

# COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND THE ARTS DIRECTORATE

## Introduction

The three Offices under this Directorate are Community & Enterprise, Arts and Environmental Services. The Directorate has reviewed services, programmes and resources during 2009 in order to make savings and ensure that the maximum level of services can be provided in the context of ongoing funding and income reductions. In view of these changes, priorities have been identified that aim to fulfil legislative obligations and support the community and voluntary sector. Harnessing the staff and interagency skills and expertise within the Directorate as well as seeking to secure additional external funding are two of the main approaches being adopted to deal with the changing context.

## Community & Enterprise and Arts Offices

The County Development (CDB) completed a review in June 2009 and agreed a range of priorities for the period 2009-12. These include improving County Sligo's profile through the development of sligo.ie, developing a Creative Sligo initiative, working collaboratively on an interagency basis in managing the downturn and ensuring job retention and supporting job creation. Social inclusion and equality remain priorities with member organisations working in a range of areas including disability, older persons, travellers, youth participation, childcare, domestic violence and new communities. An Economic Working Group has been established under the CDB and is overseeing the delivery of work on broadband provision, supporting indigenous businesses, training and up skilling, tourism and rural development. The development and support of the County Community Forum as the representative voice of the voluntary and community sector remains a priority for the Board.

In order to better position Co. Sligo as a more attractive location for investment and tourism, and to further develop the Sligo's identity as a cultural and creative place, the CDB proposes to undertake research and projects in 2009-10 to identify unique selling points and agree an approach to deliver on a *Creative Sligo* initiative.

In the context of decreasing resources the Community & Enterprise and Arts offices will work more closely together along with other relevant Departments and CDB members to maximise supports at community level and add value to each other's programmes where possible. Supporting community effort, volunteerism, environmental awareness and protection will be prioritised. The Community & Enterprise and Arts Offices will continue to identify funding sources in an attempt to mitigate the impact of current funding decreases. The Community & Enterprise and Arts Offices have secured €6.2m over the past four years from external funding such as Peace, Interreg, the NDP and Clar as well as €4.1m for the MANS broadband project.

The Peace 111 Programme Action Plan 2008-2010 under the County Development Board will continue in 2010. It is concerned with building positive relations at local level and addressing racism and sectarianism. It provides an opportunity for the community sector and development organisations in the county to be resourced to meet the peace objectives of the Programme, at the

same time it underpins ongoing community activity at a time of very limited resources for the voluntary and community sector. The Council's own Community and Voluntary Grant Scheme, the Burial Grounds Grant Scheme as well as the Tidy Towns and Pride of Place Schemes will continue albeit at a reduced level.

Teach Laighne will continue to provide services at local level as a one stop shop for the public in South Sligo. Implementation of the Tubbercurry and Enniscrone Economic Development Plans, completed in 2008, will continue with local stakeholders.

## The Arts

In 2009 the Arts Office continued to implement the Arts Plan 2007-12, *Space for Art*. The Arts Plan like the CDB Action Plan reflects a collaborative, inter-agency and strategic approach with strong community and stakeholder links. The work programme in 2010 will continue to develop Sligo's long standing reputation as a 'cultural county' including the development of a *Creative Sligo* initiative as part of the CDB prioritised action plan.

The Arts Office has applied the required financial cuts in a way that does not permanently undermine the arts infrastructure of Sligo. Funding is provided for individual artists, venues, networks festivals, events, commissions, residencies, programmes and projects. Grants and programme provision will be affected but every effort will be made to minimise the impact on the sector. Culture Night which was a great success in 2009 will continue in 2010 building on Sligo's reputation as a cultural centre. The two Arts Office Peace 111 funded projects will further support the work of the arts sector, cross-border work focusing on the Yeatsian Legacy and the Legacy of Belief. A new round of public art commissions will begin in 2010 building on the very successful *Unravelling Developments* public art series.

## The Environment

Protecting Co. Sligo's environment is fundamental to the county's balanced and sustainable development. The Environment Department continues to work on waste reduction and management, protecting and improving water and air quality, promoting best practice in environmental management and practices, litter management and providing veterinary services. The protection and enhancement of the environment through the implementation of the Waste Management Acts, the Water Pollution Act, the Litter Pollution Act and the Drinking Water Regulations will continue to be priorities for the Environmental Services Department. In addition there are many new demands on the Department resulting from new legislation and initiatives, in particular the River Basin Management Plans, the Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters (Nitrates Directive), the EU Shellfish Water Directive the Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning Regulations and the Environmental Liability Regulations.

The cutback in funds and staff coupled with increasing demands will require the Department to prioritise work areas in 2010. The full extent of additional work under the River Basin Management Plans, the Shellfish and Nitrates Directives is currently unclear but there have already been extra demands in 2009 resulting from these Directives and from other Regulations and initiatives.

Waste management in 2010 will be ensured through a range of measures including the regulation of waste collectors, the recycling centre in Tubbercurry, the green waste facility in Ballysadare,

participation in the Connaught Waste Management Plan, the bottle banks and the implementation of Regulations including the Packaging, Waste Electrical (WEE) and End of Life Vehicles (ELVs) regulations and the Plastic Bag Levy as well as regulations related to tyres, burning, batteries and solvents. County Sligo has shown a marked increase in the level of recycling and a reduction in the amount of refuse going into landfill. The work of the Enforcement Officers is central in reaching recycling targets in the county as well as the installation of CCTV cameras at bottle banks and the enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act. Work under the Litter Pollution Act will be at a reduced level due to cutbacks.

In November 2009, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published the *International Review of Waste Management Policy* which makes a series of recommendations. It is expected that government will consider a policy statement in 2010 based on the review which may lead to new actions and initiatives in the waste management area.

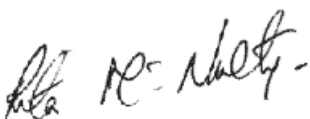
Environmental education and awareness are key to changing behaviour and instilling a sense of responsibility among members of the community in protecting the environment. Initiatives were delivered through schools, community and other groups at a reduced level in 2009 and will be further reduced in 2010.

Implementation of the Climate Change Strategy for the organisation will be led by the Environment Department in 2010 and will be a key priority.

Drinking water quality is a major issue of public concern and is an increasingly important part of the pollution control remit of the Environmental Services Department. New Drinking Water Regulations were introduced in 2007 putting significant additional responsibilities on Local Authorities in relation to private water supplies as well as ongoing responsibilities regarding public water supplies. Source Protection Plans for all our drinking water supplies continue to be a priority. In early 2010 the River Basin Management Plans will be presented to the Council members for adoption. The purpose of the River Basin Management Plans is to ensure that the targets set by the EU regarding water quality are reached by 2015 as required in the Water Framework Directive. The implications in terms of land use and resources required to implement the Plans are very significant and will have to be addressed in 2010 and beyond.

Five beaches in County Sligo were monitored in the 2009 bathing season. In 2010 it is hoped to maintain the standard of bathing water quality despite ongoing issues at a number of beaches.

Abattoir inspections continue to be carried out to ensure compliance with food safety requirements and animal welfare is ensured through the implementation of the Control of Horses Bye-Laws and the Control of Dogs Acts.



**Rita McNulty**  
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**1st December 2009**