



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Interim Report of the Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group

December 2011

1. Introduction

The Steering Group for the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development was established by Phil Hogan T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, in September 2011.

The Steering Group's Terms of Reference are:

- Review the role of Local Government in Local and Community Development;
- Review the role and contribution of the Local and Community Development programmes in order to determine the scope for greater synergy with Local Government; and
- Make recommendations on how the alignment of Local Government and Local and Community Development should be progressed with a view to: –
 - a. improving delivery of services for the citizen at a local level;
 - b. achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness; and
 - c. enhancing the role of local authorities in the delivery of Local and Community Development programmes and functions.

1.1 Guiding Principles

The work of the Steering Group is guided by the principles that currently underpin local and community development including retaining a developmental “bottom-up” approach as an integral feature of local and community development. Communities and the marginalised within those communities should continue to be involved, with the opportunity to influence and shape local decisions; this approach has a proven record in stimulating and recognising voluntary activity.

The Steering Group recognises the value of the range of local and community development programmes and supports funded by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, to support sustainable communities through social and economic development. The provision of training and education opportunities, and

supports for enterprise and employment creation, are key elements in this regard. The Steering Group believes that the continued vitality of the community and voluntary sector is also centrally important to the development of an equitable and pluralist society.

At the same time, the Group recognises the strength, experience and democratic legitimacy of local government, and in particular, its proven capacity to work in effective partnerships with local development groups. The Steering Group recognises the constitutional role of local government as a forum for the democratic representation of local communities and promoting the interests of such communities.

The Steering Group recognises the importance of building upon the strengths and experiences of both the local government and local development systems and of strengthening a partnership approach which can facilitate multi-agency activity and greater synergy in delivering effective services to communities.

1.2 Work of the Steering Group

This Interim Report presents the preliminary considerations and orientations of the Steering Group at the end of November 2011 and outlines the Group's initial findings, based on its terms of reference. The preliminary considerations have included a review of the role of local government in local and community development, a review of the role and contribution of the local and community development programmes, and an initial assessment of the scope for greater alignment between local government and local development.

The Steering Group has reviewed information drawn from a number of sources and received presentations from key stakeholders, including the Irish Local Development Network (representative body of the local development companies), the City and County Managers Association and Pobal. An extensive consultation process with key stakeholders has commenced – including the local development companies, local authorities (city/county managers and local elected representatives), the Community and

Voluntary Fora, Volunteer Centres, key community and voluntary organisations, and service users.

The work of the Steering Group is not sufficiently advanced at this stage to make final recommendations vis-à-vis achieving greater alignment between local government and local development. In *Section 4* the Group's position on the need to change the current arrangements for local development and interim proposals on a way forward are outlined. Final findings and recommendations will be presented to the Minister in early 2012.

1.3 Scope of the Alignment Process

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) has responsibility for a broad range of community programmes and supports, including:

- Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP);
- The Rural Development Programme (Ireland) 2007 – 2013 (RDP);
- National Rural Development Programmes; and
- Community and Voluntary Policy and Supports.

It is also recognised that the local and community development sector is broader than the remit of DECLG and its relationship with the local development companies and community and voluntary organisations; the sector also encompasses a wider range of structures, local delivery bodies and local and community development initiatives.

Notwithstanding this, the primary focus of the Steering Group at this stage is on the local development companies and the two key programmes (LCDP and RDP) delivered by these companies on behalf of DECLG. As the process develops, the Steering Group may suggest consideration of other programmes and delivery structures that operate in the local and community development landscape.

2. The role of local government in local and community development

2.1 Role of Local Government

The State recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of local communities, promoting their interests and exercising statutory powers at local level. The principal services of local authorities are divided among eight programme headings: housing and building; road transportation and safety; water supply and sewerage; development incentives and controls (planning); environmental protection; recreation and amenities; agriculture, education, health and welfare and miscellaneous services. It is often perceived that local government activity and services are confined to infrastructure provision and the enforcement of regulations. In reality however, local authorities have a long history of involvement in community initiatives and service provision at local level, including social housing, leisure, recreation, arts and amenity facilities and services, as well as estate management, urban and village renewal, tidy towns, 'pride of place' and the operation of community employment schemes. These are important and rich interventions that can help build social capital and they are a fundamental part of the role of local government. Local authorities are the main sub-national, democratically-based bodies and have a statutory responsibility for local development.

