



**PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE COMBAT POVERTY
AGENCY TO MONAGHAN**

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

January 2006

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Executive Summary

This Implementation Plan seeks to identify and address the key issues and next steps which have emerged to date for the Combat Poverty Agency arising from the proposed relocation of the Agency as part of the Government's decentralisation programme announcement on December 3rd 2003.

Since the December 3rd 2003 announcement, Combat Poverty - its Board, Management and Staff - together with unions representing staff, have engaged in active dialogue on the issues raised by the proposed relocation. Staff briefings have taken place on a regular basis. In March 2004, the Board established a Decentralisation Sub-Committee which has met on a number of occasions. Ongoing contacts have been established with the Implementation Group in the Department of Social and Family Affairs and Implementation Committee in the Department of Finance. In addition, Combat Poverty staff have participated in briefings and workshops organised in relation to the proposed decentralisation programme.

In 2004 Combat Poverty commissioned an Impact Assessment focussed on the proposed relocation and its effect on Combat Poverty's ability to fulfil its statutory functions in the context of relocation. Goodbody Economic Consultants conducted this review, which was completed in November 2004. The overall conclusion from the impact assessment is that the organisation could not adequately fulfil its functions from the proposed location. There are two main reasons for this:

- Firstly, the difficulty of providing policy advice from a remote base, given that the majority of policy influencers and makers will remain in Dublin or its hinterland;
- Secondly, very few staff have indicated a willingness to move. Experience has shown that it would be difficult to replace such specialist expertise in Monaghan.

Various mitigating actions were considered and are outlined in this Plan, but these are likely to have only a limited impact due to the nature of Combat Poverty's statutory functions, the profile of many of our stakeholders, the attitudes of staff to the move and the continuing need to interact with stakeholders that will remain primarily Dublin-based. In addition, the relocation of a maximum of 30 families to Monaghan, many of whom may not live in Monaghan town, will do little to revitalise the economy of Monaghan town.

Combat Poverty continues to have reservations about the proposed relocation to Monaghan town and would wish to negotiate on a number of key elements of the proposed relocation, as spelt out in the Impact Assessment and this Implementation Plan, prior to any relocation taking place.

1. Introduction

The Government announcement of a major decentralisation programme on December 3rd 2003 has already stimulated a number of actions by Combat Poverty. It has been a major agenda item at a number of Combat Poverty board meetings. The Board established a Decentralisation Sub-Committee at its March 2004 meeting. The April 2004 meeting approved the commencement of an Impact Assessment study. In May 2004, Goodbody Economic Consultants were commissioned to carry out this study. The Audit Committee and senior management also undertook a risk management assessment of Combat Poverty in May 2004. The Impact Assessment reported in November 2004 and many of the elements of this Implementation Plan draw on the findings and conclusions of the Impact Assessment.

a. Mission & mandate

Combat Poverty Agency was established in 1987 under the Combat Poverty Agency Act, 1986. Under the aegis of the Department of Social and Family Affairs, it is the sole national advisory agency with a remit to combat poverty in Ireland.

Combat Poverty is a state advisory agency developing and promoting evidence-based proposals and measures to combat poverty in Ireland.

Under the 1986 Act, Combat Poverty has the following general functions:

- advising and making recommendations to the Minister for Social and Family Affairs on all aspects of economic and social planning in relation to poverty in the State;
- the initiation of measures aimed at overcoming poverty in the State and the evaluation of such measures;
- the examination of the nature, causes and extent of poverty in the State and for that purpose the promotion, commission and interpretation of research;
- the promotion of greater public understanding of the nature, causes and extent of poverty in the State and the measures necessary to overcome poverty.

Acting as a catalyst for change, Combat Poverty seeks to influence public policy and elicit public support for action on poverty issues. The organisation's effectiveness and credibility is rooted in its ability to speak authoritatively and with objectivity on poverty.

Combat Poverty has had a specific remit in the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy since 1997 and in the EU process leading to the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion.

Combat Poverty in partnership with Pobal, through Border Action, also has responsibility for implementing a number of measures under the EU-funded Peace and Interreg Programmes. For this purpose Border Action has an office in Monaghan.

b. Structures, staffing

Combat Poverty works through four sections, all informing policy advice. These sections are: research, projects, communications, and organisational management and development (OMD). The Peace and Interreg Programmes are a further dimension of the work. The work of the Combat Poverty Agency, including Border Action, is overseen by the Director.

