



Strategic Plan

2007–2010

FOREWORD

As Chair of the Wicklow County Childcare Committee I am very pleased to present the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010. The Wicklow County Childcare Committee (WCCC) was set up in 2001 and published its first Strategic Plan in 2003. This marked the culmination of the Committee's first stage. The WCCC is dedicated to providing a co-ordinated approach to increasing the quality and quantity of childcare in the County. It is composed of local representatives from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, social partners, parents and childcare providers.

This Strategic Plan builds upon the first Strategic Plan, 2002 – 2006, enriched by the experience that the Committee has gained since its inception in 2001 and shaped by the changes that County Wicklow has gone through in those years. These changes have involved both an increase in the number of women in the workforce and an increase in child population, thus significantly increasing the need for quality childcare in the county. This period has also seen Ireland's greatest ever period of growth, but while our prosperity has increased considerably this has only heightened our awareness of poverty, social inclusion and equality and diversity issues. There is therefore a strong focus on these in the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010 and we regard it as a hugely important part of our work to address them.

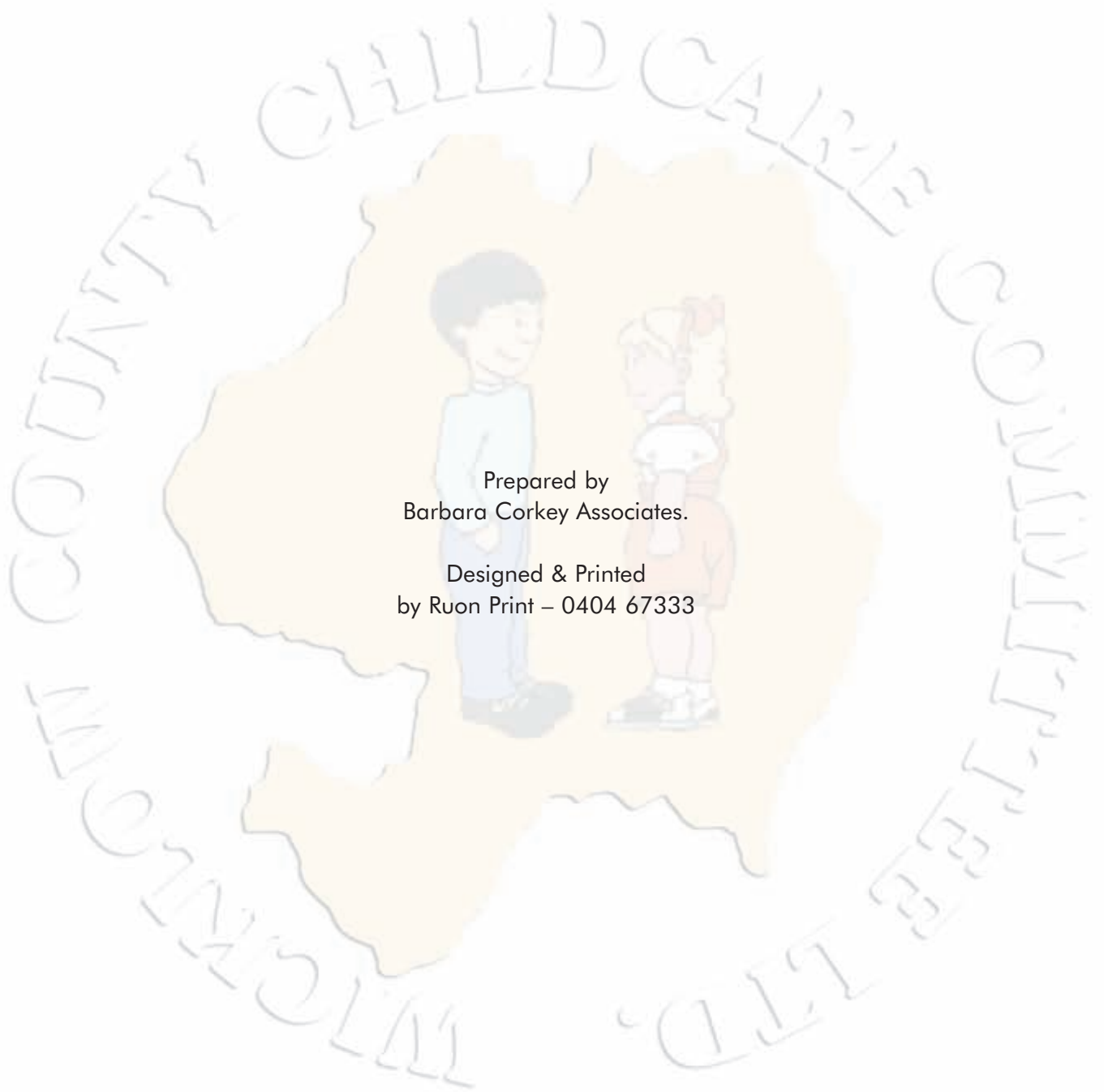
The preparation of the Strategy has been participatory in nature as it involved a wide-ranging consultation process involving all of the stakeholders in childcare in the County. In addition an in-depth research project was carried out culminating in a strategic profile of childcare provision in Co. Wicklow. This Mapping Exercise ensured an informed strategic direction to the work of the WCCC for the coming years. Most of all, though, the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010 is child-centred in that it promotes quality childcare and equality of access.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Committee I would like to express appreciation of the work done by the staff of WCCC – the Co-ordinator, Jeremy Kynaston, the Development Workers – Assumpta O'Neill, Susan Hill and Marie Cuddihy; the Childminding Advisors, Miriam O'Regan and Bridie Clancy, and the Administrators Gráinne Conroy and Judy Collins. The staff have always worked as a team and are deeply committed to increasing the quality and quantity of childcare in the county.

The Strategy was developed with the assistance of Barbara Corkey and the Mapping Exercise with the assistance of Jo Smith and we owe them huge thanks. We also wish to thank all of those who have contributed to the work of the Committee and the development of this Strategy and we look forward to its successful implementation in the coming years.

Deirdre Whitfield
Chairperson

Wicklow County Childcare Committee



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Contents

1. Foreword	1
2. Summary of the Review of Strategic Plan 2002-2006	5
2.1 Achievements	5
2.1.1 Information	5
2.1.2 Process	5
2.1.3 Goals	6
2.2 Conclusions	6
2.2.1 The new Plan	6
2.2.2 Training	6
2.2.3 Networking	6
2.2.4 Collaborative Relationships	6
2.2.5 Accurate Reflection of Objectives	6
2.3 Lessons learned	7
2.3.1 Inform new Plan	7
2.3.2 Social Inclusion and Disadvantage	7
2.3.3 Parents network	7
2.3.4 Pre-school education	7
2.3.5 Gaps as identified by Strategic Profile 2006	7
3. Executive Summary	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 The Consultation Process	9
3.3 Summary of Analysis of Needs and Priority Objectives	10
3.4 Synopsis of Evaluation and Monitoring	10
4. Details of Committee and Staffing Structures	11
4.1.1 Mission Statement	11
4.1.2 Ethos of WCCC	11
4.2 Staff Positions and Responsibilities	11
4.3 Committee	12
4.3.1 Committee responsibilities	12
4.3.2 Committee membership	13
4.3.3 Committee structure	13
4.3.4 Sub-Committees	14
4.3.5 Committee Working Methods	14
4.4 Legal Status	14
5. Details of Area	15
5.1 Demographic Profile	15
5.1.1 Sources of Information	15
5.1.2 Introduction	15
5.1.3 Childcare and future Provision	15
5.1.4 National Population Trends	16
5.1.5 Wicklow Population	
– Growth and change	16
– Population distribution	17
5.2 Socio-Economic factors	17
5.2.1 Employment	17
5.3 Disadvantage and Social Exclusion	18
5.3.1 The Benefits of Early Childhood Education	18
5.3.2 Specific Areas of Disadvantage and Social Exclusion	19
(a) Lone Parents	

(b) Travellers	
(c) Ethnic Minorities	
5.4 Children with Disabilities	19
6. Analysis of Needs	21
6.1 Description and Analysis of Current Provision	
6.1.1 Existing Provision	22
6.1.2 Pre-school Provision	22
6.1.3 Full Day-Care	22
6.1.4 School Age Childcare	23
6.1.5 Childminding	23
6.2.1 Future needs – Background	23
6.2.2 Future needs – Summary	23
7. Objective Setting	25
7.1 Establish and Sustain Local Capacity	25
7.2 Support Strategies for Providers	25
7.3 Quality Standards	26
7.4 Disadvantage and Social Exclusion	26
7.4.1 Maintain and develop relevant childcare	26
7.4.2 Co-ordination and Collaboration	27
7.5 NCIP Application Process	27
7.6 School Age Childcare	27
7.7 Early Childhood Care and Education for 3-4 yr olds	28
7.8 Childminding	28
7.9 Networks	29
7.10 Training	29
7.11 Information Sharing	29
7.12 Attracting Resources	30
8. Linkages and Collaboration	31
8.1 Stakeholders	31
8.2 National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative	32
8.3 Providers and Parents	33
8.4 Further Linkages	34
8.4.1 Other Childcare Committees	34
8.4.2 Other Relevant Agencies	34
9. Review and Monitoring	37
9.1 Overview	37
9.2 Strategic Plan Review	37
9.3 Methodologies and Responsibilities	37
10. Bibliography	38
Tables	
Table 1: Committee Membership	13
Table 2: Changes in Population shown by 2006 Census by area	17
Table 3: Projected Population Increase	21
11. Appendix	39
11.1 Facilities and places by Childcare Census 2006 by Electoral Division cf: total number of Children by State Census 2006 by Electoral Division	

2. Summary of the review of Strategic Plan 2002 - 2006

The Strategic Plan 2002–2006 was formulated as a vision of what the Wicklow County Childcare Committee (WCCC) set out to achieve in this period.

