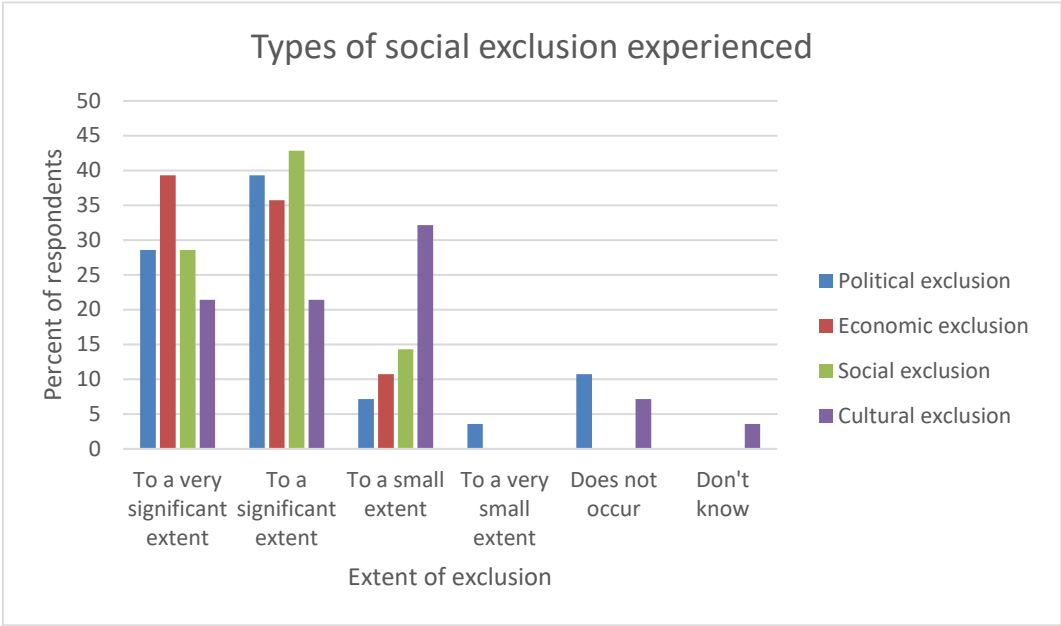
Respondents were also asked to indicate if their organisation had a strategy in place. The following was the response.



It is interesting to note that less than 50% had a strategic plan in place but comforting that most of the remainder were in the process of completing such a plan. It would certainly be desirable that all organisations had such a plan and that it was used as the basis for it actions and activities over the relevant period of time.

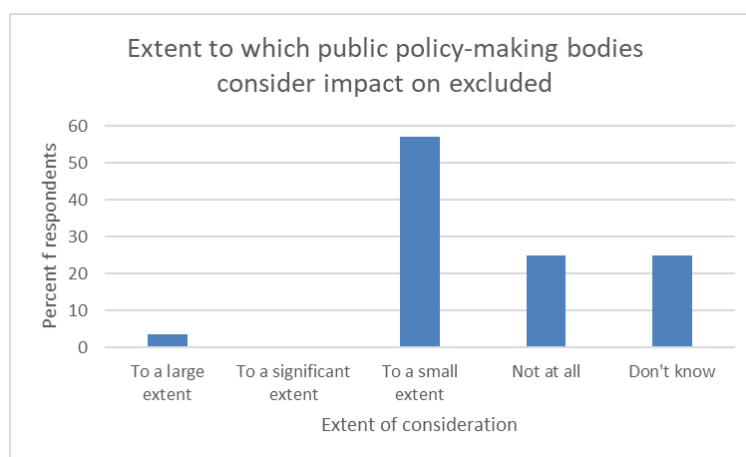
Extent of exclusion

Respondents were asked to indicate the nature and extent of exclusion which was experienced by those for whom the provide support with the following response. The types of exclusion identified were political, economic, social and cultural and respondents were asked to give a separate response in respect of each category.



As might be expected the level of exclusion under all categories was high, although it is interesting to note that cultural exclusion was significantly the least mentioned by respondents. It does, however, point to the broad nature of exclusion as identified by the respondents and the need to consider this in any policy approach which is being developed.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought the implications for those for whom they work were considered by policymakers, other than when the policy being considered expressly addressed that target group. The response was as follows.

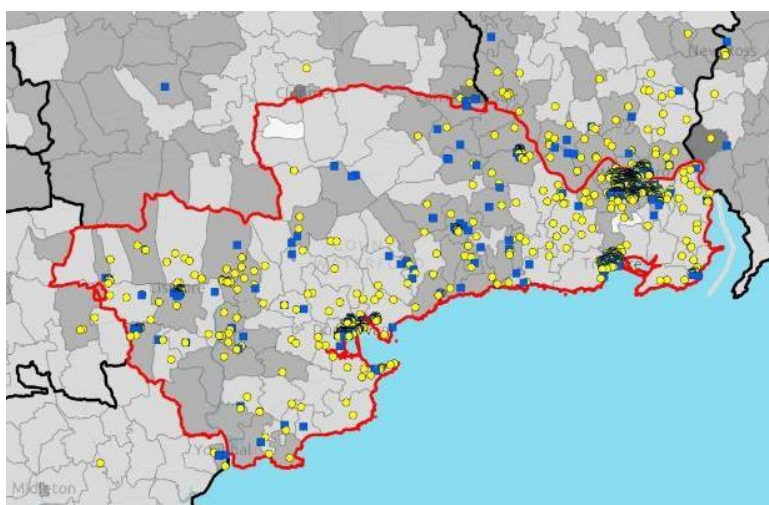


Again, as might be expected, these respondents do not believe that policymakers take the needs of the excluded into account when general policies are being developed. This again points to the need for the approach which is being taken by the LCDC in preparing this report and in developing a model which will seek to mitigate the negative outcomes likely to arise from this situation. It is interesting to note also that 25% of respondents did not know the extent to which such impacts are considered which may reflect something of the processes used in policy development.

SICAP in Waterford

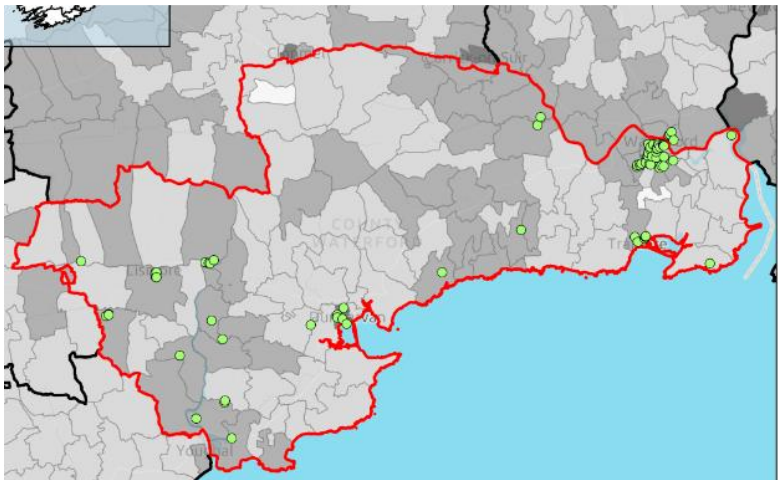
The SICAP Programme delivered by Waterford Area Partnership is the principal broadly based social inclusion programme in the county. A brief review of this programmes is considered appropriate in order to demonstrate the range of target groups which it addresses and the breadth of its geographic coverage.

