

**CORK CITY COUNCIL**  
**AUDIT & ACTION PLAN**

**A Photography Exhibition**  
**on Social Inclusion/Exclusion**  
by Maurizio Vallebella

# **Picture THIS**

 funded by  
**Combat Poverty**  
Agency  
working for the prevention  
and elimination of poverty



# **Picture THIS**

A Photography Exhibition on  
social inclusion/exclusion.

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## **WHY THIS EXHIBITION?**



This exhibition was organised to inform people about how the City Council is seeking to put social needs at the core of its policies and actions through a creative and accessible way.

The black and white exhibition by photographer, Maurizio Vallebella, is designed to raise public awareness, including awareness among City Council Staff, of the issue of social inclusion and Cork City Council policies.

This exhibition has been organised by Cork City Council with funding from the Combat Poverty Agency and the Department of Social and Family Affairs and has been timed to coincide with the launch of the Cork City Council Social Inclusion Audit and Action Plan.

The exhibition will travel for three months and a half in the city centre and suburbs so that everyone has a chance to see it. All the venues are at the back of this information booklet.

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# CONTENTS

<b>WHY THIS EXHIBITION?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHAT IS SOCIAL INCLUSION?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CORK CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL INCLUSION AUDIT &amp; ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HOW DID WE DO IT?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WHAT IS THE APPROACH?</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>CORK CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN</b>	
1. NEEDS:	11
2. INCLUSION:	13
3. PHYSICAL ACCESS:	16
4. FORUM AND CO-ORDINATION	17
5. AWARENESS AND TRAINING:	19
 <b>PUTTING THE PLAN INTO PRACTICE</b>	 <b>21</b>

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## **FOREWARD**

I welcome the publication of this Information Catalogue on the photography exhibition "Picture This: A photography exhibition on social inclusion/exclusion". The aim of this catalogue is to raise public awareness, including awareness among City Council Staff, on what social inclusion means and what are the steps the City Council is undertaking to achieve this with a well thought out strategy and plan. The photography exhibition is a way of showing the challenges the City faces and the work that needs to keep developing and strengthening in relation to Social Inclusion and Cork City.

The photography exhibition will travel for three and a half months in the city centre and suburbs and will give everyone a chance to see it and make use of it.

I hope you enjoy the exhibition.

J. Gavin Cork City Manager

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Social Inclusion Unit would like to thank first Maurizio Vallebella for his great effort, sensitivity and work put into this photography exhibition. Thanks are also due to Katherine Ketch, for her large contribution in this information catalogue.

We would also like to thank the Combat Poverty Agency, the Department of Social and Family Affairs and AIB Bank, for their support and their funding in this project. Many thanks are also due to all the organisations that will be hosting the exhibition. Their support was crucial to make sure that this photography exhibition reached as many people as possible in Cork City.

The Social Inclusion Unit would also like to thank all staff within Cork City Council, who helped and supported this photography exhibition through their expertise and time.

Social Inclusion Unit  
Community and Enterprise Directorate  
Cork City Council  
Norwich Union Building  
South Mall  
Cork