The clarity of the initial vision is shown by the number of objectives in the Strategic Plan 2002-2006 which were achieved, either fully or in good part. Those that have not been achieved are either in the pipeline or have changed as needs have been re-evaluated.

All Committee and Staff members of WCCC spent a day together to review and evaluate the existing Strategic Plan. They identified the achievements of the organisation and the changes needed in response to the lessons learned. These changes have been integrated into the Objective Setting section of this document.

2.1 Achievements

These have been categorised under the core objectives of the Strategic Plan 2002-2006 as listed below:

2.1.1 Information

- Through a continually rising positive profile, the existence and function of the WCCC is becoming increasingly well known County-wide. The profiling activities have included regular radio interviews, dissemination of information through brochures, newsletters, newspaper articles and advertising, and Family Fun Days with art themes such as 'East meets West' and 'Multicultural Wicklow'.
- Assisted by effective Committee partnerships, structures and sub-structures WCCC is an effective conduit for the flow of information among stakeholders.
- The high standard of publications and of the website has added to the information available to all.
- The relocation of the Office in Wicklow town brings WCCC to a central point and enables easy access for training courses and consultations. This reflects the accessibility and availability of the Service and the Staff Team

2.1.2 Process

- The cross-sectoral professional approach of the Committee and growing Staff Team of WCCC have enabled the establishment of professional structures and systems for the provision of childcare in Co Wicklow.
- High quality, affordable childcare training and start-up support have contributed to an increase in the number of childcare places available and to the number of community childcare facilities.
- In particular, with services and training, WCCC is hopeful to maintain and develop its resources available to communities experiencing disadvantage and exclusion.
- Along with a service agreement with HSE, WCCC is providing a Childminders' Advisory service. With the introduction of Voluntary Notification it was noted that most of the 41 Childminders who Notified in the first year were new to childminding and were supported by the WCCC.

- With the publication of Bray Family Childcare Needs Analysis (2004) and the Strategic Profile of Childcare Provision in Co. Wicklow (2006), WCCC has demonstrated its commitment to quality and quantity of the provision of a more focussed service. These publications have provided a valuable assessment of provision and gaps, taking into account anticipated development.
- Through its professional networking approach and influence, the WCCC objectives have informed and been included in the County Development Plan.

2.1.3 Goals

- An effective, strong, professional, well co-ordinated Staff team with excellent Staff-Committee relationships has been established. Childcare Development Workers and Childminder Advisory Officers have provided extensive contact and assistance to all existing childcare facilities, providers and potential providers.
- WCCC has recorded the growth and quality of its development of support for childcare in Wicklow by quarterly monitoring and reporting to Pobal and monthly reporting to the Committee.
- Regular team building and review processes have contributed to the hallmark of equality and quality.
- Regular and on-going updating of data ensures increasing accessibility and communication among stakeholders.

2.2 Conclusions

- 2.2.1 While the Strategic Plan 2002-2006 was a Plan to establish the organisation, the new Plan needs to reflect the maintenance and development of a good quality service.
- 2.2.2 The Training programme is a significant contributor to an increase in quality and quantity of childcare available throughout the County.
- 2.2.3 There is a need to continue to enhance and develop co-ordination between childcare providers through networking, shared activities and sharing information. Mentoring should be encouraged thus promoting dissemination of knowledge from experienced childcare workers to new ones.
- 2.2.4 The flow of support within the collaborative relationships plays a major role in the working of the WCCC.
- 2.2.5 The expressed desire of the Committee and Staff is that the new Plan will accurately reflect the objectives of the service and will relate directly to the development of the service over the next four years.

2.3 Lessons learned

- 2.3.1 The lessons learned from 2002-2006 have informed the objective setting for the next four years.
- 2.3.2 WCCC has identified the need to continue to work with childcare issues as they relate to those who are experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion.
- 2.3.3 There is a need to further focus on networks for providers and parents. The practicalities of a mentoring service will be considered.
- 2.3.4 There is a need to increase awareness of both pre-school education and School Age Childcare and the capacity of childcare provision to include these facilities.
- 2.3.5 WCCC plans to focus on the gaps in childcare services as identified in the Strategic Profile of Childcare Provision in Co. Wicklow 2006:
- Pre-school sessional services
 - Full day-care
 - School-age childcare
 - Childminding
 - Identifying in detail the needs of all disadvantaged and socially excluded groups in the County

3. Executive Summary of Strategic Plan 2007-2010

3.1 Introduction to the Strategy

The WCCC was established in 2001 to promote a co-ordinated approach to increasing the quantity and quality of childcare in the County. The Committee is composed of those 'stakeholders' with an interest in childcare - local representatives from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, social partners, parents and childcare providers in the County.

The WCCC developed its original Strategic Plan 2002-2006 under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006. It was aimed broadly at the development of quality, affordable childcare services in Co Wicklow.

The National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010 was announced in the 2005 Budget as the successor to the EOCP. This is a five-year Exchequer funded programme of which the key objectives are:

- An increase in the supply of, and an improvement in the quality of, early childhood care and education services, part-time and full day, school age childcare and childminding.
- To support families in breaking the cycle of disadvantage.
- To support a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of childcare which is centred on the needs of the child.

This has informed the Strategic Plan 2007-2010.

Planning has involved the Committee in a facilitative process to develop its Childcare Strategy (2007-2010), ensuring participation by members and ownership of the Strategy. This has included:

- Review and evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2002-2006
- Identification of policy issues that are relevant to Co Wicklow

This involved:

- Use of the research and information from the Strategic Profile of Childcare Provision in Co. Wicklow in 2006 which identify priority childcare needs in Co Wicklow – both geographically and by service type.
- A consultation process with Committee and sub-committee members, and Staff of WCCC.
- Additional consultation with a range of stakeholders including:
 - Parents
 - Childcare providers
 - Children
 - Local agencies: statutory, community and voluntary.

The process of development of the Strategic Plan has been participatory in nature and has retained a clear vision for realistic development over the period 2007-2010. It builds on the achievements of WCCC during 2002-2006 and incorporates the objectives of the NCIP (2006-2010).

The plan is child-centred. It promotes quality, and equality of access. It is practical and takes into account the projected growth in Co Wicklow and the increasing diversity of families.

3.2 The Strategic Planning Consultation process.

The process of evolving the Strategic Plan 2007-2010 began with a facilitated day for the Committee and Staff to review and evaluate the Strategic Plan 2002-2006.

This group agreed which stakeholders should be included in the consultation.

WCCC Staff team was facilitated in an 'objective setting' session.

The analyses from the following consultation process were added to the objectives in a working session with the Strategic Planning Working Group

The following methodologies were agreed and carried out:

- Questionnaires for parent and toddler groups.
- Questionnaires for parents using community childcare services with childcare workers assisting the recording of responses.
- Questionnaires for school-age children completed where necessary by childcare workers writing down the children's responses.
- Focus groups were held in Baltinglass, Wicklow and Bray on a come-all basis for providers and parents
- Face to face interviews held with childcare providers included
 - Community pre-school rural
 - Community school-age
 - Community pre-school urban
 - Private sessional
 - Private full day care
 - Childminders
- Site visits made to community childcare facilities including interviews with childcare workers
- Telephone contact made with representatives of:
 - Other Childcare Committees (ranging from City to Rural)
 - Pre-school Inspectors
 - HSE
 - OMC
 - NVCC's including: Childminding Ireland, NCNA, IPPA
 - IBEC
 - Local Government / Partnerships including: Wicklow Rural Partnership, Wicklow Working Together, Bray Partnership, Arklow Community Enterprise, County Enterprise Board, Chambers of Commerce, SIM group of the County Development Board , Wicklow Community Platform
 - Co Council Planners and Architects
 - V.E.C.
 - Education Authorities
 - Trades Unions
 - FÁS

Some of those contacted by telephone responded by email, some offered personal interviews and some were content to have a telephone conversation. All of those approached were delighted to be included in the consultation process and extremely helpful both with assessment of the impact of WCCC and suggestions for the maintenance and development of the service in the future.

3.3 Summary of analysis of needs and priority objectives

It is important to note that demographic and socio-economic analysis does not deliver precise data on how to assess future provision. Prediction relies on extrapolating past trends and assuming patterns of human behaviour. Accordingly the analysis below should be seen as a planning tool not a definite prescriptive answer. So over the period of the Strategic Plan it will be necessary to monitor further Census 2006 information as it is released and seek other information.

However, it is likely that the broad trends and patterns identified will persist over the relatively short period of the Strategic Plan and the Plan should seek to cater for these outcomes.

To meet the NCIP targets, the following are of the greatest importance to the Plan over the period 2007 – 2010 addressing disadvantage and the importance of pre-schools and childcare generally as a family support:

- there will be at least a 10% increase in child population, amounting to some 2,000 children over the Plan period which is higher than the national average
- there will be an increased need for childcare over and above that indicated solely by natural growth in the child population as employment and particularly female participation in employment grows
- there will be focussed increases in the need for childcare in the centres identified by the County Council as those where growth will be encouraged and permitted
- added to these increases is the need to address the shortfalls of existing provision in the centres and rural clusters identified below, particularly by support for the development of community pre-school and playgroup facilities in areas of disadvantage
- there are general County-wide shortfalls in Full Day Care and School Age Childcare.