Pobal's report on the outcomes of SICAP in Waterford contains a significant amount of data, some only of which is reflected here. SICAP interventions take place with both individuals and Local Community groups (LCGs). Two maps which indicate the distribution of these interventions are included in the report.



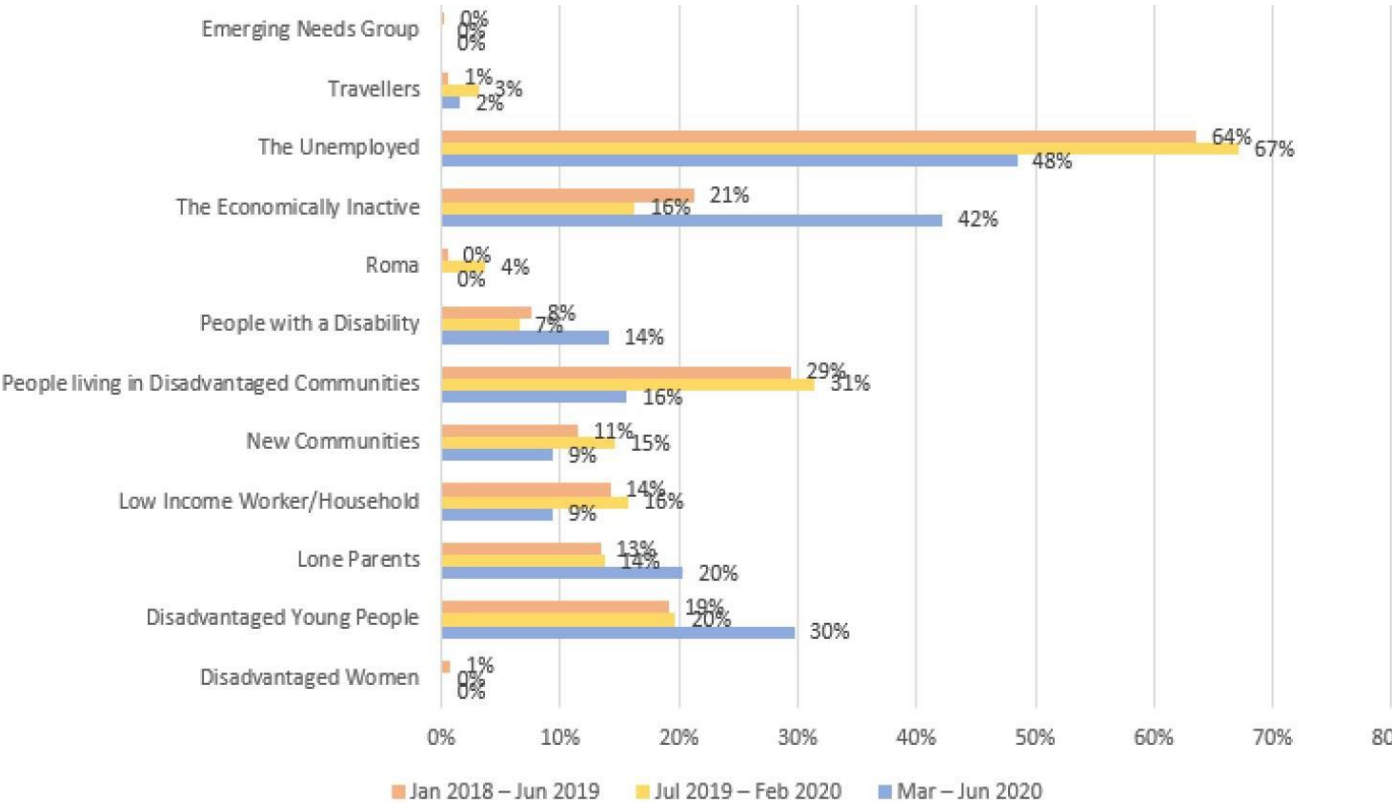
This map shows the distribution of individual beneficiaries between January 2018 and June 2020. The

blue squares indicate those with transport barriers. It will be noted from this that while there were parts of the county which were less well represented than others, there was, generally a wide geographic distribution of beneficiaries across the county.



This map shows the distribution of Local Community Group beneficiaries which suggests that there is a heavy concentration of these groups in the settlements of the county, with a particular concentration in the city and larger settlements. This is, no doubt, partly accounted for by the distribution of such groups throughout the county but it may be something to reflect on with regard to future iterations of the programme.

Another diagram gives an overview of the individuals registered with SICAP by target group. An individual may be a member of more than one such group.



With regard to the impact of the interventions, this is reported in respect of a smaller number of categories which are considered to have suffered particularly from the COVID restrictions. The outcomes are limited to a number of, primarily economic categories, and are summarised as follows.

	Participated on a course (%)	Progressed into employment (%)	Progressed into self-employment (%)	Referred to other services (%)
Unemployed	No data	No data	No data	No data
Traveller	14	0	0	0
Roma	15	0	0	0
Homeless	60	2	0	0
Asylum Seekers and Refugees	58	2	0	2
People Over 65	65	NA	NA	0

From this, admittedly limited data and across a limited range of target groups and at a challenging time for society at large, it can be seen that significant work remains to be done to address the needs of the marginalised and socially excluded and that the co-operation of all is needed in this endeavour.

2018 Report

In a Pobal report in 2018 it was stated that the level of disadvantage in the following categories was above the national average, with Waterford's place in the national tables being listed in order.

- Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- One Parent Family: Census 2016
- Asylum Seekers & Irish Refugee Protection Programme:
- Households Renting from a Local Authority & Voluntary Housing Body
- Homeless Persons
- Tenancies in receipt of Rent Allowance (HAP & RAS
- Households with no Internet Access
- People Living in Disadvantaged Communities
- Socio-Economic Group G – Unskilled
- Economically Inactive
- Persons with Lower Secondary Education as Highest Education Level Completed
- Unemployed: Census 2016
- People with a Disability
- Estimates of Roma
- 65 years and over and Living Alone
- Leaving Certificate Retention Rate
- NEETs

While it is acknowledged that these placings may change over time, nevertheless it may provide some guidance as to priority areas for attention when issues and categories of social exclusion are being considered and prioritised in the future.

LEADER

One of the areas which this review was asked to consider was the LEADER programme and its social inclusion potential. In considering the role of this programme in the area of social inclusion, it must be borne in mind that the LEADER programme is not one which provides ongoing support to any business, community, group or organisation.