In the past decade, local government has embraced an enhanced role in local, community and enterprise development, as well as a multi-disciplinary, strategic planning role. The 1996 White Paper on Local Government Reform, known as Better Local Government (BLG), outlined an expanded role for local authorities in the local, community and enterprise arenas, as well as the creation of more participative structures and processes as part of the agenda to improve local democracy, including community representation and participation in decision making and service delivery.

The Local Government Act 2001 provides a modern legal framework for local government, covering its civic leadership for the community and its responsibility to take such action as it considers necessary/desirable to promote the community interest, having

regard to the need to promote social inclusion. The role of local government as focus for leading development and delivering public services at local level, especially in the current climate when efficiency is a priority, has also been emphasised in Transforming Public Services (2008), the McCarthy Report (2009) and the Programme for Government (2011).

2.2 Promotion of the Interests of Local Communities

The new structures and initiatives referred to above, that came about following BLG, included Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), City/County Development Boards (CDBs), Community and Voluntary Fora, Business Support Units and Directorates of Community and Enterprise in local authorities. Over the past ten years, local authorities have worked closely with the local and community development sector and other stakeholders, playing a lead role in co-ordinating the delivery and integration of services at local level through the CDBs – *see Section 2.3 on CDBs*.

Local authorities also deliver initiatives that address poverty and social exclusion, examples being local government anti-poverty strategies, social inclusion units, RAPID, social inclusion measures working groups (SIMS), sports partnerships and PEACE Programme activities (in the border counties). Consequently, local authorities have built capacity and expertise in the delivery of these community-oriented actions.

Given the primary role of local government in leading development and delivering public services, it is significant, however, that a broad range of interventions are being delivered on a localised basis by the local development sector, outside the ambit of local government with little accountability to local democratic structures. While the crucial role of local government in community and enterprise development is recognised, there are however, cultural, legislative and historical factors that have resulted in the majority of local development programme activity based on the ‘bottom up’ approach residing outside the local government system in a separate set of independent structures (*see Section 3.1 below on the origins of local development*).

The developmental “bottom-up” approach of the local development companies aims to enable participation by citizens in the design, planning and execution of interventions at local level. While such an approach has not traditionally been the hallmark of local government, it is recognised that the local area planning process carried out by local authorities has been implemented using a community, bottom-up approach in some instances. Furthermore, as referenced above, Local Authorities support the county-wide Community and Voluntary Fora and the establishment of the Directorates of Community and Enterprise mean that additional expertise now resides in Local Authorities in the area of community development. However, it will be necessary to further develop the expertise/technical capacity and embed the developmental “bottom-up” approach within local government.

2.3 County Development Boards

The Steering Group notes that the primary formal interface between the local government and local and community sector are the City/County Development Boards (CDBs). The CDB structures are significant in that they provide the only inter-agency, strategic planning and delivery framework at local level. It is noted by the Steering Group that the OECD Public Management Review in 2008 considered integrated service delivery as critical to ensuring better outcomes for clients and citizens. CDBs were established to provide an integrated planning framework for each county/city in terms of its economic, social and cultural development, as well as supporting the co-ordination of publicly funded services at local level. They are led and supported by the local authorities and are responsible for co-ordinating and integrating local service delivery, including across the local development sector.

CDBs provide key local, regional and national agencies and the social partners with a means to engage in joint planning and policy development. The CDB ten-year strategies (2002-12) were prepared following two year’s extensive community and stakeholder consultations. While much was achieved - as identified in the Fitzpatrick Associates/ERM Ireland Ltd Review of CDB Strategies - there were limitations and

variation in terms of effectiveness and impact. The CDB structures are significant in that they provide the only inter-agency, strategic planning and delivery framework at local level. It is noted by the Steering Group that the OECD Public Management Review in 2008 considered integrated service delivery as critical to ensuring better outcomes for clients and citizens.