Despite the thorough work undertaken by the Strategic Profile there is a shortage of information available on the number of childminders. This is being addressed by the encouragement of Voluntary Notification and the expansion of networks.

The Strategic Profile concluded that relative affluence and deprivation cannot be taken in isolation as an indicator of the level of childcare provision. Additional information on the relationship between these two factors will be ascertained by monitoring new facilities.

3.4 Synopsis of evaluation and monitoring mechanisms

The Evaluation, Monitoring Equality and Diversity (EMED) sub-committee meets quarterly to review progress against the Action Plan. The templates which are created at the beginning of the year work effectively in tracking progress with each action and the cumulative budget spend. A report is presented to the Committee's monthly meeting following each quarter.

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed mid-term at the end of 2008.

4. Details of the Committee and Staffing Structures

4.1.1 Mission Statement

Wicklow County Childcare Committee promotes the development of childcare in County Wicklow so that all children have access to a range of high quality childcare services which nurture their development

4.1.2 Ethos Role of Wicklow County Childcare Committee

The Committee will be guided by the following principles:

Quality: WCCC is committed to quality in all aspects of childcare and in the working of the Committee itself

Partnership: WCCC is committed, in line with current Government policy, to an integrated, co-ordinated and networked approach to achieving its goals and will build on the existing partnership approach adopted both in terms of the Committee itself and with all relevant stakeholders.

Social Inclusion: WCCC will pay particular attention to equity and diversity within childcare provision to ensure that factors such as poverty, disadvantage, ethnicity, gender, religion, geography or lack of information do not act as a barrier to accession of quality childcare.

Communication: WCCC will be proactive in the dissemination of information and in developing effective and respective two-way communication links between all relevant stakeholders.

Consultation: WCCC will consult with relevant stakeholders where appropriate, including children themselves, and conduct research in order to guide policy.

Co-ordination: WCCC will work to co-ordinate the relevant participants in the development and delivery of childcare and will address gaps in services and will seek to avoid overlaps.

Commitment: WCCC is committed in its work to achieve the mission statement and the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

4.2 Staff Positions and Responsibilities

Co-ordinator: Jeremy Kynaston. Reports to Staff Liaison on Staffing and Recruitment Sub-Committee.

All other staff report to Co-ordinator.

Childcare Development workers (part-time):

Susan Hill - for east Wicklow

Assumpta O'Neill - for west and south Wicklow

Marie Cuddihy - for Bray, Greystones and north Wicklow

Childminders' Advisory Officers:

Miriam O'Regan (half time and funded by HSE Wicklow area, employed by WCCC)

– for north, east and south Wicklow

Bridie Clancy (employed by HSE South West Region)

– for west Wicklow and Kildare

Administrators:

Gráinne Conroy

Judy Collins (part-time)

Staff Management Appraisal Process

A performance management system will be developed and staff reviews will continue to take place annually

Role support is available to staff

4.3.1 Committee Responsibilities

The WCCC will:

- a) Implement and co-operate with the CCC handbook and all operational guidelines by carrying out all executive, administrative and delivery functions to support good corporate governance of the company, including formal mechanisms for keeping boards fully and appropriately informed
- b) Submit financial returns, performance monitoring and annual progress reports to Pobal as and when they fall due
- c) Set defined targets, in agreement with Pobal, for the implementation of its programme and carry out annual reviews of its targets and outcomes
- d) Adhere to good employment practice through implementing policies agreed by the Board covering recruitment, leave, grievance and disciplinary procedures; staff contracts will reflect this
- e) Commit to maintaining a well managed industrial relations environment to minimise disputes affecting the level of service to the public
- f) Implement an agreed customer charter which includes a customer complaints procedure
- g) Adhere to financial best practice as set out in the Manual of Accounting Procedures and Practices which includes: adherence to the highest standards in project file maintenance, adherence to public procurement procedures as advised and the development of and adherence to a code of standards and behaviour for staff
- h) Commit to increased flexibility, including in relation to working arrangements, and cooperate with and participate in work and organisational evolution and change
- i) Cooperate with the introduction of new technology to further enhance business processes and service delivery to clients

4.3.2 Committee membership and sectors they represent.

The WCCC will continue to include the following sectoral representation and will be open to expansion as and if required:

Table 1. Committee Membership

Sector	No. of Reps.	Group	Name of Rep
Statutory	5	Health Service Executive	John Quin
		Wicklow County Council/ Dept. of Environment through Wicklow County Development Board	Deirdre Whitfield
		FÁS	Ann McLoughlin
		Co Wicklow VEC	Brian MacDiarmada
		Dept. of Education & Science	Nora Hickey
Local Development/ Partnership Groups	2	Bray Partnership	Lorna Lafferty
		Wicklow Working Together	Christine Keegan
Social Partners	5	Trade Unions	Kieron Connolly
		Wicklow & District Chamber of Commerce	Christine Campbell
		IFA	Breda Devitt-Durkin
		Community & Voluntary Sector	Catherine O'Grady
		Wicklow Communities Networking	Gertrude Salley
National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative	2		Aileen Bradshaw
			Patricia Murray
Childcare Providers	2	Community Provider	Lily Dempsey
		Private Provider	Carolyn Eglinton
Parents	1		Clare Tyrrell-Smith
In attendance	1	Pobal	Orla McMahon

4.3.3 Committee Structure

The membership structure of the WCCC consists of 18 members representing the main statutory bodies, the social partners, the National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative, parents and providers. A representative from Pobal is in attendance at meetings.

4.3.4 Sub-Committees

Relevant sub-committees of the WCCC exist to progress the Committee's operation.

A convenor exists within each sub-committee to chair the meetings and report progress and give feedback to the Committee. There are 3-8 members within sub-committees, consisting primarily of members from the WCCC Committee. However other members can be co-opted to particular sub-committees (e.g. Pre-school Officer or any appropriately experienced person) with the agreement of the full Committee

4.3.5 Working methods of the Committee

The WCC Committee holds regular meetings during the year with its AGM in April.

The sub-committee structure is as follows:

- Finance: meets monthly, one week before Committee meetings.
- Training and Information: meets as required.
- Evaluation, Monitoring, Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion: meets quarterly.
- Childminding Initiative: meets quarterly.
- Staffing and Recruitment: meets as required.
- Project Evaluation (evaluates funding Proposal Frameworks for submission to Pobal and OMC): meets as needed to fit Portfolio timetable.

Reports and recommendations are made to the Committee following each sub-committee meeting

4.4 Legal Status of WCCC

The Committee is a company legally constituted under the Companies Act. It is a limited company (incorporated in 2002) and has Charitable status. It has agreed its Memorandum and Articles of Association. For reasons of equality the Memorandum and Articles adopted ensure that co-opted members have the same status as other members.

5. Details of the Area

5.1 Demographic Profile

5.1.1 Sources of Information

Information on the demographic profile of Co. Wicklow has been taken from, Vital Statistics Second Quarter 2006 Annual compiled by the Central Statistics Office on behalf of the Department of Health and Children and issued in December 2006, and the Census 2006 Preliminary Report compiled by the Central Statistics Office and issued in July 2006.

This Plan builds on the extensive demographic and socio-economic information contained in the Strategic Profile of Childcare Provision in Co Wicklow prepared by Wicklow County Childcare Committee Ltd in May 2006. This Profile used the information contained in the 2002 Census.

The full Census 2006 results will be released as they become available during the later part of 2007. These full results may refine the analysis outcomes given below and these should be examined and monitored as part of the review process of the Strategic Plan. However the Census 2006 Preliminary Report gives access to the main changes in population and broad trends. (See 5.1.5 for more detail)

5.1.2 Introduction

County Wicklow is one of the most rapidly growing counties in Ireland in terms of both its population and employment.

This growth sits within the context of other national, regional and local changes. The County is part of the Greater Dublin Area and is subject to many of the pressures emanating from the expansion of the capital city. Improved road infrastructure has resulted in increasing numbers of people commuting to Dublin to work. The County is becoming increasingly urbanised. Employment patterns are changing, for example, showing from 1996 to 2002 a 70% increase in people employed in building and construction and a 24% rise in people employed in transport.

The main concentrations of population are located along the N11 corridor on the east coast with a number of smaller centres along the N81 to the west. East-west movement within the County is restricted by the mountains.

5.1.3 Childcare – future provision

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to identify existing shortfalls in childcare provision and to establish future needs. The future needs for childcare will be determined by population and social change, government development policy, housing land availability, migration and employment patterns and the existing provision of childcare facilities.

5.1.4. National Population Trends

The Census 2006 Preliminary Report notes a record increase in national population at a rate of 2% per year over the intercensal period 2002 to 2006. This compares with 1.3% for the previous intercensal period 1996-2002. This growth is the result of increases in both natural increase and net migration. The highest population growth was in the Mid-East region which comprises the counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. The growth in the region was 3.75% per year. In Co. Wicklow the growth was 2.55%. This growth is consistent with the noted trend of high population growth rates in areas within commuting distance of Dublin.

It is also relevant to note that only six of the thirty-four administrative Counties experienced net outward migration. Of particular relevance to Wicklow is that three of these counties were Dublin, Dublin South and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. This is considered to be due to factors such as urban renewal programmes and the demolition of older housing. Out migration from these areas may place further growth pressures on neighbouring areas.

5.1.5 Wicklow Population

(a) GROWTH AND CHANGE

As noted by the Strategic Profile, Wicklow is one of the most rapidly growing Counties in Ireland. From 1996 to 2002 the population increased by about 12,000. The 2002 Census also showed that 25,825 of the County's population [22.5%] were aged 14 years or under.