- It is essentially a project-based programme, and, while it should, in principle, be willing to accept a level of risk which those providing support to a venture on a commercial basis would not, it is, nevertheless, important that a pathway to success and sustainability can at least be envisaged in the application for project funding. A project which has no chance of success or one where the possibility of such success cannot be demonstrated in the application for support, is not a project appropriate for funding.
- Secondly, the LEADER programme operates within a framework which is set down at European and national level and must abide by strict operational rules which limit the discretion of the Local Action Group to apply its own rules.
- Finally, the LEADER programme depends on projects being proposed by businesses, organisations or communities which it can fund. While its Development Officers do seek to stimulate such projects and provide well-received support to those who are seeking to bring an idea to fruition, their capacity and available time to engage in such activity has been limited in the recent iterations of the programme.

Despite these limitations, however, the LEADER programme does, indeed have a social inclusion focus with regard to some of its themes and sub-themes. One theme of LEADER is called Social Inclusion and two sub-themes which operate under that theme are Basic Services Targeted at Hard- to-Reach Communities and Rural Youth.

Notwithstanding these designations, the restrictions under which the LEADER programme and those who deliver it have to work, do not provide the level of opportunity for actions directly targeted only at those who may be considered to be socially excluded. Experience from evaluations of LEADER programme implementation across the country is that socially excluded groups and communities have limitations on the capacities, skills, organisation and resources which are needed to enable them to make successful application for funding for projects which they will also be in a position to manage to a successful and sustainable future. What often tends to happen, therefore, is that the social inclusion element of the projects funded under LEADER are ancillary elements of projects which serve the community at large. This does not mean that benefit does not accrue to the socially excluded but that it is not as focused as the title of the theme and sub-themes might suggest.

This overall situation does not, of course, mean that no such targeted projects take place. These, however, tend to be in the mentoring/capacity building area and, while very important, the scale of projects which the LEADER programme can support in this area is limited when its overall intent is taken into account.

It has also emerged from evaluations of the LEADER programme, that, what would benefit its social inclusion function significantly, would be the implementation of capacity-building, mentoring and other support activities amongst excluded groups and communities under other programmes, particularly SICAP, so that they would have the capacity to develop and successfully apply for funding under the LEADER programme. At present an interim LEADER programme is being implemented. The next full programme, like all publicly funded programmes, is likely to have a significant climate action focus. In the context of that focus it is important that marginalised and excluded groups are supported and mentored to be able to engage with the

considerations which the new programme will incorporate and to identify projects and activities which will help to address any issues of social exclusion which might arise from such a focus.

The drawing up of a collaborative protocol between organisations which would facilitate such an outcome is, therefore, recommended.

4. Proposed model of social inclusion

As the discussion above has suggested, the question of social inclusion is complex conceptually and theoretically, in terms of the processes which produce it and the impacts it has on individual lives. While poverty, however defined and financial limitations are clearly major factors, they do not tell the whole story. There are forms of exclusion which arise from characteristics other than poverty. In addition, poverty can be both a cause and a result of exclusion and, while directly tackling poverty is, of course, a high priority, tackling the factors which give rise to poverty is also crucial.

It is proposed, therefore, that a multi-factor model of social inclusion be adopted by Waterford LCDC. The model proposed does not claim any theoretical perfection nor does it purport to consider all aspects of inclusion or exclusion or all those who are in danger of experiencing exclusion. While based on a theoretical foundation it is pragmatic in its approach. It borrows concept from the literature on social inclusion but also from the mechanisms of other processes such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Regulatory Impact Assessment. It should be noted that this model is not one which seeks to provide an approach to the measurement of social exclusion with the many difficulties which that involves but to provide the basis for a process which can incorporate social inclusion thinking into a broad range of service providers at local level in Waterford.

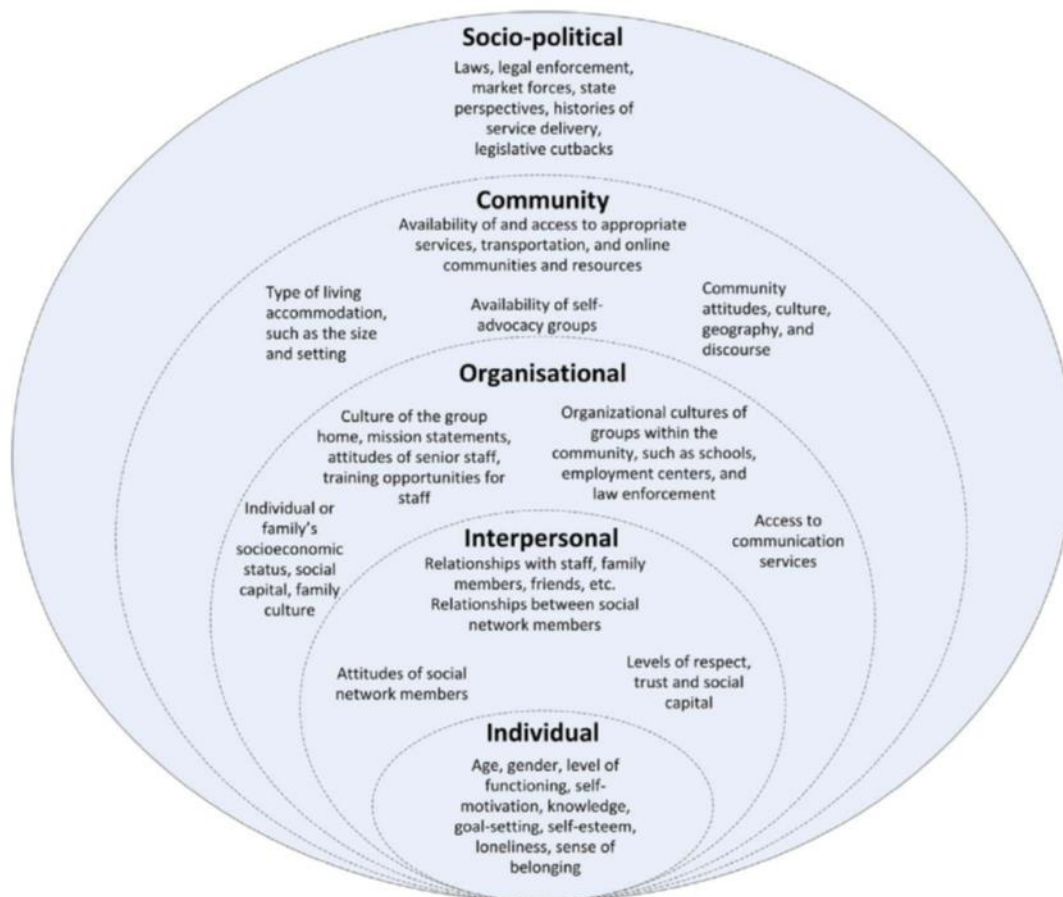
A theoretical base

Reviewing the question of social inclusion for people with disabilities, Simpican et al proposed the following model. It will be noted that this is a far more complex framework than that normally included within the policy approaches discussed earlier. It does, however, highlight the many factors which are involved in the personal experience of social exclusion and the many agents who are involved in the way these factors are experienced.

While this is a model developed within the context of the inclusion of those with a disability, it has a wide applicability, and can be used as a general model for the purposes of this report.

