

Ennis RAPID Programme

Background

"Despite the improvements in economic and social standards which Ireland has enjoyed over recent years there are still many people who have not shared in this prosperity...we must take advantage of the opportunities which our prosperity provides in order to distribute our wealth and share our country's success more fairly" Eoin Ryan T.D., Minister of State for Local Government, on the launch of the RAPID Programme.

The *RAPID Programme* has a social inclusion focus and is aimed at improving the quality of life and the opportunities available to residents of the most disadvantaged communities. It is primarily concerned with directing attention and investment towards areas of greatest need, and improving the efficiency of local (government) spending by encouraging inter-agency co-operation and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Designated RAPID Areas

Ennis is one of twenty towns in Ireland that qualified for inclusion in the programme. Eligibility was based on certain socio-economic indices. The specific estates of Cloughleigh, Hermitage, Clancy Park, Drumbiggle, Dalcassian and Old Military Barracks were identified as the areas of greatest disadvantage in the town. The RAPID Co-ordinator, Fiacre J. Hensey, took up office in July, of this year.

Programme Structure

The RAPID structure encompasses an *Area Implementation Team* and a *Community Assembly*. The former is largely the management component of the programme and is composed of representatives of the relevant agencies both statutory and voluntary. The latter is comprised of residents nominated by their associations to represent their interests in matters pertaining to RAPID.

Project Development

Community participation via the *Community Assembly* is an integral part of the Programme. The needs of the community are identified and prioritised at this level,

and in-turn form the basis for the consultative development of projects with those agencies, who deliver a service(s) to the target area.

Funding of Projects

Seventeen projects have been developed to date under the *Ennis RAPID Programme* and submitted for funding under the *National Development Programme (NDP)*. The diversity of projects ranges from youth recreation to security for the elderly, and from infrastructure to anti-social behaviour. Over half of those submitted to date are integrated projects involving collaboration between two or more agencies.

Status of Projects Submitted

Feedback is expected in early 2003, on whether departments have accepted projects, and on when funds shall be released.