The Census 2006 Preliminary Report shows that Wicklow's population increased by 11,654 over the intercensal period 2002 – 2006, from 114,676 in 2002 to 126,330 in 2006. This is a rate of growth of 10.2% over the period compared to the national average of 8%. Of this total increase of 11,654, natural increase accounted for 40% of the growth [4,611 persons] while net migration contributed 60% [7,043 persons].

These figures broadly accord with the assumptions in the Strategic Profile. If the actual growth experienced in the period 2002-06 continues to 2010 this will give a total population of about 139,000. The Strategic Profile [Table 4] gave a low estimate of 134,000 and a high estimate of 146,000. Accordingly in terms of broad population numbers it would be reasonable to plan on the basis of a slightly higher population total in 2010 than anticipated as the low estimate in the Strategic Profile, but not to plan on the basis of the high estimate.

As stated, future growth in the population is also dependant on a range of factors. As noted, 60% of the population growth in Wicklow is a result of net migration which is driven by economic and social forces which may weaken or strengthen over the Plan period.

In terms of Government action it is the policy of Wicklow County Council to facilitate the growth of existing and the creation of new employment and industry in a sustainable manner across the County. The Council has identified those areas where it wishes to accommodate growth and the current County Development Plan indicates that in the main there is adequate land zoned and available to meet the anticipated population growth. In addition to this general planning a RAPID initiative operates in Bray, and south-west Wicklow has been declared a CLÁR area. These initiatives may result in the need for enhanced provision of childcare, particularly from the community sector.

Employment growth has been significant in Co Wicklow and from 1996 to 2002 the number of people in employment rose by 31%.

Given these factors and the development pressures emanating from Dublin it is fair to assume that net migration will continue over the Plan period and a population projection of 139,000 will occur.

In conclusion, while the growth of Wicklow's population may not achieve the highest estimate there does not appear to be any reason to doubt that the current growth of about 2.5% per year will continue over the Plan period

(b) POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

The change in population shown by the 2006 Census by area is shown in Table 2. below:

Area	1996	2002	% change per year	2006	% change per year
Wicklow County	102,683	114,719	1.9	126,330	2.5
Arklow Urban Area	8,519	9,963	2.8	11,721	4.4
Bray Urban Area	25,252	26,215	0.6	26,985	0.7
Wicklow Urban Area	6,416	7,007	1.5	6,835	-0.5
Baltinglass Rural Area	12,749	14,715	2.6	17,002	3.95
Rathdown Rural Area	16,395	19,025	2.6	19,496	0.7
Rathdrum Rural Area	26,932	31,086	2.6	36,830	4.6
Shillelagh Rural Area	6,420	6,708	0.7	7,461	2.7

Wicklow County Council's Settlement Strategy aims to locate future population growth and channel development into the Metropolitan Area Settlements of Bray and Greystones/Delgany and the Hinterland Development Centres of Wicklow and Arklow. A reduced level of growth, allowing for natural increase but restricted immigration, is to be permitted in the Primary Growth Centres of Baltinglass, Blessington/Burgage, Carnew, Newtownmountkennedy, and Rathdrum and Secondary Growth Centres of Ashford, Aughrim, Avoca, Dunlavin, Kilcoole, Newcastle, Roundwood, Shillelagh and Tinahely. Only minor developments will be permitted in the large and small villages of the County.

This pattern and distribution of growth will absorb some 72% of the County's growth.

5.2 Socio-economic factors

5.2.1 Employment

As stated employment growth has been significant in Co. Wicklow. In 1996 the total labour force was 42,600 of which 85% were classified as "at work". By 2002 the total labour force was 52,000 of which 92% were classified as "at work".

The service sector was the main employer and currently accounts for over 50% of the work force. The people employed in these jobs live mainly on the east coast and in the north and north west of the County. This is due to many of these jobs being located in Dublin and people commuting to this work.

Wicklow County Council's employment strategy is aimed at sustainable growth and generally new industry will be encouraged to locate in areas related to towns. This will reinforce the County Council's settlement strategy of directing new housing to identified main centres.

Research has also pointed out that lack of childcare is a significant barrier to the pursuit of

employment. The growth in employment experienced within the County is likely to increase the demand for childcare.

In 1996 47% were classified as engaged in home duties, but by 2002 this had fallen to 37.5%. Over this period the number of people occupied in home duties fell by 2,483.

In 1996 the female participation rate in employment was 39%, but by 2002 this had risen to 46%.

These trends have a clear impact on the need for childcare. Employment growth will generally fuel the demand for childcare and this is likely to be most marked in the areas where people locate so they can commute to Dublin.

The need for childcare as a component in enabling the labour force to grow is to be considered in relation to the growing rate of female participation in employment. The increasing female involvement in employment and the parallel decline in those involved in home duties will mean that demand for childcare will continue to grow.

It is noted that the provision of childcare facilities is an important element in tackling unemployment. Accordingly improved provision will be required in those areas where unemployment is greatest. The main concentrations of long term unemployed people are in the urban areas, notably Arklow and Wicklow and those areas of Bray covered by the RAPID initiative. There are also areas of West Wicklow where long term unemployment is an issue.

5.3 Disadvantage and Social Exclusion

5.3.1. The WCCC acknowledges that marginalisation, is caused by socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The Report on the National Forum for Early Childhood Education (1998) outlines the benefits of early childhood education such as raising individual potential, promoting social inclusion, increasing returns on educational investment and enhancing future employability. These benefits are particularly pronounced for children from disadvantaged backgrounds whose participation in such programmes can lead to improved education participation and achievement in later life, as well as enhanced self-esteem and employment prospects. The WCCC is committed to improving both the quantity and quality of childcare provision in Co. Wicklow and to proofing the work of the Committee in terms of equality of access, participation and outcome.

The Office for Social Inclusion's first annual report, on the subject of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities states that it is committed:

...To promote the social integration of [families] at risk of facing persistent poverty, for example because they have a disability or belong to a group experiencing particular integration problem such as those affecting immigrants;

And they have promised

...additional resources for schools to support the needs of students for whom English is not their first language.

Guidelines for schools are being published in the coming months demonstrating the level of awareness at National level; if it is relevant for schools it also has significance for childcare facilities. The WCCC is including the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities in its training programmes.

5.3.2 Specific areas of disadvantage and exclusion

The Strategic Profile of Childcare provision (2006) identifies members of disadvantaged groups as the following: Lone Parents, Travellers, and ethnic minorities

(a) LONE PARENTS:

According to Census 2002 there were 3,953 lone mothers and 701 lone fathers in Co. Wicklow. Of those who work most mothers work part-time while most fathers work full-time. In order to work around children's needs, job choices are often limited and career advancement is poor. Lone parents often experience difficulty in accessing education or training because of a lack of good quality affordable childcare and after school care.

(b) TRAVELLERS

567 Travellers were enumerated as living in Co. Wicklow by the 2002 census. 42.2% were living in Bray. 239 Traveller children in Co. Wicklow were under 14 years. Recent research into young Travellers experience of education showed that pre-school and primary school plays a very important part in the whole family's attitude to education generally. Through contact with early childhood education parents, in particular mothers, became aware of the positive impact of education on their children. Childcare providers in Bray are working successfully with Traveller families who use their services.

(c) ETHNIC MINORITIES INCLUDING FOREIGN NATIONALS

The primary issues identified in 'New Ethnic Minorities in Bray' (Bray Partnership) and cited in the Strategic Profile were the language barrier, lack of easily available relevant information, lack of support services and legislation and policy changes needed at national level.

Businesses and employers have been actively recruiting outside of the European Economic Area in recent years. In 2004 there were 250 new work permits issued in Co. Wicklow and 865 renewed.

In his promotion of a Social Cohesion model for multicultural communities Ted Cantle (Chairperson Community Cohesion Review team for the British Government) states that segregation and separation work against social cohesion. While Britain describes itself a multicultural society, most people do not live in multicultural communities. Ireland needs to do things differently. By responding inclusively to the needs of ethnic minorities the WCCC contributes largely to a more healthy society.

5.4 Children with Disabilities

Research for Enable Ireland (Wicklow Services) outlined issues facing children with disabilities and their families in Co. Wicklow. These are as follows:

- In terms of provision of childcare facilities which cater for children with disabilities in Co. Wicklow, services are thin on the ground. There is also a lack of after school care and family based respite care
- Difficulties are experienced by parents with children with disabilities in recruiting childminders, especially for older children who are dependent on assistance and may have challenging behaviours
- There is a lack of childcare facilities within local communities for children with disabilities
- Services provided by childcare providers need to be flexible and need to address the issues facing young people with disabilities
- Many young people are inappropriately placed because they have multiple disabilities and are classed solely under one of these

It was also noted within the research that Childcare providers noted a general willingness to deal with children with special needs. However, there was also a general reluctance to provide childcare places for these children due to a number of reasons, such as staffing, special requirements, the unsuitability of buildings and cost factors. The consultation process for this Plan highlights the need for training and support for childcare workers in working with children with disabilities.

More research is needed within the county to assess the needs of all disadvantaged and socially excluded groups.



6. Analysis of needs.

If, as seems reasonable to assume, the population growth from 2006 to 2010 continues at the same rate as that experienced from 2002 to 2006. The population will grow from 126,000 to 139,000 a rise of some 13,000.

Table 2 of the Strategic Profile examines this growth but takes as its 2010 population the indicative maximum. This analysis takes the 2.5% growth that occurred from 2002 to 2006 and projects this same rate to 2010. This would be within the low and high estimates taken by the Strategic Profile.