It will be noted that not all of the elements included in the model are amenable to intervention by external agencies as some are too closely bound up with personal and inter-personal matters which will vary from individual to individual depending on their personal psychological profile. It is clear however, that a wide range of factors which are subject to intervention can be identified.

The multi-faceted nature of the issue will also be noted, incorporating as it does socio-political, community, organisational, interpersonal and personal factors. It is proposed that interventions can be considered at each of these levels, with an intervention being appropriate to the level at which it is targeted.



Adapting the framework suggested by Simplican et al, using the relevant factors they suggest and adding to them since they themselves acknowledge that the factors are indicative rather than exhaustive, would produce the following framework.

Factors at the level of the individual would include -

- a person's level of functioning with regard to key factors such as physical and mental capacity, key social skills including digital and literacy skills
- learning capacity
- self-motivation
- confidence
- knowledge of the persons area of residence and of the available activities within it
- the capacity for goal setting

Factors at the inter-personal level include -

- relationships with staff of various relevant organisations
- staff attitudes in those organisations
- family attitudes and capacity to provide support to the individual
- the relationship between families and staff of the various relevant organisations
- relationships with others in their own in-group

Organizational factors include

- family culture
- the culture of organisations which provided targeted or general services to the individual or group
- mission statements of those organisations
- attitudes of managers within those organisations
- training opportunities for staff within those organisations particularly with regard to diversity and inclusion
- access to communication services
- cultures within community organisations, such as churches, schools, employment centres and law enforcement
- whether an attitude prevails within public bodies and agencies of the importance of vindicating the rights of the citizen or of applying regulations

Community factors include

- type of living accommodation, such as size and setting
- availability of and access to appropriate services and transportation, online communities and resources, local community organisations
- community attitudes, culture, geography, and discourse
- training in diversity and inclusion in the community
- employer attitudes within the community
- access to the community discourse through which decisions about various projects and processes are made
- Socio-political factors include
- laws and legal enforcement
- market forces
- state perspectives and histories around service delivery
- state-supported equal access to the wide range of employment, social welfare, education, health, finance and other services seen as fundamental to a socially inclusive society
- availability of state services to address specific issues leading to exclusion

Additionally, factors at each level interact, further producing enabling or disabling conditions. For example, individual and interpersonal levels interact, as staff and/or family members may help facilitate or constrain a person's knowledge, self-motivation, and use of goal setting. Community level conditions – such as the culture of group homes and attitudes of managers – affect staff attitudes, the relationships that staff develop with clients and relationships between families and service providers.

Responses to social exclusion

This five-level framework of analysis can also direct us to the kinds of interventions which may be required to address issues of social inclusion. Simpican et al state that –

The conceptual ambiguity of social inclusion invites both narrow and vast definitions of the concept. Narrow definitions undercut the social and political purposes of social inclusion, whereas vast definitions threaten to become too demanding, thus inviting some stakeholders to conclude that social inclusion may be for some people, but not all.

By considering the interventions at a variety of levels, however, it is possible to consider the broad range of factors which impact on social exclusion as a lived experience and start on the road of helping to address it.

The five levels of this model and some appropriate interventions may be outlined as follows –

Level	Interventions
Personal	These interventions are primarily aimed at enhancing the capacity of the individual who is a member of an excluded group in society. These interventions will increase their ability to engage with those whose support they need, will enhance their motivation and goal-focused approach, will seek to mitigate any personal factors which are compounding the exclusion and, where necessary, will provide them with the advocacy and personal support which they need in order to have their societal rights vindicated
Inter-personal	Depending on the nature of the exclusion, this could include family supports and training for assisting individuals who are excluded, diversity and inclusion training for the staff of various agencies and, indeed, for other private-sector organisations, training for the excluded in how to engage with the various service organisations in a positive and productive way, promotion of inclusivity and anti-discrimination amongst the population at large, approaches such as restorative justice and opportunities for groups and individuals who usually have no opportunity to engage to do so.
Organisational	This can include organisational level training and development, bringing issues such as social inclusion and diversity into the consciousness of organisations during strategic and operational planning processes, consciously developing a culture of accommodation and inclusiveness within organisations, developing a citizen-focused rather than regulatory approach within organisations, developing a consciousness of the impacts of policies, procedures, and processes on marginalised groups and seeking to mitigate those impacts.
Community	This can include actions which facilitate the excluded individuals and groups in engaging with communities and actions which make communities more responsive to the needs and situation of excluded groups. The word community in this sense can include communities of place, communities of interest and virtual communities. The activities can include opportunities for different parts of each of those types of community to come together, to exchange views and culture and to develop mutual respect. It can also involve community training in diversity and inclusion and actions which typically fall under the remit of SICAP. It can include the promotion and facilitation of pro-active actions by community organisations to seek to attract and retain members who are part of groups which are often socially excluded. It also includes a focus on including excluded groups in the decision-making processes which affect their communities and, in particular, taking steps to include the views of the non-organised, those who have no voice to represent them and who are unable or unwilling to represent themselves.

Socio/political	This heading includes all the large-scale actions which are normally considered to be the core of social inclusion. Therefore, access to employment, programmes for the reduction of poverty amongst particular groups, anti-discrimination laws and regulations, provision of access to a range of social and public services, mechanisms for removing the barriers which exist to accessing those services, providing socially and culturally appropriate services and so on. It will also be noted that this area can also include intervention in the marketplace to encourage inclusive behaviour on the part of private sector actors either through the use of regulation or encouragement.
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The presentation of this model seeks to scope out a broad understanding of the nature of social exclusion and social inclusion and the various components of them which contribute to social exclusion as experienced by the individual. At the same time it seeks to reflect the group-related elements of social exclusion and to seek to address those as well.

The actions outlined above do not purport to be comprehensive in any sense. The purpose of the descriptor of each element of social inclusion is to highlight the range of potential actions which might be taken to address the issue in the case of different groups and individuals. Each individual who is experiencing social inclusion may require a different set of interventions, but the majority of such interventions will be provided in respect of the groups of which he or she is a member though a small number may be provided on a personalised individual basis also.

Approaches to dealing with social exclusion

As noted earlier in this document, social exclusion can be addressed through a number of different types of intervention. One way of categorising these is as follows -

- Initiatives targeted at groups
- Initiatives targeted at issues
- Inclusion of considerations of social inclusion in initiatives where social inclusion is not the principal objective
- Consideration of impact on social exclusion of initiatives where social inclusion is not a significant objective

Initiatives targeted at groups

Many of the initiatives which seek to address social exclusion are targeted at specific groups that are seen as experiencing exclusion in a variety of ways. These groups are well known and formed one of the focuses of the survey referred to above. Amongst the target groups often referred to are –

- The homeless
- Those with a disability
- Lone parents
- The Traveller community
- Non-Irish nationals
- Women
- Children
- Young people
- Ethnic minorities
- Religious minorities

- Older people
- The long-term unemployed
- Ex-prisoners
- Those recovering from addiction
- Roma
- LGBTI

Of course not all individuals in many of these groups are excluded. However, many programmes have been developed to ensure their access to supports of various kinds. In the context of social inclusion in Waterford, the most important consideration with regard to these programmes is that some organisation is responsible for making sure that Waterford receives its fair share of national resources with regard to the various support programmes involved.