Tel: 021-4924060/61

## WHAT IS **SOCIAL INCLUSION?**

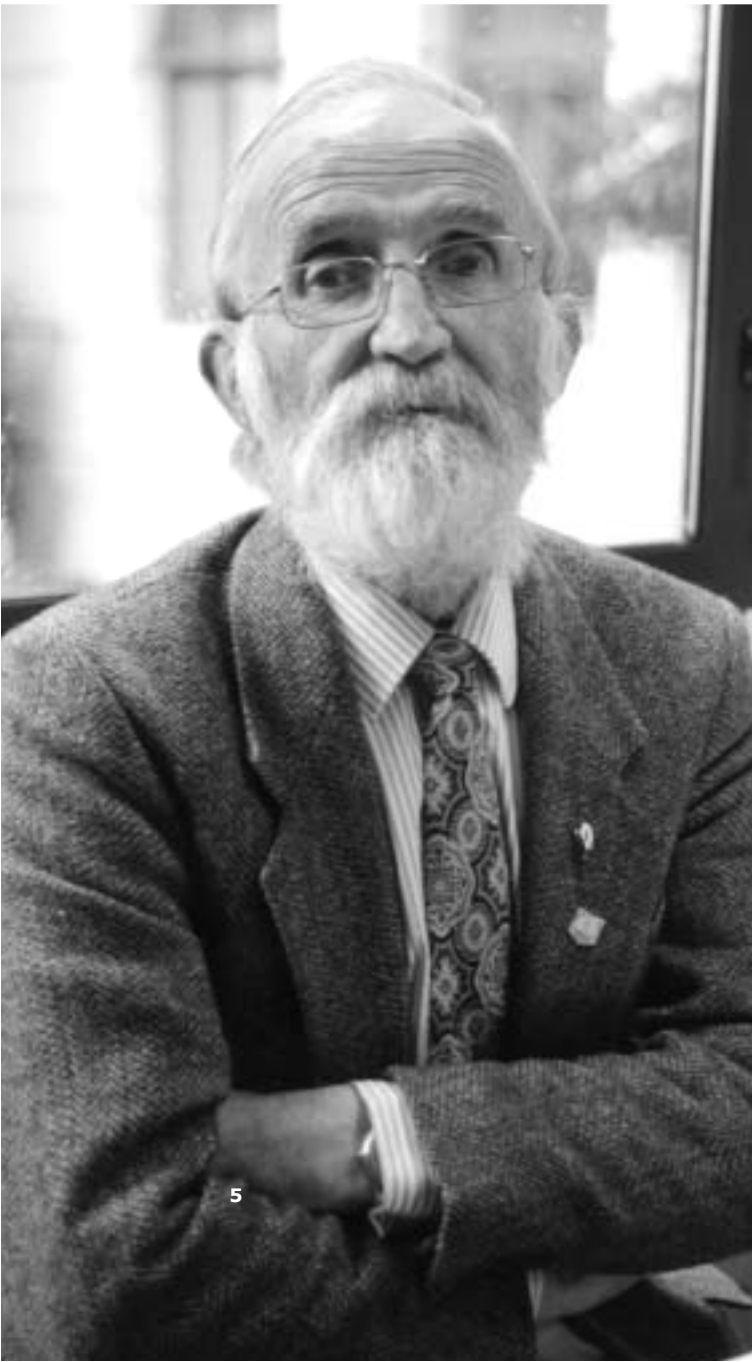
Social inclusion can be defined as a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of, and to challenge, all forms of discrimination.



## WHAT IS **SOCIAL EXCLUSION?**

Social exclusion can be defined as the experience of social and economic inequalities. That is where people are excluded from some, but not necessarily all, aspects of daily living which are considered normal, and may be experiencing poverty. For example people can be excluded from:

- Production: not being able to access employment or education
- Consumption: unable to afford goods and services
- Social Networks: lack of access to social, sporting or cultural organisations.
- Decision making: being without power to change personal or wider circumstances



## **WHAT IS THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT?**

The Social Inclusion Unit is moving forward the process of bringing social inclusion into the core of Cork City Council policies. However, it is all the City Council Directorates and Departments that are the drivers of this process.

The Social Inclusion Unit was established in Cork City Council in February 2002, under the Community and Enterprise Directorate. Nationally, 8 local authorities have secured funding for the establishment of Social Inclusion Units (Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Dublin Local Authorities). A Social Inclusion Officer and Analyst staff each of these Units. The Department of Environment and Local Government funds the unit. The main objective of the Social Inclusion Unit is to:

- Mainstream Social Inclusion in Cork City Council policies.
- Analyse local policies and the nature and causes of poverty within the city.
- Promote social inclusion within the Council through training and information.
- Promote the National Anti-Poverty Strategy within Cork City.
- Support the ongoing work of the RAPID Programme and the City Development Board "Imagine Our Future" 10 year Strategy.