Table 3. Projected Population Increase 2006-2010

	Area	Pop 2002	Pop 2006	Pop 2010	Increase 2006 to 2010	Increase in No of children under 14years
Metropolitan Area Settlements	Bray	28,002	30,858	34,005	3,147	708
	Greystones/Delgany	11,913	13,128	14,467	1,339	301
Primary Development Centre	Wicklow/Rathnew	10,796	11,897	13,110	1,213	273
Secondary Development Centre	Arklow	9,993	11,012	12,135	1,123	253
Primary Local Growth Centres	Baltinglass	1,260	1,388	1,529	141	32
	Blessington/Burgage	2,509	2,765	3,047	282	63
	Carnew	809	891	982	91	20
	Newtownmountkennedy	2,521	2,778	3,061	283	63
	Rathdrum	1,387	1,528	1,683	155	35
Secondary Local Growth Centres	Ashford	1,356	1,494	1,646	152	34
	Aughrim	871	960	1,058	98	22
	Avoca	564	621	684	63	14
	Dunlavin	814	891	981	90	20
	Kilcoole	2,826	3,114	3,432	318	72
	Newcastle	851	938	1,034	96	22
	Roundwood	518	571	629	58	13
	Shillelagh	278	306	337	31	7
	Tinahely	692	763	841	78	18
	Total increases					8,758

The Table's assessment appears acceptably accurate for strategic planning purposes when tested against the broad patterns anticipated. The projected growth from 2006 to 2010 is 13,000. If 72% of the growth is located in the settlements in the Table then a population increase of 9,360 would be expected. The assumptions behind the Table indicate an increase of 8,758.

Accordingly if the proportion of the population under 14 years old remains at the figure of 22.5% which prevailed in the 2002 Census then the Table shows that there will be 1,971 additional children from 2006 to 2010 in the major centres. The total population will increase by 13,000 of which 2,925 will be children, so there will be an increase of approximately 1,000 children outside the main centres.

The timeframe of 2006-2010 used in the Table is to relate the figures to Census comparisons. The Strategic Plan operates from 2007 to 2010 inclusive. However this is also a four year period so the increase in the number of children over the Strategic Plan period would be as given in the Table.

Therefore future childcare demand will be driven by the addition of approximately 3,000 children to the County's population from 2006 to 2010. Of these approximately 2,000 will be located in the major centres indicated and 1,000 over the rest of the County. In addition if female participation in employment continues to rise at the rate found in 1996 to 2002 then there will be approximately another 2,000 fall in people occupied in home duties with a resulting increase in the need for childcare.

6.1 Description and Analysis of Current Provision

6.1.1 Existing Provision of Childcare

The Strategic Profile 2006 undertook a thorough audit of childcare provision and describes in detail the location and types of services offered.

Appendix 1 to this Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010, combines Table 13 of the Strategic Profile, which identifies the shortfalls in childcare provision, with age groups figures from the State Census 2006.

Taken as a whole the County affords 50% of children aged 3-4 with access to Pre-school places. Only 10% of children aged 0-4 have access to Full Daycare places. Only 3% of children aged 5-14 have access to a School Age Childcare place.

The following assessment looks principally at the Electoral Divisions [ED] which have a significant child population.

6.1.2 Pre-school provision

In terms of Pre-school places, the Electoral Divisions [ED] which may have less than the County average are: Arklow No.1 Urban though this may be compensated for by the provision in the neighbouring Arklow No.2 Urban; Bray No.3 and Rathmichael and Kilmacanogue though this may be compensated for by the provision in the neighbouring Bray No.1 and Bray No.2.

Electoral Divisions which have less than the County average and do not seem to have neighbouring provision are Wicklow, Newcastle Lower and Newcastle Upper.

The Strategic Profile rightly draws attention to clusters of EDs which surround towns or villages which have no Pre-school provision and where the combined numbers of children exceeds 30. These town or villages are Rathdrum, Rathdangan, Ballinclash, Ballycullen and Stratford

6.1.3 Full Day Care

In terms of Full Day Care places for children aged 0-4 there are significant shortfalls below the County average in Arklow No.1 Urban, Bray No.3 and Rathmichael though again these may be compensated for by neighbouring provision.

EDs which have less than the County average and do not seem to have neighbouring provision are Greystones and Kilmacanogue.

Only 7 out of 82 EDs have more day care places available than the County average. The Strategic Profile points to EDs with more than 70 children aged 0-4 but with no Day Care facilities. Of these Bray No.1, Rathmichael, Burgage, Glenealy and Newcastle Lower may have this shortfall compensated for by neighbouring provision. However Dunlavin, Aughrim, Carnew and Tinahely with a total of 367 children have little or no neighbouring provision.

6.1.4. School Age Childcare [SAC]

The Strategic Profile notes the poor provision of SAC in the County and further draws attention to questions on the suitability of some of the SAC that does exist. Only Bray No.1 has any significant provision and the Profile is explicit in its call for additional services in this area of provision.

6.1.5 Childminding

Of the childminders surveyed for the Strategic Profile 87.72% offer their service for five days per week. Over half (54.24%) operate for 48 weeks per year, which allows four weeks for personal holidays. 13.56% of those surveyed operate during school terms only. One provider works in a Montessori school during term time and offers a childminding service for 8 weeks in the summer. Three childminders employ an additional staff member to assist with their services.

Of those childminders who care for school age children, 76% provide a service full time during school holidays or on days when schools are closed and 80% provide a collection/delivery service to local schools.

13 of those surveyed intend to develop their premises to have a separate area for childcare or to expand the level of provision they provide. 17 currently have a separate area within their home for the children's use. 18 have already received capital grant aid towards their service. 16 of these received the childminders' development grant and the remaining 2 received EOCP funding.

81.36% of childminders surveyed have completed some childcare training.

6.2.1 Future Needs - Background

It is important to note that demographic and socio-economic analysis does not deliver precise data on how to assess future provision. Prediction relies on extrapolating past trends and assuming patterns of human behaviour. Accordingly the above analysis should be seen as a planning tool not a definite prescriptive answer. So over the period of the Strategic Plan it will be necessary to monitor further Census 2006 information as it is released and seek other information.

6.2.2 Future needs – Summary.

However, it is likely that the broad trends and patterns identified will persist over the relatively short period of the Strategic Plan and the Plan should seek to cater for these outcomes.

To meet the NCIP targets, the following are of the greatest importance to the Plan over the period 2007 – 2010 addressing disadvantage and the importance of pre-schools and childcare generally as a family support:

- there will be at least a 10% increase in child population, amounting to some 2,000 children over the Plan period which is higher than the national average
- there will be an increased need for childcare over and above that indicated solely by natural growth in the child population as employment and particularly female participation in employment grows
- there will be focussed increases in the need for childcare in the centres identified by the County Council as those where growth will be encouraged and permitted
- added to these increases is the need to address the shortfalls of existing provision in the centres and rural clusters identified above
- there are general County-wide shortfalls in Full Day Care and School Age Childcare.

Despite the thorough work undertaken by the Strategic Profile there is still inadequate information available on the number of childminders. It would also be helpful to compare the childcare facilities provided privately and on a community basis.

Additional information would also be helpful on the relationship between the level of childcare and measures of relative affluence and deprivation. The Strategic Profile concluded that relative affluence and deprivation cannot be taken in isolation as an indicator of the level of childcare provision.



7. Objective setting

The detailed objectives of Wicklow County Childcare Committee have been informed by the consultation process, the experience of the organisation and the guidance of the NCIP.

The Strategic Objectives established for 2007 – 2010 are therefore:

7.1:

The WCCC will maintain and build the local capacity to establish and sustain childcare places/services across all categories of childcare providers/services by doing the following:

- WCCC will continue to carry out and develop its work with other agencies, groups and areas on childcare issues

7.2:

The WCCC will establish, develop and maintain relevant support strategies for childcare providers at local level by doing the following:

- (a) Training provided by WCCC will make every attempt to be accessible to all relevant participants.
- (b) Support from Childcare Development Workers
- (c) Provision of information targeting areas of need
- (d) In order to create more childcare places and provide longer hours of childcare when required, working with:
 - Community sector
 - Private sector
 - Parents
 - Childminders
 - Parent and toddler groups, in conjunction with the Katherine Howard Foundation
 - School-age childcare
 - Full day care
 - Traveller groups and groups with special needs
 - Employers; to encourage
 - the provision of childcare facilities
 - more flexible working patterns
 - family friendly arrangements for school-age childcare
 - provide information on childcare facilities in the area
- (e) Applying for NCIP funding
- (f) Networking / peer mentoring / support to link new people with the area of quality issues. WCCC will investigate the possibilities of a Bank of childcare workers
- (g) A pro-active approach to funding; providing information sessions to promote awareness of NCIP funding available and assistance with the process of application
- (h) Continuous updating of childcare provision/current need to avoid displacement of services
- (i) Establish, develop and maintain networks. Widen the existing field to cover areas of need that are not currently being met

7.3:

The WCCC will develop and promote quality standards and targets for childcare in the county by doing the following

- (a) Training
- (b) Engage with CECDE to promote Síolta workshops in order to implement quality standards with individual services
- (c) Linking providers with quality standards which already exist through:
 - NCNA
 - IPPA
 - Childminding Ireland
 - St Nicholas
 - Forbait Naonrai Teo
- (d) Childcare regulations:
 - Promote them
 - Provide information
 - Information sessions
 - Workshops on new regulations
- (e) Targets: work with Pre-school Officers
- (f) Maintain a partnership with Pre-school Officers so that Development Workers can follow up on issues of quality. Guidance for this to include National Guidelines for Childminders
- (g) WCCC to advocate for Garda vetting for all members of households where childcare takes place

7.4:

The WCCC will promote initiatives that enhance the level of appropriate service provision which target disadvantage and social inclusion issues by doing the following:

7.4.1 The WCCC will maintain and develop childcare provision by the following methods:

- (a) Through research, identify specific local childcare needs of families experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion; namely Travellers; other ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. Promote awareness of these issues with all providers.
- (b) Explore Family Outreach Support provision.
- (c) Support Community childcare provision which targets areas of disadvantage and social exclusion.
- (d) Support School-age childcare provision which targets areas of disadvantage and social exclusion.
- (e) Provide supervision of training childcare providers addressing social inclusion issues.
- (f) Work with relevant agencies to assess and meet the needs of immigrant families.
- (g) Promote the provision of county-wide childcare for parents considering education or training.
- (h) Include awareness of rural disadvantage in all areas of disadvantage.
- (i) Assist community childcare providers to establish sliding scale fee structures.