Another important element of such programmes is the capacity of those at whom they are targeted at to access them and the capacity of the organisations which are responsible for their implementation to engage appropriately with the various groups involved. This is addressed in the personal, interpersonal and organisational parts of the model outlined above and might be a key focus for the LCDC and the LECP over the coming period of time. Those who experience multi-exclusion e.g. a migrant with physical disability will experience further challenges both culturally and in accessing necessary supports

Initiatives targeted at issues

These are similar to the issues targeted at groups but differ in that they may address those who are in many different target groups or, indeed, none. Some of the issues which have been identified are as follows –

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Illness
- Mental illness
- Isolation
- Inadequate accommodation
- Racism
- Discrimination
- Low literacy levels
- Low digital literacy
- Fuel poverty
- Lack of agency
- Childcare

Many of these issues, though not all, also have a variety of programmes which seek to address them. As with the target groups, it is again important that Waterford ensures that all opportunities for funding to address issues of exclusion are taken on by some organisations (as identified within the LECP?) and, again, that any barriers to accessing the supports which are available and considered and addressed to the greatest extent possible.

Consideration of the potential impact on social exclusion of initiatives where social inclusion is not a significant objective

This is an important element in the overall model of social exclusion which is being proposed for adoption by the LCDC. Most initiatives of the state and civil society and, indeed the private sector, do not have social inclusion as a primary objective. However, many such initiatives can have significant consequences for a target group or for one or more social inclusion issues. Such an impact can occur in two ways. On the one hand an initiative has the potential to make it even harder for one or more excluded groups to access supports and other services due to changes in the way the service is being delivered or the conditions which are attached to such delivery. A second type of impact can occur when a particular initiative does not enable easy participation by excluded groups, so that their concerns are ignored, another area from which they are excluded emerges and the extent of their exclusion is deepened.

One of the ways of addressing this issue is to incorporate a process in all policy, programme and project development, which considers the impact which such development might have on excluded groups or issues, to amend the proposal to mitigate such impacts or, in cases where a severe impact can be identified, to abandon or radically change the proposal. An approach as to how this might be done is considered below.

Incorporation of social inclusion as a consideration in initiatives with principal objectives other than social inclusion.

As noted in the previous section, most initiatives which are taken at local level do not have social inclusion as their principal purpose even if the manner of their implementation does include social inclusion considerations. However, one way in which social inclusion can be enhanced is by seeking to incorporate a social inclusion element into a broader range of activities than happens at present. Funding support is one area in which this form of input might be increased. It is acknowledged that a number of funds do this already with the Sports Capital Fund, for example, asking applicants to consider social inclusion within their proposals and a number of other funds do the same. If this model were extended to as many funding supports as possible and if it became a default expectation of all funds, it would be likely to have a significant impact, particularly on the organisational and community elements of the model as set out above.

Funding is not the only area where social inclusion considerations can be incorporated. Social realm developments have a lot of potential in this regard and, indeed, some such considerations are often included. Even for those interventions where some social inclusion considerations are currently included, it would be possible to seek to broaden the range of such considerations and the ways in which they are brought on board.

The overall proposal in this regard is that those pursuing any programme or project would, as a matter of course, consider ways in which some social inclusion elements might be incorporated. This approach is different from that in the previous section in that it seeks to see and avail of opportunity, whereas that in the previous section seeks to identify and mitigate negative impact.

An overall model

By combining these various considerations, therefore, an overall model of intervention can be developed, which can be considered as being represented by the following diagram.

	Targeted at Groups	Targeted at Issues	Opportunities within non-targeted initiatives	Mitigation of impacts of non-targeted Initiatives
Personal				
Interpersonal				
Organisational				
Community				
Socio-political				

This shows the interrelationship between each of the four types of action which can impact on one or more of the five categories where exclusion can be both experienced and addressed. Further work needs to be done on the identification of specific actions in each cell, but it is suggested that each agency delivering a service in the county, and which has some degree of autonomy as to how the service is delivered, would spend some time and resources considering what actions they could take within their own area of operation and in the context of the four different types of action to address issues within each of the five factor categories.

5. Elements of a social inclusion assessment approach

The discussion above sets out the basis of and the argument for a social inclusion assessment process to be applied to all policies, programmes and projects being undertaken by LCDC-engaged bodies. The principal purpose of a process of this nature is to consciously include the consideration of the implications and potential for assisting those in danger of exclusion.

Key objectives of service delivery

This would ask that all organisations would go beyond the minimum that is asked of them with regard to the way in which they deliver their service and consider their potential with regard to social inclusion. The overall objectives of the social inclusion elements of programme delivery would be-

- To maximise access
- To minimise barriers
- To facilitate engagement
- To promote respect
- To develop capacity

In developing the approach to social inclusion assessment, regard was had to the following criteria –

- The approach must be understandable
- It must not be too complex or time-consuming
- It must facilitate the making of well-based judgement
- It must facilitate a focus on the main issues being addressed by the LCDC, particularly within the context of the LECP.
- It could be carried out as a collaborative process where members of the LCDC and others with an understanding of a particular area of exclusion could provide valuable insights where necessary
- It must be more than a tick-box exercise

Regard was also had to the limited availability of clear evidence as to the precise impact that can be expected of particular interventions. Informed assessment and judgement are the best that can be expected from a process of this nature without making it so unwieldy as to cease to be useful.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the parameters of some interventions are set down by others and there is little flexibility for their amendment or remodelling at local level. If potential impacts are identified as being associated with these interventions, then all that may be possible is for mitigations to be introduced through other programmes or processes.

In considering the approach to adopt, the following have also been taken into consideration.

- The five factors – personal, interpersonal, organisational, community and socio-political – referred to above
- The four types of intervention where impacts can be considered
- The five objectives - to maximise access, to minimise barriers, to facilitate engagement, to promote respect, to develop capacity – referred to above
- The priority target groups and target issues which are the focus of social inclusion in Waterford City and County.

It is proposed that when a new project, policy or programme is being considered, the potential impacts and the potential opportunities are considered under each of the five factor headings and in

the context of the five objectives. In considering the impacts and opportunities, these might be categorised as follows –

- No impact/potential
- Little impact/potential
- Significant impact/potential
- Major impact/potential

In the cases where no or little impact or potential is identified, the programme, project or policy can continue without further consideration.

Where significant impact or potential are identified, the policy, programme or project should be amended to mitigate or eliminate such impacts and to allow such opportunities to be availed of. It would be a matter for the body concerned to decide as to the level of consultation with others which would be required in these cases.

Where major impact or potential is identified, the policy, programme or project should also be considered for amendment as in the previous case. However, in this case, where mitigation cannot be identified which would reduce the impact to an acceptable level, consideration would be expected to be given to radically amending the proposal or to its not being proceeded with. At a minimum, a detailed cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to indicate why the proposal is justified notwithstanding the impacts. In cases such as this, it would be expected that the body concerned would consult with others with a particular insight into the group or issue involved.