# SOCIAL INCLUSION AUDIT AND ACTION PLAN

## WHAT IS THE AUDIT?



The Cork City Council Social Inclusion Audit is a policy document. This document was carried out in order to understand the nature of the City Council's work to find out where the

Council's services can be enhanced to benefit the most vulnerable groups including, people with disabilities, home-

less, elderly, children, Travellers, as well as vulnerable areas within the City.

The Audit recognises that the Council has a long history of tackling social exclusion and has been targeting resources towards the disadvantaged for many years, either directly, through social housing, or indirectly through community infrastructure such as sports facilities and major regeneration schemes in disadvantaged areas.

The audit also sets out to clarify the work already undertaken by the Council in the area, to build on the strengths and fill in the gaps as well as setting a baseline for future actions.





## HOW DID WE DO IT?

The audit and action plan are the result of 2 years of meetings and interviews with 35 key people in supervisory roles in their respective sections and data collection on City Council policies from published information and internal documentation including plans, strategies, projects, newsletters, pamphlets, application forms etc.

Consultation was limited to City Council staff, because changes need to first happen internally. However, the audit recommends public consultation when the next audit will be carried out. The action plan clearly encourages partnership with voluntary and non-voluntary groups.

A particular key contribution that has guaranteed the completion of this Audit and the undertaking of the Action Plan is the Social Inclusion Committee, which was established a year ago to support the development of policies within the City Council in regard to Social Inclusion. The Committee is made of two members from each City Council Directorate and Department. The members of the Committee have been extremely supportive and committed to the process.

## WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN?



The Cork City Council Social Inclusion Action Plan is also a policy document. The Action Plan is a set of short-term and long-term

actions identified by each Directorate and Department from the learning of the Audit. The plan presents short-term actions on how to further include people's needs in the City Council services and activities. The short-term actions are already being undertaken and began at the end of 2002, and should finish in July 2005. Long-term actions will need resources to be implemented.

# WHAT IS THE APPROACH?

The key objective of the audit and action plan was to integrate social inclusion into the practices of the City Council by integrating both short-term and long-term recommendations and actions into the Council's Corporate Plan bringing about

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organisational and cultural change. The Social Inclusion Audit and the Social Inclusion Action Plan including both short and long-term objectives are the tools, which will implement social inclusion policy in Cork City Council.

The audit and the plan, as well as any policies that emerge from them will be integrated into the City Council Corporate Plan. Changes in policy and the allocation of resources will be achieved by General Council approval.

The process will also need monitoring and evaluation to ensure objectives are met.