7.4.2 The WCCC will enhance and develop co-ordination at all levels by:

- (a) Broad interagency collaboration, consultation and co-operation. Links with the Social Inclusion Monitoring (SIM) Group to include:
 - Synergy between WCCC and SIM objectives
 - WCCC involvement in childcare actions in LAPS and Traveller Inter-agency group
 - WCCC to engage in relevant research with SIM and CDB and be involved in the actions resulting from it
- (b) Co-ordination of the provision of the service of the CCC and the dissemination of information at all levels; staff, local, county and national.
- (c) Stay central to the process of the dissemination of this information
- (d) To operate as a conduit in the transmission of information and raising awareness
- (e) Providing feedback on relevant issues to inform policy through the CCC representative on the NCCC and other appropriate organisations

7.5:

Through the CCC role in the NCIP application process, WCCC will establish a strategic and proactive approach to be taken to childcare development at county level by doing the following:

Proactively promote awareness of NCIP funding available by providing:

- Information sessions and consultation opportunities for providers and parents
- Assistance with applications for funding
- Target areas of need:
 - those of disadvantage and social exclusion
 - school-age childcare
 - pre-school education
 - community childcare

7.6:

The WCCC will identify and promote initiatives targeted at the development and support of School-Age Childcare in the county by doing the following:

- (a) Specific school-age childcare training provision to be maintained and expanded.
- (b) Promote awareness of the need for school-age childcare and support the involvement of stakeholders in a facilitated process in response to the need to develop and support school-age childcare

Stakeholders to include:

- Schools
 - Parishes
 - Dept. of Education and Science
 - Landowners, including councils
 - Community organisations
 - Parents
 - Pre-school providers
- (c) Provide relevant information of NCIP grants available.
 - (d) Promote and develop best practice guidelines for school-age childcare.
 - (e) Develop guidelines with NVCCs, other CCC's and relevant agencies.

7.7:

The WCCC will identify, promote and improve the supply of early childhood care and education services for 3 to 4 year olds doing the following:

- (a) Work with the Pre-school Inspectors to bring clarification and classification of relevant targets and standards and to identify numbers in this age group.
- (b) Maintain and expand specific training in order to include places for this age group in pre-school care and education.
- (c) Inform new and existing providers of the categories and methods of early childhood care and education in order to stimulate the creation of new places.
- (d) Inform new and existing providers applying for NCIP funding of criteria relating to 3-4 year olds.

7.8:

The WCCC will promote initiatives targeted at the support and inclusion of Childminders – including the development of voluntary notification with the local HSE either directly or through WCCC acting as agent by doing the following:

- (a) All related childcare plans will include Childminders.
- (b) Distribute National Guidelines for Childminders (OMC) 2006
- (c) Training and networking events especially tailored to Childminders (including QAP and Síolta) and consult with Childminders to identify training and networking needs
- (d) Promotion of Childminding Development Grants and the simplification of application forms for these.
- (e) Promote and develop integrated networks of childminders and sessional pre-school providers to provide good quality full day-care.
- (f) Promote Voluntary Notification by Childminders in line with standardised national guidelines.
- (g) Encourage the Pre-school Inspectorate to publish an explanatory guide to their standards.
- (h) The promotion of childminding as a career through leaflets and literature: Encourage a national advertising campaign through the CCC representative on the NCCC
- (i) Establish linkage between Childminder Advisors and
 - Social Welfare Officers in disadvantaged areas
 - PHN and new parents using 'Choosing a Childminder – A Parent's Guide'
- (j) Recruit, provide training for, and support childminders from 'disadvantaged and socially excluded' population
 - lone parents
 - immigrant population
 - Travellers
- (k) Create a special information pack relevant to different backgrounds to include:
 - contact details
 - social welfare and childminding
 - other relevant information

7.9:

The WCCC will enhance childcare networks appropriate to the range of childcare providers, workers and parents in the county by:

- (a) Providing regular networking events for childcare workers and providers eg: meetings, shared activities, dissemination of information, invited speakers
- (b) Specific groups targeted to include: community, private, pre-school, school-age, childminders and parents

7.10:

The WCCC will identify training needs, developing a relevant strategy in consultation and collaboration with relevant training bodies/agencies by doing the following:

- (a) Establishment of training needs through consultation with providers, Childminders and parents both directly and through course evaluation sheets
- (b) Explore the possibility of provision of childcare at training events – source available funding
- (c) Establish existing levels of childcare training of childcare workers in the County (refer Mapping)
- (d) Raising the skills level of childcare workers through provision of appropriate courses in liaison and consultation with but not limited to CEB, FETAC, FAS, VEC, NVCO, Carlow IT, SACCI and other agencies

7.11:

The WCCC will develop and improve information sharing and learning systems by:

7.11.1 Information sharing

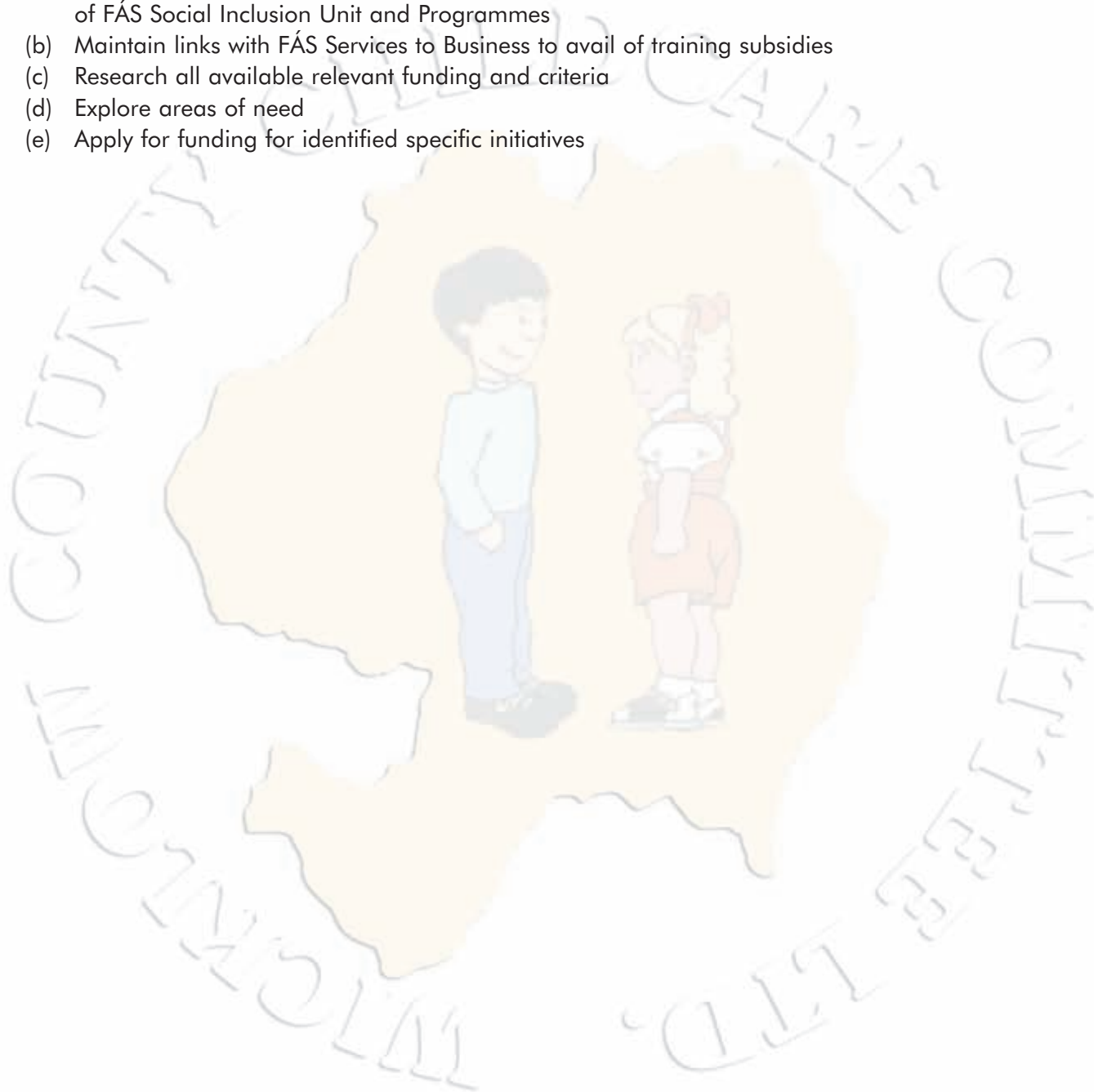
- (a) Internal:
 - Continued development of database and internal computer network
 - Develop an electronic data-base which could be used externally (by email)
 - Set up data-base of providers' emails and mobile phone nos.
 - Share information among staff and committee
 - Regular staff meetings
- (b) External
 - Email data base
 - Committee to disseminate information to own organisations
 - Branding
 - Web-text
 - Web site – maintenance of
 - Media profile – maintain and raise and source funding for same
 - Newsletter – for providers and others
 - Publications (action and plan)
 - Training brochure
 - Multi-lingual information and publicity

7.11.2 Learning systems

Maintain monitoring and evaluation of all actions on a regular basis by the Evaluation, Monitoring, Equality and Diversity sub-committee.