A closer engagement between local authorities and local development companies has been achieved through representation by these bodies on the CDBs and vice versa, as well as participation of the local development companies on CDB sub-groups. Indeed, the 2008 Indecon Review of CDBs acknowledged, in particular, the good progress made by the Social Inclusion Measures sub-groups and their effectiveness in co-ordinating social inclusion measures at a local level.¹

The limitations of the CDBs also need to be recognised and there is evidence of local variation in terms of the effectiveness and impact. The Indecon review pointed out that the relationship between local authorities and local development companies through the CDBs can vary from ‘collaboration to competition’. Impact can depend very much on the drive and commitment of representatives of agencies and groups who sit on the CDB, together with the capacity, commitment and resource availability of the Community and Enterprise Directorate of the local authority. With limited executive powers, CDBs can invest considerable energy and focus in the development of city/county strategies, but they have no power to compel implementation of actions under those strategies or impose sanctions where local operational plans are not consistent with the strategies.

The effectiveness of the CDB structure can also be limited by the withdrawal or non-attendance of State agency and central government representatives, which has been a feature of most CDBs in the recent past. Moreover, it is perceived at local level that insufficient regard is given by national agencies to local city/county strategies and that local vision is not taken into account when central government is formulating policy in respect of national priorities. This is a key issue for national agencies who sit on CDBs in that they are asked to implement prescribed national strategies and programmes, while

at the same time they are asked to adopt a flexible local approach required for the CDBs to function. This undermines the work of the CDBs and contributes to poor attendance by some national agencies.

The broad scale of representation on the CDB is also cited as a weakness of the structure. The Indecon review pointed out that having the same personnel involved at board level in both the CDB and local development company can result in duplication, a dilution of interest for board members and raises doubts about effectiveness. The limitations of CDBs present critical dilemmas not only for local service deliverers, but more fundamentally for central government in aligning its national policies and implementation mechanisms with local delivery structures.

In relation to strategic and planning oversight and the endorsement of local development company social inclusion plans, the Indecon review pointed out the need to ensure that these were meaningful exercises. There is concern that insufficient consideration is given to these plans by the CDBs due in some instances to the plans having already been approved for funding in advance of presentation to the CDBs, or to the limited time and opportunity available at CDB level to examine them. A more meaningful outcome could be delivered by a direct link between the endorsement process and annual funding allocation for local development companies.

3. Role and contribution of local and community development programmes

3.1 Origins of Local Development Companies and Programmes

The origins of Ireland's local and community development programmes are rooted in the policy responses to some of the social and economic challenges which confronted the State in the 1980s, including increasing unemployment and poverty, deepening inequalities, and greater concentrations of deprivation.

The absence of effective, 'bottom up' integrated and partnership-based interventions was seen as a barrier to progress; centralised decision-making did not encourage participation by communities or include a local dimension in the decision-making process. There was no overall State policy for community development and no consistent stream of State funding for such activity.

EU and International Influences

The focus on partnership between statutory and community sectors and the development of integrated approaches started to emerge nationally and internationally in the late 1980s. At EU level, integrated development was identified as the key approach to addressing the growing concern that economic growth was not evenly spread, that concentrations of deprivation were developing and, in the rural context, that the Common Agricultural Policy was not equipped to address growing inequalities. Increasingly, the EC insisted on this approach as a way forward for the disbursement of Structural funds. This integrated approach involved the development of area based projects which brought together the relevant statutory, voluntary, private and community groups in joint partnership to plan, manage and implement actions for their areas using a 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' approach.

Integrated Development – Growth of Community Groups and Programmes

Four initiatives laid the foundation for an integrated community development approach and the development of local development companies and programmes in Ireland. These

initiatives saw a shift over time from localised, sectoral interventions to programmes deployed on a much wider scale.

- i. The EU co-funded **Poverty 3 Programme** funded three local development projects over the period 1989 – 1994 and built on two previous EC anti-poverty projects.
- ii. The **LEADER Community Initiative** (1991-1993), also co-funded by the EU, provided funding to 16 local development agencies/companies to enable rural groups to implement multi-sectoral, coherent, integrated business plans for their areas. Successive LEADER programmes saw an increase in the number of LEADER Groups to 38 over the period 1994 – 2006.
- iii. In the national context, the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) provided for the establishment of 12 **Area Based Partnerships** in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage. The partnerships were established as a response to long term unemployment and operated initially over the period 1991 – 1994. The introduction of various programmes up to the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (2000 – 2006) saw the number partnership bodies increase to more than 60 by 2004.
- iv. The **Community Development Programme** (CDP), initiated by the Department of Social Welfare in 1990, was the first mainstream, State-funded community development initiative aimed at tackling poverty and disadvantage. Its origins were in the 2nd EC Anti-Poverty Programme and it initially funded 15 community projects, increasing to some 40 projects by end-1993. By end-2008 the number of groups funded under the programme peaked at 185.