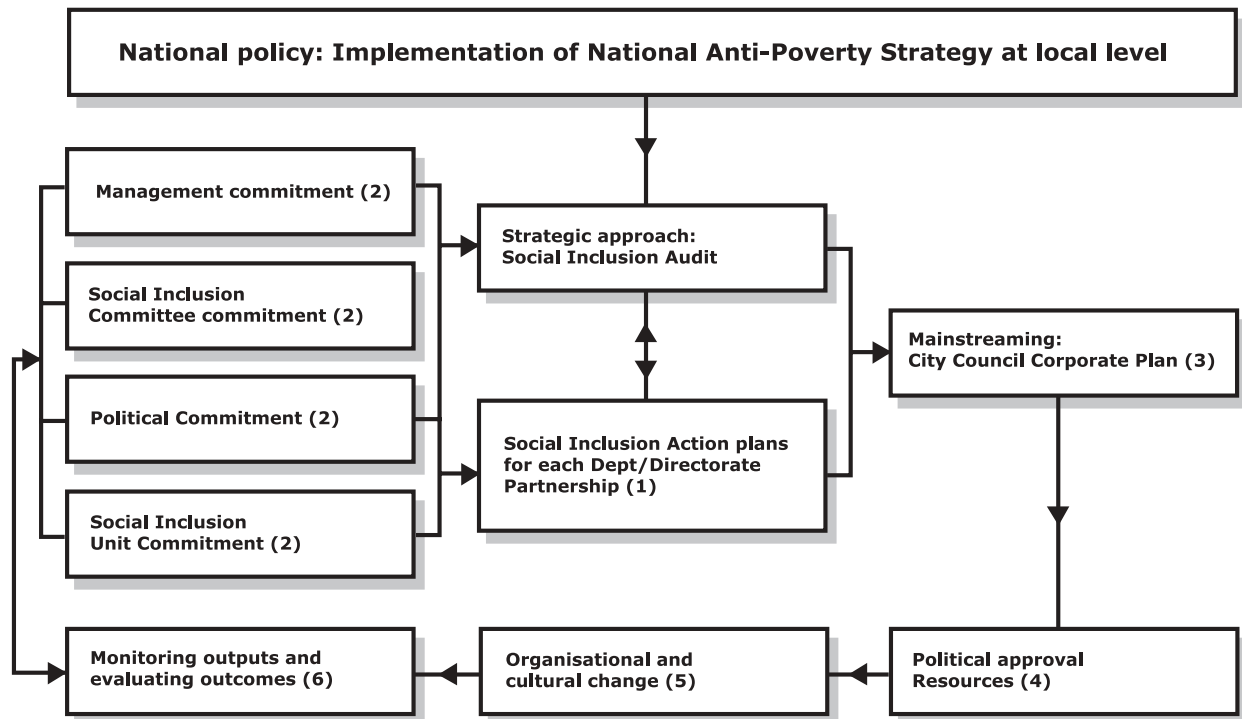


Diagram 1 - Tackling Social Exclusion in Cork City Council

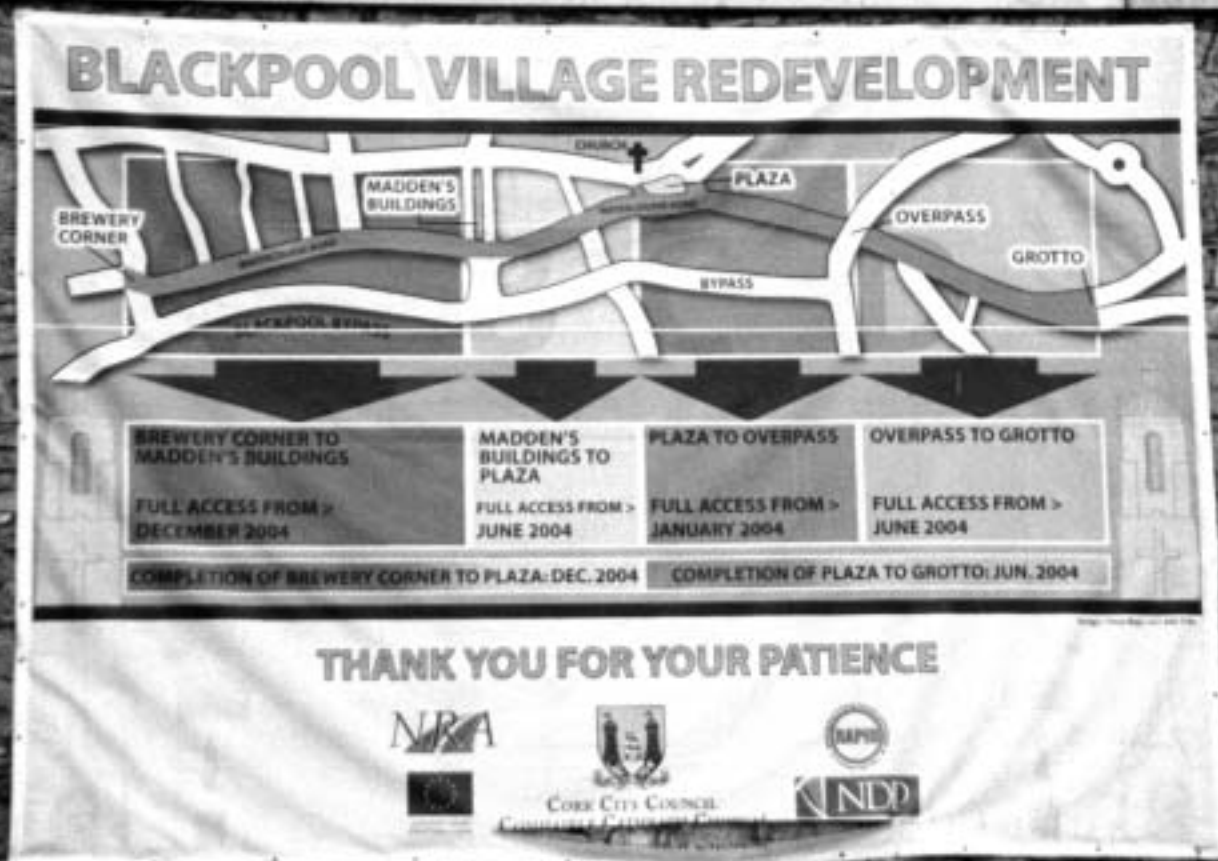
**There are four key structures involved:**