7.12 The WCCC will continue to attract resources from local, regional and national sources to implement/supplement specific initiatives by doing the following:

- (a) Training which covers social inclusion (ref. Nos. 7.4 & 7.5) specifically attracting the resources of FÁS Social Inclusion Unit and Programmes
- (b) Maintain links with FÁS Services to Business to avail of training subsidies
- (c) Research all available relevant funding and criteria
- (d) Explore areas of need
- (e) Apply for funding for identified specific initiatives



8. Linkages and Collaboration

The WCCC will maintain links with its stakeholders and all relevant local agencies, organisations and groups to ensure a co-ordinated approach to childcare at a local level. Collaboration with the following stakeholders and organisations, forms an integral part of the work of WCCC.

8.1 Stakeholders

This section includes linking, networks and collaboration. It notes the current situation and plans for the future.

8.1.1 Dept. of Environment & Local Government through WCDB/Wicklow County Council.

- Wicklow County Development Board (WCDB) is a partnership working to co-ordinate, improve and integrate service delivery in the county. To achieve this WCDB has developed a strategy for the Social Economic & Cultural Development of County Wicklow in consultation with the public and relevant groups and agencies including WCCC. The provision of childcare services is crucial to many aspects of the strategy.
- Linkage is strong, with the WCCC Chairperson being an Administrative Officer in the CDB's Community & Enterprise section, and the Co-Ordinator serving on the CDB and the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) and Sustainable Communities sub-groups

8.1.2 Dept. of Education & Science

A representative from this Dept. sits on the Committee.

The Mission of the Department of Education and Science is to ensure the provision of a comprehensive, cost-effective and accessible education systems of the highest quality, as measured by international standards. This will enable individuals to develop to their full potential as persons and to participate fully as citizens in society and contribute to social and economic development.

8.1.3 Dept. of Social & Community Affairs

The Department's mission to promote social well-being through income and other supports which enable people to participate in society in a positive way.

8.1.4 Employers through Chambers of Commerce

The role of Chamber of Commerce in relation to childcare is to represent the interest of employers, identify issues relating to blocks to employment and to identify areas of employer support to the development of childcare. A member serves on WCC Committee

8.1.5 Farming Organisations through Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

IFA representative's role on the WCC Committee is to ensure that the rural needs for childcare and in particular the needs of farm families, are catered for. The availability of family members for childcare in the past has meant that farm families are only now developing a culture where childcare outside the home is being considered. The growing need for childcare in rural areas is now recognised and the WCCC is focusing on it.

8.1.6 Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

Congress is the single umbrella organisation for trade unions in Ireland representing a wide range of interests. In 2001 there were 48 unions with 543,882 members in the Republic of Ireland and 36 unions with 215,478 members in Northern Ireland. A local representative serves as treasurer of WCCC

8.1.7 Community & Voluntary Sector through Wicklow Community Platform and Wicklow Communities Networking

- The representative of the Community & Voluntary Sector was selected through Wicklow Community Platform and serves as Vice Chairperson. Wicklow Community Platform is a network of approximately 28 community groups in County Wicklow, whose work focuses on redressing disadvantage in their local communities.
- Wicklow Community Networking represents a variety of voluntary organisations, community groups and members who have childcare issues. The role of the representative in relation to the WCCC is to provide the Committee with the perspective of Wicklow Communities Networking in relation to the plan and its implementation. It will also be the role of the representative to feedback information to members of the Wicklow Communities Networking from the WCCC.

8.2 National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative

The NVCC comprises eight child centred and quality focused childcare services. Their main aim is to support quality in services for children:

8.2.1 Childminding Ireland

- Childminding Ireland is a national membership body promoting quality for children in family-based care and provision of services for childminders.
- Childminding Ireland's CEO is an NVCO representative on the Committee and also sits on the Childminding Initiative sub-committee.
- CI will continue to deliver the QAP course and information sessions to Childminders

8.2.2 IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation

- The IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation is committed to promoting quality play based early childhood care and education.
- Membership is spread throughout Ireland representing service providers and individual members.
- The IPPA will continue to deliver the QAP course to Childminders, both practising and prospective

8.2.3 National Children's Nurseries Association (N.C.N.A.)

- The NCNA is the Irish professional body for providers of quality full day care for children.
- The NCNA promotes the concept of quality childcare to its members in the form of advice, in-service training and networking at regional and national level.
- Collaboration with NCNA involves the Regional Support Worker serving as an NVCO representative on the Committee, the NCNA running several training courses for the WCCC in conjunction with the FÁS. and Staff members having regular informal contact with NCNA management members.

8.2.4 Barnardos

Barnardos has provided services to the children and families with particular focus on disadvantage (whose well-being is at risk) in Ireland for over thirty years and have an advocacy and support role in the sector.

8.2.5 Children in Hospital Ireland (CHI)

CHI promotes the well-being of sick children by drawing the attention to their need for emotional security, before, during and after hospitalisation.

8.2.6 Forbairt Naonrai Teoranta (FNT)

FNT promote quality pre-schooling through the medium of Irish. It is a national membership organisation with some members from the 6 Northern Counties.

8.2.7 Irish Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Association (ISWECA)

ISWECA works to support the development of Steiner based early childhood education and care services in Ireland. ISWECA is a thirty-two county body with membership representing charitable corporate bodies providing Steiner based childcare.

8.2.8 St. Nicholas Montessori Society (SNMTA)

SNMTA is a twenty-six county body with full and associate members providing Montessori education. The focus of SNMTA to members is maintenance of best practice, to provide in-service training and advisory services to all members and interested parties.

8.3 Providers and Parents

8.3.1 Childcare Providers Community Sector

The role of the representative on the Committee is to present the perspective of Community Providers sector in relation to the implementation of the Plan. It is also to feedback information to the Community Providers from WCCC.

8.3.2 Childcare Providers Private Sector

The role of the representative in relation to the WCCC is to provide the committee with the perspective of Private Providers sector in relation to the Plan and its implementation.

8.3.3 Parent Representatives

The role of this representative on the Committee is to present the perspective of parents in relation to the Plan and its implementation.

8.4 Further linkages

This section records the broad range of linkages which have been created and joint actions undertaken. These links are on-going.

8.4.1 With other CCCs

- There is ongoing collaboration between all CCCs from the SE region and FÁS personnel in response to FÁS proposing a Regional Training Network;
- Wicklow, Kildare and South Dublin CCCs are collaborating with The School Age Childcare Certificate Initiative (SACCI) with a view to the launch and joint delivery of a Fetac Level 5 SAC Certificate course;
- Kildare and Wicklow CCCs collaborate on the training of childminders as the Childminder Advisor for west Wicklow is also responsible for Kildare;
- Dunlaoire/Rathdown CCC collaborated with the NCNA and FÁS in a Childcare Owner Manager Development Programme run in Greystones, with participation by residents of both Counties;
- The Childminder Advisors in East Wicklow and Dunlaoire/Rathdown, both funded by the same area of the HSE, have a collaborated approach to the HSE regarding common issues eg. Funding, Voluntary Notification and service agreements;
- The Co-Ordinator is a member of the south east Co-ordinator's group;
- The Childcare Development Workers are involved in a regional network
- The Childminder Advisors are involved in a national network

8.4.2 With other relevant agencies

(a) HSE DUBLIN AND MID-LEINSTER:

- The Child Care Manager, who was the first Chairperson of the WCCC in 2001, remains the HSE representative on the Committee and is a member of two sub-committees - the Childminding Initiative and Evaluation, Monitoring, Equality and Diversity. He was instrumental in finalising the Voluntary Notification (VN) policy through the HSE's Pre-school committee (East Coast area) during 2005.
- Staff have regular contact with the Preschool Inspection Officer (PSIO) through updates on pre-school notifications, both openings and closures, any concerns about particular services, and any enquiries about Regulations; in addition the Childminder Advisor has benefited from advice about advisory visits for Voluntary Notification. The PSIO was a member of the Funding Consultative during the year and is also a member of the PESC.
- The Children First Officer runs one day courses for Childminders in addition to the longer ones she organises herself and runs for providers.
- Another HSE representative also sits on the Childminding Initiative sub-committee.

(b) HSE SOUTH WEST AREA:

- WCCC collaborates with PSIO regarding childcare notifications and related childcare issues in west Wicklow and any Funding Consultative templates for that area;
- The Childminders' Advisor who covers Kildare and west Wicklow is employed directly by the HSE. She attends Childminding Initiative sub-committee meetings. In conjunction with the Childminder's Advisor in the East and other WCCC staff she proposes and organises training and information sessions in the west, and joint activities covering the west and south.

(c) FÁS:

- Collaboration with FÁS through the Competency Development Programme, has resulted in training subsidies being made available since September 2005. A reference to FÁS's proposal to set up a Regional Training Network is noted in collaboration with CCCs above.
- In addition FÁS has granted €15,000 to the WCCC, through its representative on the Committee, for Social Inclusion actions in 2007.