This might apply to each of the intervention types as follows.

Initiatives targeted at groups and Initiatives targeted at issues

Because both of these intervention types are focused on social inclusion, it is expected that the approach will be slightly different than in the other cases. The assessment in these cases will relate to the following –

- Unintended consequences for groups or issues which are not the target of the intervention
- Potential to benefit other social inclusion groups or issues from an amendment to the intervention
- How the benefit from the intervention can be maximised for the group or issue involved and, in particular, how any barriers to access can be overcome.

Inclusion of considerations of social inclusion in initiatives with other purposes

This refers to the consideration of how interventions with other purposes might also include an element which helps with issues of social inclusion. In this case, positive opportunities across the five factors and in the context of the five objectives are being considered and, where possible, possibilities for the incorporation of a social inclusion element or elements should lead to a modification of the proposal.

Consideration of impact on social exclusion of initiatives with other purposes

This refers to the more negative side of the evaluation process and is carried out in respect of those proposals which have the potential to have negative impacts on those in danger of social exclusion. Such impacts may include new forms of exclusion or an exacerbation of existing forms of exclusion. An example of the latter might be where a service which was delivered personally is now going to be delivered through virtual means. This could both increase the exclusion of some groups and exclude groups who were not previously excluded. In such a case mechanisms for mitigating the impact should

be identified and included in the proposal and, where such mitigation is not possible, a detailed cost-benefit should be carried out to justify the proposal notwithstanding its impact.

How a process would work

In developing a process for considering the impact and potential of an action by a relevant body, the following will be required –

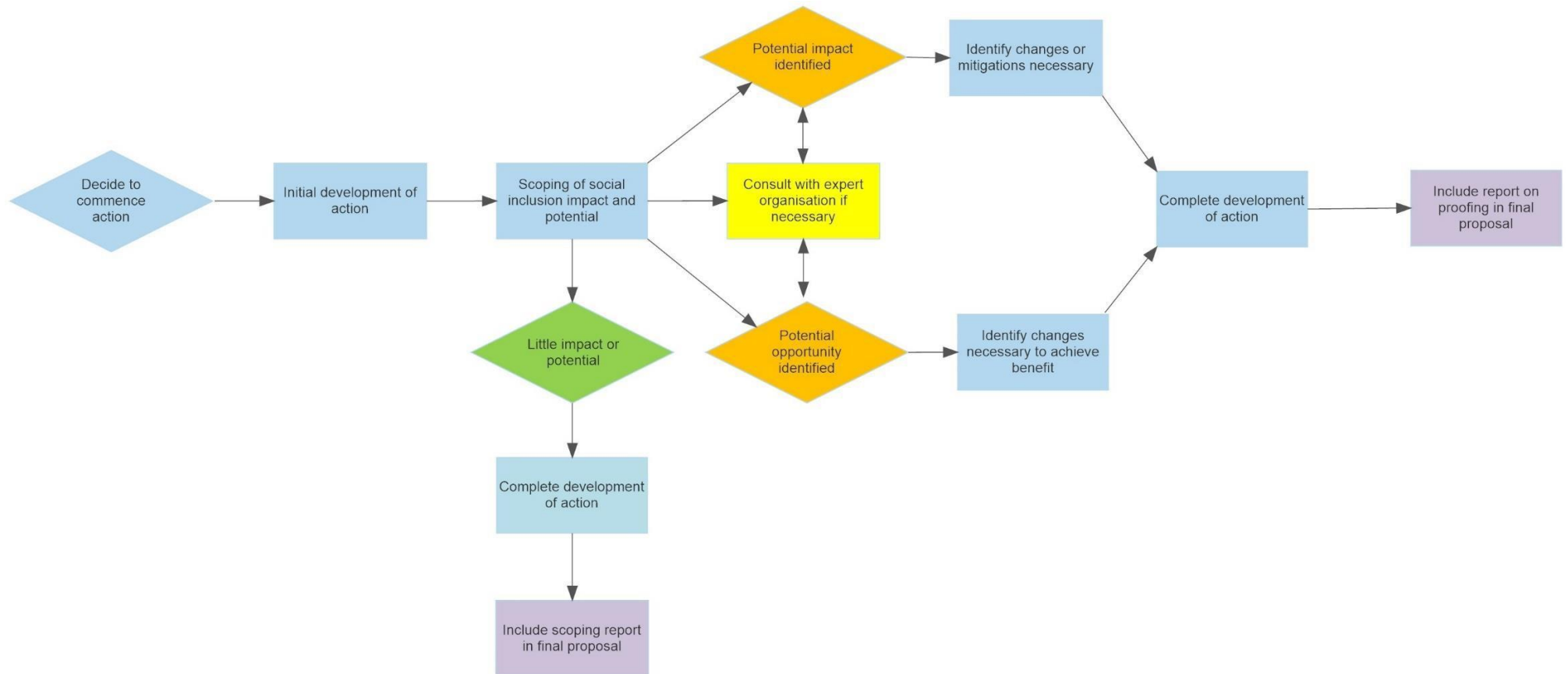
1. Agreement on the nature of the actions to be considered. This will take some time to finalise, but it is proposed that the following factors be taken into account –
 - a. The scale of the action in terms of the resources being devoted to it
 - b. The number of groups or issues on which it may impact with the greater the number leading to a greater likelihood that it should be included
 - c. The number of instances in which it is likely to have an impact, Therefore, a specific action with regard to a specific location may be less worthy of extensive consideration than an action such as a funding programme which will have many instances in which it will be applied
 - d. The geographic spread of the action with the wider the spread leading to a greater likelihood that it should be included
2. Agreement as to the stage in the process when this evaluation should take place. It should not be so late in the process that those involved are committed to a particular course of action and will be reluctant to change; nor should it be so early in the process that the broad outline of the action is not discernible.
3. Agreement on the priority issues and groups to be included. This recognises the limitations of resources which exist within relevant organisations and the fact that it is better to have some issues and groups considered well than all potential issues and groups not considered at all. Some suggested groups and issues are set out in the table below
4. Agreement on the factors which will be considered. Some suggestions are set out in the table below and under the headings of access, participation and respect
5. Agreement on the process to be used. The stages are set out in the diagram below. These remain to be developed further but include the following –
 - a. An initial scoping to determine if the action is likely or not to have a social inclusion relevance
 - b. An evaluation of the potential negative impact if the scoping suggests that such might exist
 - c. An evaluation of the potential for positive impact if the scoping suggests that such might exist
 - d. Incorporation of amendments or mitigations into the design of the action where necessary In all cases the preparation of a report setting out the rationale for the decision
6. Provision of training to relevant staff in a number of areas.
7. Training in diversity and inclusion awareness so that unconscious as well as conscious biases and responses can be addressed
8. Training in the use of this model so that there is a common understanding of its purpose,

procedures and parameters for judgement

Social Exclusion Assessment Matrix

	Unemployed	Disability	Older	Younger	Single Parent Families	Non-Irish Nationals	Disabled	Travellers	Low Literacy	Children	LGBTI+	Recovering from substance abuse
Access												
Employment												
Welfare												
Education												
Health Services												
Accommodation												
Public realm												
Recreation/Leisure												
Local government												
Funding opportunities												
Information												
Participation												
Organisations												
Community												
Political system												
Acceptance												
Respect												
Assistance												
Tolerance												
Safety												

Social Inclusion Assessment Process



6. Social Inclusion and the LECP

There are four key elements to any process such as the LECP –

- Consultation
- Plan preparation and adoption
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation

It is recommended that the issue of social inclusion be included as a conscious element of each part of the process.