1. The Social Inclusion committee.
2. The Manager and Management team.
3. Political structures (Strategic Policy Committees, Corporate Group and General Council).
4. Social Inclusion Unit of the Community and Enterprise Directorate.

The Combat Poverty Agency has provided funding, training and staff support for integrating social inclusion into the new Corporate Plan. A steering group with members from Cork City Partnership, Combat Poverty Agency and Cork City Council staff is leading this process.

**Diagram 1** shows the approach. This process is a circular process. The Social Inclusion Action Plan is already being implemented and a review of this Audit will need to be considered in future. This new Audit would build on the activities already undertaken and set a new set of recommendations on Social Inclusion for the City Council to further activate. This circular process will ensure that in time Cork City Council will embed the notion of Social Inclusion in the way it strategically works and provides services.





# 1. NEEDS

## CORK CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL INCLUSION **ACTION PLAN**

The Audit recommends planning for those most in need of the Council's services.

The action plan includes objectives that will strengthen the support for already recognised needs. For example housing services, disadvantaged groups and schools with high levels of disadvantage. The following are some examples of the actions:

### Housing:

- Working with planning and the law Department to develop derelict sites for

social housing and other community beneficial amenities.

- Developing guidelines for social housing and affordable housing units in the Docklands. The aim is to create a diverse and integrated community with a mix of social housing, private rented and homeowner households as well as apartments specially designed for persons with disabilities and elderly people.
- Locating City Council tenants on private estates to minimise social segregation.
- Proactive intervention with rent arrears - budgetary management information and MABS.
- Incorporation of needs of tenants into design of new estates by housing and city architects.

### **Travellers**

- Strengthen targeting of expenditure on Traveller halting sites to ensure a quality environment.
- To investigate the possibility of a transient halting site with Cork County Council.

### **Roads**

- Identification of needs of RAPID areas and City-wide groups in relation to accessible roads and traffic services.
- Identify areas of priority need for roads maintenance, with the community and voluntary sector.

### **Library**

- Library service to assess the range of services for refugees and asylum seekers particularly in the city centre. Book stock in their languages and increase classes in co-operation with VEC.

### **Docklands**

- Ensure that facilities such as schools and community centres are accessible, as well as exploring the possibility of a one-stop shop facility for public services.
- Public transport to meet the needs of disabled and those on low incomes.



## 2. INCLUSION

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The Audit recommends bringing the work of the Council out to the community in the areas of arts, sports, environmental awareness, estate management, museum, library and housing services.

Below are examples of forms of action that will actively include disadvantaged people or groups through consultation, involvement, increased participation or use/increased responsibility or employment.

See examples below.