Cohesion and Integration Processes

In 2004 the Government, concerned at the proliferation of locally-based groups and at the lack of spatial coherence in their areas of operation, embarked on a process of cohesion relating to local and community development. It resulted in the merging of Partnership and LEADER companies into single, mainly county-based entities, reducing their number from 94 to 52. The aim of the process was to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery of local and community development programmes and to improve democratic

legitimacy, public accountability, governance, statutory agency participation, social partnership and local involvement. As part of this process, the Government agreed arrangements in 2007 to ensure full nationwide coverage by local development companies and the 52 companies currently operating in the local and community development sector structures emerged from that process. A further phase of this work focused on integrating some 140 community development projects into the local development companies. Some 15 alternative delivery structures operate within the LCDP but outside the 52 LDCs on a specialised basis.

3.2 Scale and Complexity of Local and Development Landscape

In addition to the 52 local development companies under contract to DECLG and the 15 alternative delivery structures of the LCDP, there is a range of other bodies implementing various local and community development actions. As a result, the local and community development landscape now comprises a complex, multiplicity of programmes and bodies. The services delivered to citizens and communities by these bodies – such as local development companies, City and County Enterprise Boards, Family Resource Centres, drugs task forces, etc. – include *inter alia* social inclusion interventions, training, employment activation measures, and business mentoring, advice and support services.

The funding model of these local development bodies, and the programmes they deliver, suggests a complex set of relationships with Government Departments and other State bodies, by whom they are funded and to whom they report. Some organisations have been established to deliver on a singular policy objective and, consequently, only receive funding from one public source (Exchequer or EU). In many instances, however, organisations deliver on a number of policy objectives for the State and receive funding from as many public sources.

A diagrammatic representation of the local development landscape is at Appendix 1 – the chart does not claim to represent a complete picture of the local development sector, however, it is illustrative of the scale of the structures and relationships in a number of key areas.

3.3 LEADER Approach

The LEADER approach is important in how it has contributed to the current local development structure and, furthermore, it is currently a very significant funding stream to many local development companies. LEADER ('Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale', meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions') is a local development method which allows local actors to develop an area by using its endogenous development potential. Under the 2007-13 Rural Development Programme Ireland (RDP), all 'outside the farm gate' funding is implemented via 36 local development companies (which are a subset of the 52 local development companies referred to earlier). This is different to the approach followed by most other EU Member States; in the main they implement such actions via a combination of local groups and Local Authorities/statutory agencies. Under current EU rules, a minimum proportion of the overall Rural Development Programme (RDP) allocation must be delivered by Local Action Groups (LAGs) and this provision is likely to be retained for the next programming round. Therefore, depending on overall government priorities for the RDP 2014-20 and the division of funding between the various programme measures, there could be scope to deliver a greater proportion of 'outside the farm-gate' actions directly through central and local government structures, whilst also allocating funding for LEADER implementation.

3.4 Strengths of local development companies and programmes

The local development companies are rooted in their communities; they have a proven track record of leading social inclusion and local and community development initiatives and in delivering effective solutions to local needs. They have significant local knowledge and expertise in service planning and delivery.

Local development companies' involvement in the very broad range of local and community development interventions puts them in a position to deliver co-ordinated, integrated and joined-up solutions to meet the needs of their local communities. In this regard, they represent a key forum through which public bodies and other stakeholders can act within an integrated space. Moreover, their use of a bottom-up approach means

that they are in a position to harness locally-based skills, encourage volunteering and liaise with local organisations. To some extent, they can operate outside the bureaucratic strictures, adding to their flexibility.

The focus on bottom-up delivery of local and community development interventions has developed their capacity to consult and engage effectively with target groups in planning, programme development and in preparing socio-economic plans at sub-county level. This approach can differ from that of the local authority-led local area planning process where the focus is more on spatial planning.