The LECP also includes two key focus areas –

- Community development
- Economic development

It is also recommended that social inclusion be given specific consideration within both parts of the plan. As will be noted from the discussion above, economic factors such as income and employment are key components of the circumstances which can give rise to social exclusion.

Consultation

In designing the consultation process consideration should be given to mechanisms through which the voices of those in socially excluded categories or who face issues which can give rise to social exclusion can be heard. In many cases such as this, those who work and advocate for such groups are the principal sources of views. However, this runs the risk of excluding those who have no advocate to speak on their behalf and of not fully representing the views of those in danger of exclusion since the experience and views of those directly at risk are always the most authentic. In developing the consultation process, therefore, consideration should be given as to how these difficulties can be overcome so that the voices of those in danger of exclusion are heard as well as those of those who support them and advocate on their behalf.

Consideration should be given as to how social inclusion considerations will be incorporated into the consultations relating to the economic part of the plan as well as the community development element to which social inclusion is often confined.

Some steps which might be considered in this regard include –

1. Identify those categories of social inclusion which should be specifically targeted
2. Engage by specific invitation with the organisations which advocate for or provide services to people in those categories
3. Use those organisations as gatekeepers to directly access individuals, households and groups who are in those categories
4. Consider the barriers to engagement which may exist in terms of means of engagement, locations, times and contexts and specifically seeking to overcome those barriers
5. Tailor the consultation to address the specific situation of those individuals, households and groups who are in danger of that form of exclusion
6. Consult on a broad range of issues where systemic exclusion may exist (e.g. employment) as well as on any direct or deliberate discrimination which may be experienced
7. Put in place mechanisms to ensure that what is being communicated is understood and that

significant misunderstandings do not arise.

8. Involve marginalised groups and those in danger of exclusion in both the initial consultation phase and the final phase of consultation on the Draft Plan.
9. Ensure that social inclusion is specifically referred to in the report on consultation which is required as part of the process

In carrying out a consultation process of this nature it is also critical that the boundaries of the consultation are clear and that the limitations of what is possible are outlined. A consultation process which implies that all things are possible when they are not can be as damaging as there being no consultation process at all.

It is also important that those who are consulted are communicated with at the end of the process and informed of the extent to which the outcome of the consultation with them is reflected in the final plan. Ideally, where suggestions or ideas were not incorporated, the reason why that happened should be indicated and any mitigations referred to.

Plan preparation and adoption

It is assumed that sufficient consideration will be given to social inclusion as an issue during plan preparation and adoption. The two key points for consideration during this phase are the following.

Firstly, it is important to ensure that the broad range of social inclusion issues and potential measures (possibly using the five factors outlined above) are considered and that the issue of social inclusion goes beyond the poverty and employment focus which sometimes can predominate. It is also important that newly emerging sources of exclusion – such as fuel poverty and digital exclusion – are fully considered during this phase.

Secondly, following on from the point referred to above, it is important that social inclusion is considered in the economic part of the plan as well as the community development part. The opportunity for this arises specifically as it is a requirement that the interactions between both parts of the plan are considered as part of the process. Social inclusion would be one manifest platform for such consideration.

Some steps which might be taken in this regard are as follows –

1. Agree that a certain percentage of the goals both in the community and economic aspects of the plan will have a social exclusion/inclusion focus
2. Include in the process of plan development a step where consideration is given as to how a social inclusion objective or objectives can be included in respect of those goals which do not have social inclusion as their primary focus. These objectives might particularly consider issues such as barriers to access and participation, mechanisms for motivating those who feel excluded to engage, ensuring that the means of communication of opportunity are appropriate to marginalised and excluded groups and individuals.
3. Consider each of the five levels of social inclusion in the model referred to above – personal, inter-personal, organisational, community and socio-political – and consider ways in which each of these can be addressed throughout the LECP. This is proposed on the basis that the model suggests that to truly address the issue of social exclusion as a felt experience, each of these areas needs to be addressed.
4. Consider whether the issue of stigma is likely to be a barrier with regard to any action with a social inclusion focus which is being considered and ways in which the barriers to access which stigma creates might be addressed.

5. Since climate change is likely to be a significant element of the LECP, examine any climate action proposals from the Just Transition perspective to ensure that climate action does not lead to or exacerbate social exclusion.
6. Specifically seek to identify and address newly emerging categories of social exclusion which are not based on the normal categories of discrimination, but which can create major barriers to engagement in society, nevertheless. Isolation, lack of transport, digital exclusion, low literacy levels and lack of opportunities to influence are amongst the areas which might be considered.
7. When Goals, Objectives and KPIs are being identified, relevant organisations, and not just those in the LCDC, should be asked to indicate the areas of social inclusion where they will intend to participate. This, ideally, should be done at the level of the Objectives and the KPIs rather than the Goals as the latter are too high-level, all-inclusive and in a sense aspirational to allow for specific commitment.
8. Ask each of the participant organisations to consider the extent to which their processes, systems of communication, staff training and development, means and times of access, level of assistance provided amongst other matters, helps or hinders those in danger of exclusion from accessing their services.
9. When KPIs are being developed, make sure that amongst them are indicators which measure the impact of social inclusion actions and not merely their existence. Consider whether tailored KPIs may be necessary to achieve this outcome.
10. At least one person from an organisation with a specific focus on a broad range of social inclusion issues should be included on the Advisory Group for the reparation of the LECP.
11. The social inclusion proofing which is included as a process within the Guidelines should be a substantial and significant process, it should include consideration of the potential for both negative impacts and additional positive impacts and should include recommendations for amendments to the Draft.
12. Proofing should be carried out at both the plan preparation stage and in respect of each implementation plan.

Plan implementation

It now appears that implementation will be carried out through a rolling action plan model although this matter remains to be finalised by the LCDC. The use of the proofing approach outlined below, and collaboration around addressing the often multi-factored aspects of exclusion will be important elements to consider in this context. The following are some steps which could be taken in this regard.

1. Each organisation which has indicated a commitment to contributing to a social inclusion objective or KPI should be asked to include in its annual operational plan some actions which will be directed towards the achievement of those objectives and the improvement in the relevant KPIs.
2. Particular efforts should be made to identify collaborative actions between organisations which are addressing the same objective or KPI. These need not be identified during LCDC meetings but in direct engagement between organisations. This will build on the existing significant level of collaboration which the organisational survey suggests exists at present in Waterford. Organisations would be asked to consider the extent to which collaboration might be possible with regard to any action which they are planning to undertake.