### **Strengthening consultation**

- Community Arts Programme.
- Development of parks and green spaces.
- Sports Strategy.
- Review and poverty proof Housing consultation procedures.
- Consultation on city development and local area plans and the introduction of a social inclusion checklist in the preparation of plans.
- Consultation with disadvantaged by City Architects Department.

### **Strengthening participation/use**

- Incentives for use of Municipal Golf Course.
  - Encourage the use of Bishopstown running track.
  - Enhance the use of IT.
  - Develop and access policy to all Municipal facilities.
- 



### Employment

- Provide opportunities for workers under the Job Initiatives Scheme to enhance prospects of mainstream employment.
- Personnel to develop an equality policy for City Council.
- More transparent and accessible information on job vacancies and application forms.

### Outreach

- Possibility of creating an outreach position in the Museum bringing awareness of city culture to disadvantaged groups.
- Library to act as a referral centre regarding literacy programmes.
- To promote reading for teenagers and make libraries available as focal points for other community services such as community arts, sports officer etc.
- IT Dept: kiosk based facility for access to public services in Area Housing Offices.

### Inclusion

- Create an awareness of social inclusion in assessing planning applications - a poverty proofing checklist to be implemented.
- Review of Waivers Scheme - focusing on low-income groups.

### Geographical areas

- Prioritise needs of RAPID areas in Council policy.
- Immediate response to areas of high need is a long term objective of the Community and Enterprise Directorate.
- Building inspectors to target buildings in private rented sector of poor quality.
- Fire Brigade to poverty proof the profile of buildings in the geo-base database.

### Responsibility

- Increase community's responsibility for the environment through projects such as the Environment Task Group in the Mayfield/Glen/Blackpool area.







## 3. PHYSICAL ACCESS

The Audit recommends an inter-departmental co-ordinated process to respond to the needs of people with disabilities in line with the Barcelona Declaration.

Below are some examples of the actions that will improve the physical access of the city and City Council Services:

- Carry out an audit and disability proof all existing City Council buildings.
- Disability proof new City Hall extension.
- Feasibility studies by City Architects before formal development of any City Council project.
- Disability proof city hall cash payments points - Finance.
- Access audit on the museum's permanent exhibitions.
- Extend the library services to house bound persons.
- Accessible library catalogue for disabled people - IT Dept.



- Develop the library service for the visually impaired by extending the Kurtzweil system to all libraries.
- How the City Council's web-site can be made more user-friendly e.g. for the blind by incorporating sound files.
- Roads and Transport to produce a pamphlet on disability issues, create on-going awareness.
- Continue disability proofing of pedestrian routes, particularly crossings in City Centre. Increase and monitor parking for people with disabilities.
- Enhance Roads Maintenance partnership with community and voluntary sector to prioritise accessible footpaths and roads.
- The City Council's implementation of the national requirements of all public bodies to employ 3% of staff with disabilities to be examined.
- Identify employment option for people with disabilities.
- Support staff already employed with disabilities - long term.
- Employment of an access officer in the long term.

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## 4. FORUM AND CO-ORDINATION

Below are some examples of actions that are in the Action Plan:

The audit recommends to strengthen the Council's existing work in the community by creating a forum for staff in these areas. The new Housing Knocknaheeny Area Team office serves as a pilot to integrate all the community level services of the Council.

- For a stronger and co-ordinated community development focus in the Council a forum will be organised where all the community development staff in City Council can network and co-ordinate activities.
- Increase links between the sports strategy and other City Council strategies. Identify within existing strategies the potential of



sport as a social inclusion measure - homeless strategy, Travellers' Plan and the Parks Plan.

- To provide a better understanding on river water rescues - analyse the water rescuing calls for a better understanding of this social issue.
- The Fire Brigade to provide training sessions on their experience of social issues.
- Increased co-operation between Civil Defence and Community and Enterprise Directorate.
- Prison welfare officers and library staff to participate in networks involving City Council staff who have a community outreach focus.
- To analyse in conjunction with the Fire Brigade, Gardaí and other agencies all incidents of anti-social behaviour to reduce anti-social behaviour incidents to City Council households.
- Partnership between housing, community and Enterprise, other Departments and other agencies involved in the RAPID process to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour.





