



blanchardstown
area partnership

action for positive change

Labour Market Skills Development

The experience of
Blanchardstown Area Partnership



Blanchardstown Area Partnership - Background

- Blanchardstown is one of the fastest growing areas of Ireland
- 65% increase in population 1996-2006
- More than 100 nationalities
- In some disadvantaged areas unemployment is almost double the national average



Range of services provided to clients

- Mediation and Career Guidance
- Job Clubs for ready-to-work clients
- Enterprise supports, including training
- Focused training programmes
- Newcomers now up to 50% of clients accessing services



Rationale for Training in Blanchardstown

- High levels of social exclusion compounded by limited training opportunities
- Needs-based training can provide appropriate skills and knowledge
- Difficulties caused by lack of local training facilities and training provision
- Documented need for training centre



Strategy Document 2003

- Board of Partnership worked in conjunction with local RAPID AIT
- Demonstrated need for improved training
- Outlined current training provision
- Highlighted the gaps which existed
- Recommended solutions in the short- and long-term

Statutory response to Strategy document

- Series of meetings held to discuss needs
- Commitment of additional €1 million
- 450 extra places locally each year
- Pilot programme for early school leavers
- No commitment to training centre

Policy Context

- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment responsible for policy on employment training
- Department of Education and Science responsible for policy on early school leavers
- Statutory responses for early school leavers mainly through FÁS (National Training Authority) and VEC (Vocational Education Committee)

Further developments in 2006

- Lack of training centre highlighted
- Review of current needs and gaps in provision
- Feasibility study commissioned
- Engaged in meaningful discussions with FÁS
- Approval in principle received March 2006



Contributing factors for success

- Range of organisations identified need for local community training centre
- Supported by evidence through consultation, needs analysis and local opinion
- Meaningful discussions with FÁS
- Commissioned documents including feasibility study, strategic and business plans



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Conclusions

- The Partnership, together with RAPID, formed a strong local voice for change
- Good case backed up by research
- Statutory agency willing to engage in local discussions
- Local acceptance of what was possible at the time