3.5 Limitations of the local development company model

The complexity of the local development landscape and the multiple funding and reporting relationships involved, create an administrative burden on local development companies and raise questions about duplication and overlap. There are also questions as to whether the existing arrangements lend themselves to joined-up, integrated service delivery and ease of access for the service user.

Disjointed Approach by the State

These structures have developed organically as a result of a disjointed approach by the State in the delivery of local/community development interventions. The model supported by the State at central level therefore perpetuates high overhead and administration costs. Given the complexity of the structures and the many public funding sources involved, the Steering Group considers that it may be necessary over time to examine the full breadth of programmes and structures in order to advance alignment of local government and local development in a more comprehensive and meaningful manner.

Rationalisation through the Cohesion Process

The significant rationalisation in structures in the local development sector between 2004 and 2008 as a result of the Cohesion Process did result in the reduction of delivery structures. The effectiveness of the process in yielding significant cost savings to the

State, however, has yet to be quantified. Moreover, local development companies perform their own back office functions in respect of administration, payroll and personnel functions, with these costs met primarily through public funds. There is little meaningful sharing of services with other similar bodies or public services providers, although there is some evidence of a limited number of companies providing a shared service function for local community and voluntary groups. These administration functions carry significant costs and can divert resources from frontline services.

Administrative Costs

The work of the Steering Group identified some €227m delivered in 2011 through local development companies on programmes/schemes on behalf of the State. Four core programmes account for some €186m (or 81%) of the overall amount.ⁱⁱ The cost to the State of administering these four programmes in 2011 will be in the region of €35m. An analysis of available data suggests that a significant proportion - some €71m (or 31%) of the overall amount allocated - is expended on employment costs for some 1,943 employees.

An analysis on the cost effectiveness of the LCDP in November, 2010, examined indicators from the 52 local development companies and found that in relative terms, the levels of administration costs within local development companies (i.e. costs not allocated to programmes and projects) are high, at between 30% and 45%. It was recommended that administration costs should be set at 25% in line with other small businesses.

Input of Local Government

Under the current arrangements and structures, there is a clear gap in accountability to the democratically-mandated local government structures. This is notwithstanding the role Councillors and local authority officials play on the boards of these companies and the shared involvement of all in the CBD structure. Ultimately, local authorities have little input into strategy or decision-making in relation to programmes and interventions delivered by local development companies.

Board Memberships and Service Fatigue

The burden imposed upon organisations and individuals through participation on boards and various consultative structures also has a considerable cost, both in terms of resources to organisations and service fatigue. This has been highlighted in the *Department of Finance paper (2009) 'Local Delivery Structure'* which cited the example of FÁS who estimated that it had representatives on some 1,000 Committees, Partnership Boards, CDBs, etc., with many boards meeting 8-10 times per year. Given the number of boards, the number of State Agencies represented on the boards and the frequency of meetings, there is a significant hidden cost involved in their operation.

Variations in Quality and Impact

It has been highlighted to the Steering Group that there can be variations across the country in the quality of interventions implemented by local development companies and the impact of those interventions. Evaluation of available data, particularly in the context of the LCDP, highlights good work by some companies. However, this has not been replicated nationwide and it has been difficult to date to impose a consistent standard across all local development companies. A new monitoring and evaluation framework is in place for the LCDP and while it provides the architecture through which meaningful data on outputs, outcomes and impacts can be gathered, questions regarding the quality of data gathered by the local development companies still remain. This is further compounded by the multiplicity of structures which can lead to ineffective and inconsistent monitoring and reporting on outputs across the range of programmes/schemes.

Oversight Role

The Steering Group believes there is need for a continued strong national oversight role to enable consistency of standards and approaches across the country in the provision of good quality services to citizens and communities. This would seek to address the variations in performance that are problematic in the delivery of work by both CDBs and local development companies. Currently there are various roles at national level in the

oversight/quality control of programmes implemented by the local development companies. In respect of the RDP and LCDP, these roles are currently performed by DECLG and Pobal respectively. Currently Pobal manages the LCDP on behalf of DECLG and provides a wide range of services in this context, including programme planning and design, appraisal, contract management, risk audit and programme audit, etc.