## 5. AWARENESS AND TRAINING



### City Council Staff

The audit recommends awareness and training of City Council staff is key to ensure organisational and cultural change happens.

**Below are some examples of actions that you can find within the Action Plan:**

- Social inclusion awareness training for staff of all directorates including awareness on travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and people with disabilities.
- Raise awareness among staff about Data Protection Act and E-Commerce Act and to make the City Council's web-site as accessible as possible while making social inclusion a significant part of the Council's web-site.
- Personnel Department to ensure that new City Council staff are committed to social inclusion.
- Personnel to review courses at the Regional Training Centre Ballincollig with a view to incorporating social inclusion elements.

### Customers

- Increased consultation with users.
- Ensure all forms and information from the Franchise Section are literacy and disability proofed - increase voter registration among disadvantaged groups prior to local elections.
- Training on Freedom of Information to

specific reference to supplying information to disadvantaged groups for example how to get information to people with literacy difficulties.

- Literacy proofing information on services for example, rents and allocations section of housing on shared ownership, transfer applications, affordable housing, disability improvement grants, extension applications etc with literacy groups and National Adult Literacy Association.
- Increase the library's section on disability issues.
- More transparent clear criteria on the Waivers Scheme.
- Clearer procedures for the operation of housing schemes and eligibility criteria for Waiver Scheme.

### General public

- Launch and exhibition.
- Audit to be available on the web site and intranet - will be presented at Corporate Policy Group and General Council for consideration(already done?) to increase awareness on social inclusion issues for elected members.
- Role of City Council in social inclusion to be highlighted through staff newsletter, web site and intranet and the social inclusion committee member to liaise with Communications committee in Corporate Affairs Directorate.

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## PUTTING THE **PLAN INTO PRACTICE**

The Social Inclusion Action Plan has already been in place since January. Key advancements have happened, and positive outcomes are starting to be noticed. Below are some examples.

### Training staff

Internal training has been provided to members of staff on:

- Integrating Social Inclusion in the City Council, what does it mean?
- Community Development and participation.
- The theory of "social auditing" and "theory of change?" and the Social Inclusion Audit in Cork City Council.
- Communication and Social Inclusion
- Training all front-line staff on disability issues.
- Frontline staff disability awareness.
- Outdoor staff in roads and transportation training on disability issues awareness raising.
- Training ongoing on anti-racism and multi-cultural issues for staff.
- The IT and Personnel Departments have developed an induction course for both new and existing staff.
- A Cork City Partnership Booklet has been published covering key areas - poverty, housing, family issues, which has been distributed to all staff.

### Consultation

- The Roads Department has been very active meeting the Access Group and disability proofing footpaths. Technical difficulties arise but advancements are happening.
- The environment Department has been working with the Housing Directorate looking at litter problems at one halting site as a pilot programme.
- Parking spaces for people with disabilities increased.

### Challenges

- Organisational and cultural change takes time and resources.





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## V E N U E S

• Millennium Hall, City Hall	31th May - 4th June
• City Library, Grand Parade	7th June - 19 June
• Mayfield Library	21st June - 3rd July
• Cork City Partnership, Sunbeam Industrial Est	5th July - 16 July
• Blackpool Shopping Centre	19th July - 24th July
• Douglas Court Shopping Centre	26th July - 31th July
• Douglas Village Shopping Centre	3rd Aug - 7th Aug
• Vision Centre, North Main Street	9th Aug - 13th Aug
• UCC, O’Rahilly Building	16th Aug - 27th Aug
• Cork Institute of Technology	30th Aug - 3rd Sept
• Glen Resource and Sports Centre	6th Sept - 11th Sept
• Millennium Hall, City Hall	13th Sept - 17th Sept

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Tel: 021-4924060/61  
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