(d) WICKLOW VEC:

- The VEC plays an active role in the delivery and expansion of top quality childcare courses in particular the School Aged Childcare Certificate.
- The Adult Education Co-ordinator represents the VEC on the WCC Committee and Finance sub-committee.
- Another VEC staff member sits on the Training & Information sub-committee.
- There is collaboration with the Wicklow VTOS Co-ordinator and staff, the Community Education Co-ordinator and the Principal and teaching staff at St Thomas's in Bray.
- WCCC Staff contribute to the Childcare Certificate classes at Arklow and Wicklow VTOS centres.

(e) BRAY PARTNERSHIP:

- There is regular contact between WCCC Chair, Vice-Chair, Co-ordinator and the Partnership Manager regularly through various local committees.
- The Partnership's Childcare Worker (CW) is the organisation's representative on the Committee and sits on two sub-committees.

(f) WICKLOW CHILD AND FAMILY PROJECT AND WICKLOW WORKING TOGETHER:

- The Manager of the Wicklow Child and Family Project serves on the Committee. Common areas of interest link WCCC staff these two organisations.
- With the main aim of promoting social inclusion through an integrated approach, it is hoped that this collaboration will galvanise the establishment of a community pre-school facility in Wicklow town.

(g) WICKLOW RURAL PARTNERSHIP (WRP):

- With the main focus of recent programmes the work of WRP is aimed at promoting the long-term sustainable development of rural areas. Women and youth in rural areas are two groups, which have been identified for priority.
- A member of WRP is an external member of the Project Evaluation sub-committee.
- The WCCC's CDW in the west links in with WRP over rural issues and needs.

(h) BRAY AND WICKLOW TRAVELLERS:

- There are approximately 239 Traveller children in Co Wicklow aged 14 and under. 42.2% of Wicklow Travellers were living in Bray at the time of the 2002 census. While there are currently no childcare services specifically targeting this group, Traveller families avail of the services of Community Childcare facilities in Bray.
- Successful QAP courses for Traveller women are being run.

(i) ARKLOW COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE:

- WCCC retains linkage with ACE through membership of CDB sub-groups.

(j) FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES IN BRAY INCLUDING:

ST FERGALS, LITTLE BRAY AND THE MARIAN:

- The WCCC maintains links with these centres through a Marian Centre worker who serves on the Committee. Through these links WCCC is kept informed of the relevance of assistance to and resources for disadvantaged families in urban communities.

(k) RAPID:

- WCCC has links with the RAPID Co-ordinator regarding childcare and after school needs in Bray's RAPID areas; namely Fassaroe, Oldcourt, Ballywaltrim Heights, Kilbride Grove, Deerpark/Heatherwood/White Oaks/Ard na Greine and Cois Sleibhe.

Networking with other agencies is an integral part of the staff's activities.



9. Review and Monitoring

9.1:

The Evaluation, Monitoring Equality and Diversity (EMED) sub-committee will meet quarterly to review progress against the Action Plan. The templates which are created at the beginning of each year work effectively in tracking progress with each action and the cumulative budget spend. (A précised version of the Action Plan for 2007 is included as Appendix 1) A report is presented to the Committee's meeting following each quarter.

9.2:

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed mid-term at the end of 2008.

9.3:

Methodologies and responsibilities

9.3.1 Indicators:

Each planned action will have a set of indicators which point to progress on this action.

9.3.2 Targets:

For each indicator there are specific targets which specify the precise level or number to be achieved.

9.3.3 Timeframes:

Each target set has a specific start and completion date.

9.3.4 Mechanisms for monitoring:

For each target, information is collected by all staff and collated by Administrator. All relevant information is stored and maintained on a database. Reports are presented monthly by the Co-Ordinator to the Committee and to the Evaluation, Monitoring, Equality and diversity Sub-Committee on a bi-annual basis and to other relevant sub-committees.

9.3.5 Performance verification process:

At the beginning of each year a detailed Target Sheet is drawn up. At the end of each year, what actually was achieved is recorded in an Indicator Sheet.

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11. Appendix 1

Facilities and places, Childcare Census 2006, by ED, and Total No Children by Age Range, State Census 2006, by ED

ID	ED	No. of Facilities Offering Sessional Preschool, 2006	No. Sessional Preschool Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending Sessional Preschool, 2006	No. Services offering Full Daycare, 2006	No. Full Daycare Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending Full Daycare, 2006	No. Sessional + Full Daycare Places, 2006	Total No. Children 0-4yrs CENSUS 2006	No. Services offering SAC, 2006	No. SAC Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending SAC, 2006	Total No. Children 5-13yrs CENSUS 2006
15,001	Arklow No. 1 Urban	3	80	93	1	14	18	94	782	1	15	5	1093
15,002	Arklow No. 2 Urban	9	133	117	3	127	142	260	202	2	21	9	333
15,003	Bray No.1	2	70	64	0	0	0	70	111	1	180	180	100
15,004	Bray No.2	7	120	107	4	125	127	245	289	1	10	0	426
15,005	Bray No.3	4	57	64	2	92	87	149	365	1	16	8	618
15,006	Rathmichael	1	20	20	0	0	0	20	147	1	30	30	399
15,007	Wicklow Urban	6	67	73	2	48	70	115	472	2	31	28	841
15,008	Ballinguile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	23
15,009	Baltinglass	2	30	30	2	38	37	68	207	2	27	17	348
15,010	Blessington	4	95	93	1	42	35	137	380	1	20	15	519
15,011	Burgage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	158	0	0	0	184
15,012	Donoughmore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	46
15,013	Donard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	57
15,014	Dunlavin	1	40	44	0	0	0	40	98	0	0	0	220
15,015	Eadestown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	25
15,016	Hartstown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	49
15,017	Hollywood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	0	0	0	97
15,018	Humewood	1	8	8	0	0	0	8	25	0	0	0	33
15,019	Imeal North	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	28
15,020	Imeal South	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	32
15,021	Kilbride	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	124
15,022	Lackan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	0	0	0	87
15,023	Lugglass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	19
15,024	Rathdangan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	45
15,025	Rathsallagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	26
15,026	Stratford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	61
15,027	Talbotstown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	46
15,028	The Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	60
15,029	Tober	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	69
15,030	Togher	1	12	12	0	0	0	12	15	0	0	0	44
15,031	Tuckmill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	31
15,032	Delgany	4	64	63	1	30	24	94	445	0	0	0	648
15,033	Enniskerry	4	63	61	1	1	16	63	185	0	0	0	396
15,034	Greystones	8	193	214	1	22	24	215	444	0	0	0	907
15,035	Kilmacanoge Pt.	10	169	151	2	33	20	202	1103	4	90	55	2009
15,036	Powerscourt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	131
15,037	Altdore	1	20	19	0	0	0	20	19	0	0	0	30
15,038	Arklow Rural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	0	0	0	135
15,039	Aughrim	1	18	18	0	0	0	18	137	0	0	0	154

continued over...

ID	ED	No. of Facilities Offering Sessional Preschool, 2006	No. Sessional Preschool Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending Sessional Preschool, 2006	No. Services offering Full Daycare, 2006	No. Full Daycare Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending Full Daycare, 2006	No. Sessional + Full Daycare Places, 2006	Total No. Children 0-4yrs CENSUS 2006	No. Services offering SAC, 2006	No. SAC Places, 2006	No. Currently Attending SAC, 2006	Total No. Children 5-13yrs CENSUS 2006
15,040	Avoca	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	82
15,041	Ballinaclash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	88
15,042	Ballinacor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	34
15,043	Ballinderry	1			0	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	61
15,044	Ballyarthur	1	20	15	0	0	0	20	85	0	0	0	128
15,045	Ballycullen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	28
15,046	Brockagh	1	20	20	0	0	0	20	44	0	0	0	74
15,047	Calary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	28
15,048	Cronebane	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0	0	0	67
15,049	Dunganstown East	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	0	0	65
15,050	Dunganstown South	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	0	0	0	118
15,051	Dunganstown West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	62
15,052	Ennereilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	58
15,053	Glendalough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	35
15,054	Glenealy	1	16	26	0	0	0	16	197	0	0	0	310
15,055	Kilbride	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	91
15,056	Kilcoole	5	80	56	4	197	137	277	550	3	32	9	781
15,057	Killisky	2	36	59	0	0	0	36	83	0	0	0	151
15,058	Knockrath	1	20	20	0	0	0	20	23	0	0	0	26
15,059	Moneystown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	42
15,060	Newcastle Lower	2	23	19	0	0	0	23	169	0	0	0	228
15,061	Newcastle Upper	2	50	46	1	56	43	106	242	2	52	48	444
15,062	Oldtown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	65
15,063	Rathdrum	1	16	29	1	7	0	23	155	0	0	0	281
15,064	Togher	1	20	32	0	0	0	20	81	0	0	0	100
15,065	Trooperstown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0	0	0	40
15,066	Wicklow Rural	9	105	111	1	27	27	132	633	0	0	0	889
15,067	Aghowle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	26
15,068	Ballingate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	52
15,069	Ballinglen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	29
15,070	Ballybeg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	32
15,071	Carnew	1	40	39	0	0	0	40	117	1	15	30	186
15,072	Coolattin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	38
15,073	Coolballintaggart	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	58
15,074	Coolboy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	59
15,075	Cronelea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	14
15,076	Kilballyowen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	32
15,077	Killinure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	43
15,078	Kilpipe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	51
15,079	Money	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	12
15,080	Rath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	34
15,081	Shillelagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	0	0	0	67
15,082	Tinahely	1	34	40	0	0	0	34	120	0	0	0	208
ED Not Specified		3	42	27	1	6	5	48			6	5	
		101	1781	1790	28	880	812	2645	9581	23	545	439	15,810

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