Improved Service Planning

The Steering Group is conscious of the real difficulty in balancing some of the inherent tensions in structures and modes of delivery of services and in the relationship between local government and local development. These include, *inter alia*:

- managing the relationship between ‘top down’ programmes based on national government priorities and budget lines, and the ‘bottom up’ approach involving participation and decision-making at local level;
- responding effectively to the needs of disadvantaged citizens, while achieving improved and more efficient service delivery; and
- accommodating the enforcement role of national and local authorities alongside the commitment to empowerment in the local development approach.

The Group stresses the importance of prioritising the goal of improved service planning and delivery to citizens at local level, so that it is not lost sight of in any new arrangements for better alignment.

4. Towards Achieving More Efficient and Effective Delivery of Services for Citizens and Communities

The Steering Group has now completed the first phase of its work and, in this interim report to the Minister, has reached some conclusions on the existing arrangements vis-à-vis the respective roles of local authorities and the local and community development sector in the provision of local and community development services. In reaching these initial conclusions, the Steering Group is mindful of the following important factors and core guiding principles:

- The absolute requirement to ensure that services are delivered to optimum standards and targeted at those who need them most;
- The importance of a strong community ethos and meaningful engagement by local community groups in the provision of services;
- The need for democratic accountability by structures and bodies who deliver the services;
- The necessity of having due regard to the regulatory framework and, in particular, the requirements for compliance with the EU co-funded Rural Development Programme and any changes that may arise in the 2014 – 2020 revised Programme; and
- The need for accountability and integrated oversight of the local disbursement of public funds.

Why Change?

It is evident that the existing arrangements for local development are administratively burdensome and do not lend themselves to joined-up, integrated service delivery. They have evolved from the requirements of EU and government programmes and are the result of a disjointed national approach to local service delivery. Moreover, central government, by establishing multiple structures for service delivery at local level has, to a large extent, by-passed local government and undermined the democratic process at local level. Thus, many public services are delivered locally by development bodies with relatively little reference to local authorities. More ‘joined up’ local planning under the governance of the local authority would address this democratic deficit and enhance the

role of local government in local service delivery. By the same token, the Steering Group is also conscious that there is considerable variation in approach, skills and standards of service delivery across both local authorities and local development companies.

A Way Forward

- The Steering Group considers that a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to local service provision is now required. This should be based on an enhanced role for local government in planning, decision-making, oversight and, where appropriate, delivery of local development programmes within agreed structures. The Steering Group believes that alignment along local authority boundaries would be most effective in this regard. Such an administrative, operational and spatial alignment should enable greater ease of access and deliver more sustainable frontline services for citizens. It should also reduce administrative and bureaucratic burdens, lessen duplication, achieve greater value for money and improve joined-up planning under the governance of local government.
- It is the Steering Group's view that meaningful community engagement and involvement within this framework will be essential in identifying actual needs and agreeing the services to be delivered. It is vital, therefore, that the bottom-up approach, with a focus on targeting those most in need and facilitating meaningful citizen participation, is embedded as an integral part of the planning and decision-making process as well as in the delivery of services.
- Given the variations in standards, skills and approaches, the Steering Group believes there is need for a strong national oversight role to ensure consistency of standards and approaches across the country in the interests of good quality services to citizens and communities.
- While the focus of the Steering Group's work is primarily on programmes that are managed by the DECLG, we believe that service planning and delivery would be greatly improved at national and local level if central government adopted a more

integrated and targeted approach to all the programmes funded and managed by all departments and agencies and delivered locally. Joined-up services based on a comprehensive cross-programme and cross-government alignment would undoubtedly achieve greater operational efficiency and better services to citizens.

- There is an inherent tension between central government and local government priorities, which militates against an integrated approach at local level. The Steering Group believes that, within any newly aligned structures, central government priorities should allow greater flexibility at local level to customise programmes and policy initiatives to local needs and priorities. In turn, the policy making role at national level should be informed by delivery and practice on the ground at local level. New aligned frameworks and arrangements should provide for such an enhanced link between policy and practice.

Final Report

The Steering Group will present a final report with recommendations to the Minister in early 2012 in accordance with its terms of reference. This report will include recommendations on appropriate structures and mechanisms to deliver improved services with maximum efficiency through better alignment of local and community development and local authority services to the community.

i *Indecon Review of County/City Development Board Strategic Reviews and Proposals for Strengthening and Developing the Boards, January 2008*

ii *RDP €62m, LCDP €63M, Rural Social Scheme €46m, and Tús €15m*