3. Where an action is being considered by an organisation, the social inclusion evaluation process referred to above should be undertaken and mitigation or opportunity embracing elements included as appropriate.
4. Each relevant organisation should give a short annual report as to the extent to which its actions contributed to the achievement of the social inclusion or exclusion goals to which it committed. Where progress was poor the reasons for this should be outlined and the ways in which the challenges might be addressed considered by the LCDC.

Monitoring and evaluation

Under this heading it is proposed that specific consideration will also need to be given to issues of social inclusion. Given the multi-faceted nature of such exclusion referred to above, readily available measures may not be sufficient. Consideration needs to be given at an early stage to the evidence which is required to demonstrate the direction in which real social exclusion and inclusion is going in the county. It is acknowledged, as it is in the UN document referred to above, that gathering some forms of social exclusion data is not easy. However, how this might be done should at least be considered in the context of the LECP. It may be worth considering the gathering of a small number of impact indicators through a dedicated process to add to the indicators of input and output which will be available through programme and project reporting.

Steps which might be taken in this regard include the following –

1. Identify at an early stage a set of indicators which would be a real measure of progress in respect of the reduction in social exclusion and the improvement in social inclusion. Such indicators could include –
 - Input indicators – Whether the actions committed to undertaken
 - Output indicators – The proximate results of those actions
 - Outcome or impact indicators – The effects on the social exclusion status or experiences of those who were the targets of the actions
 - Process indicators – Whether the way things were done gave rise to positive or less positive experiences for those involved

Each of these has its place but, in many ways the outcome or impact indicators are the most important as they provide evidence of the effectiveness of the actions which are being taken.

2. All organisations should be asked to provide ongoing monitoring data whether or not their focus is on social inclusion. Provided they have relevant data it should be provided, and all should contribute to the actions outlined below.
3. Indicators should include subjective as well as objective measures. Since, as indicated above, social exclusion is a lived experience, how that experience is changing for those in danger of experiencing social exclusion should be included in the measures.
4. Consideration should be given to the commissioning of targeted pieces of research in collaboration with WIT (or the TUSE) about the effectiveness of specific actions which have been taken. It is difficult to ascribe specific outcomes to specific actions in the absence of such research and by carrying out such projects a body of specific knowledge in this regard will be built up over time.
5. Consideration should be given as to how the community and voluntary sector might be involved in the development of a longitudinal measure of perceived social inclusion over time. By recruiting such organisations to provide an ongoing set of data an ongoing picture similar to the TILDA study, for example, might be put in place.

6. Consideration should be given to the carrying out of baseline studies with regard to social inclusion where the information which will be used to monitor progress is not available but is planned for the future. Backward-looking estimates by a survey population are notoriously problematic and unreliable. Real-time data collected at a point in time is far more reliable.
7. This approach to monitoring and evaluation will require resources and each relevant organisation should be asked to make some resources available for this purpose.

7. Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the review carried out above. These recommendations should not be interpreted as implying that there is not a lot of social inclusion activity in Waterford already or that organisations are not conscious of their obligations with regard to social inclusion. These recommendations are made in order to seek to broaden the scope of that consciousness and to identify positive steps as to how such consciousness can be operationalised.

1. Each relevant organisation should formally commit to the Statement of Purpose as set out below, or to a similar undertaking and such a statement should be signed by all relevant parties.
2. A five-element model of social exclusion which helps to capture the multi-faceted nature of the process and of the experience should be adopted and each of these should be considered when issues of social exclusion are being addressed. These five elements incorporate various factors and are –
 - a. The personal
 - b. The interpersonal
 - c. The organisational
 - d. The community
 - e. The socio-political
3. All significant actions taken by any actor, and especially by those who are members of or engaged with the LCDC, should adopt an approach to action development and implementation which consciously considers the questions of social inclusion and exclusion, take steps to address any impacts identified and report the process of consideration and its outcome within the final project proposal.
4. A mechanism should be developed which will allow the processes set out at 3 to take place in an agreed and similar manner across all organisations. An outline of an approach is contained in this review.
5. Each relevant organisation should commission a review its own processes and procedures with a view to considering the extent to which they inadvertently contribute to social exclusion and should take remedial action where the need for such is identified.
6. The development and application of a mindset which recognises and seeks to address issues of social inclusion and exclusion will not arise automatically. It is recommended that a programme of training and education for relevant staff be developed and implemented. Such a programme would include training in the process of action evaluation referred to here as well as awareness training in diversity and inclusion. This training should be delivered on a multi-organisational basis so that peer learning and shared understandings would be maximised.
7. To the extent that the guidelines allow, the approach to the consideration of social inclusion and social exclusion in the development of the next LECP should follow the recommendations set out above
8. Collaborative protocols should be developed between organisations so that timely support can be provided to disadvantaged communities and organisations to enable them to avail of funding opportunities including those provided by the LEADER programme.

8. Statement of Purpose

Waterford Local Community Development Committee recognises that the elimination of social exclusion is fundamental to a just, equitable and properly functioning society. It also recognises that addressing issues of social exclusion is an important focus of public policy globally, at EU level, nationally and locally. It is the intention of the Committee and its member organisations to do all that they can within the resources and processes which are available to them, to embark on a pathway which will ultimately reduce social exclusion to a minimum within the City and County of Waterford.

All parties to this statement recognise that social exclusion and social inclusion are contested concepts with no agreed international definition. Notwithstanding this, for the purposes of their work, they declare that they believe and commit to the following.

1. Social exclusion is both a process and an outcome.
2. Social, cultural and economic factors make certain parts of society more likely to suffer from social exclusion
3. While macro-level factors increase the likelihood of social exclusion, social exclusion is a personal and family lived experience with major implications for an individual's or household's quality of life
4. Poverty and unemployment are major contributors to social exclusion within society and seeking to address these issues will make a major contribution to eliminating social exclusion.
5. Poverty and unemployment are not, however, the only factors which drive social exclusion. Other factors are both drivers and act as determinants of how social exclusion is experienced.
6. Some actions of the state, the private sector and civil society are specifically targeted at addressing issues of social inclusion and these actions are of great importance.
7. Such actions are not, however, of themselves sufficient to achieve the outcome of a society with few instances of social exclusion.
8. Most actions taken by the state, private sector and civil society do not have social inclusion as their purpose. However, many have implications for social exclusion either inherent in the nature of their purpose or in the way in which they are implemented.
9. Other actions, though not targeted at social exclusion and though not giving rise to negative consequences, have the potential to promote the social inclusion agenda with a small amount of remodelling.
10. Ensuring that social exclusion and inclusion issues are considered when such actions are being developed and implemented are critical in addressing the issue of social inclusion.
11. Ultimately, the active consideration of social exclusion and inclusion should become part of the ethos of all organisations; vindicating the citizens' rights should be an objective of all working in service delivery; and processes which achieve this objective should become part of the normal way of working of all relevant bodies.
12. If widely adopted, the approach set out here would make a significant contribution to the development of a just and fair society in which no group or individual would experience the trauma of exclusion.