To fulfil its functions, the Combat Poverty Agency currently has 30 approved posts, filled by 33 people, including staff employed on EU funded projects for a time limited period and a Joint Manager of the Border Action office based in Monaghan.

The majority of staff are public servants, employed by Combat Poverty, following open competition into specialist posts. Staffing also includes four seconded civil servants from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. A number of vacancies (short and long term) are being covered by temporary staffing arrangements. Staff are employed on a range of contractual arrangements depending on their employment status.

Flexible working arrangements include part-time working and work sharing arrangements. There are 7 members of staff currently included in such arrangements.

A current organisation chart is attached (Appendix 1). The chart covers 30 posts although only 25 posts are listed for relocation.

There is also one member of staff on a career break. This is in addition to those included in the organisation chart.

The Board of Combat Poverty Agency comprises 16 Members appointed by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs. Board Members are currently drawn from counties Cork, Donegal, Kerry, Kildare, Louth, as well as the Dublin area and Northern Ireland. The membership of the Board is attached (Appendix 2).

c. Location - existing property & facilities etc.

Combat Poverty Agency is located at Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Dublin 8. These offices are rented on a 21 year lease which expires in 2017, with the option of breaks on the lease agreement in 2008 and 2011.

The rented premises include a large open-plan work area, a reception area, a library which is open to the public, 3 meeting rooms, Board room, kitchen, computer room, records room, publication storage area and rest room. There is also a dedicated printing, fax, photocopying and postal services area. The total rented area involves 7,885 sq. feet approximately on two lower ground floors. The meeting facilities are regularly made available to external groups, including local community and voluntary groups.

Combat Poverty also retains off-site storage facilities at Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

The Combat Poverty Agency Library is a specialist library on poverty, social inclusion, social policy and community development and is open to the public during standard office hours five days a week. It is also used by staff of Combat Poverty. It contains a wide range of journals and publications of particular interest to academics, researchers, students, statutory bodies and community and voluntary groups.

d. Services & outputs

Combat Poverty's services and outputs are documented in the Agency's Annual Reports, which are available at www.combatpoverty.ie. The main services which Combat Poverty provides relate to the four general functions set out in the Combat Poverty Agency Act, 1986. These are policy advice; project support and innovation; research; and public education. Part of the public education service is the library and electronic information provision, including the website. Funding support is also provided under some of the Combat Poverty's programmes. Much of the service provision by Combat Poverty is through meetings and liaison.

There are a range of outputs including policy submissions, policy statements, policy briefings, publications, resource materials, information materials, and events such as conferences and seminars.

Delivery of these services and outputs demands close collaboration with key stakeholders in Government and across the wider public sector, as well as with national and local bodies and institutions, the community and voluntary sector, and the media.

e. Budgets

Combat Poverty Agency is granted aided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The 2005 Budget amounted to €4.336M, including grant-in-aid of €4.236M.

f. Customer base, stakeholders and key relationships

As the functions and remit of Combat Poverty suggest, the customer base of the Agency mainly comprises the Minister and Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Office for Social Inclusion, other Government Ministers and departments, the local government, education and health sectors, as well as a broad spectrum of other agencies and institutions and research bodies focused on social and economic policy issues.

Close working relationships with these customers are a critical part of the effectiveness of Combat Poverty Agency in fulfilling its statutory functions, especially in relation to policy advice and development.

Good ongoing relations with all Members of the Oireachtas, through their representative constituent groups, as well as with media organisations and individuals in their sector of public awareness-building and influence, are also critical parts of the Agency's ongoing work and remit.

While key relationships vary, all of these groupings and interests are stakeholders of Combat Poverty as also are staff, the Board, and the taxpaying public among others. All of these will be affected by any relocation of Combat Poverty.

2. People: Issues /Responses

Combat Poverty has a number of key specialist staff. These staff are employed directly by Combat Poverty. Their contracts do not allow for transferability across the wider civil and public sector. Such staff have high levels of relevant experience, a wide range of contacts and a highly professional approach to their work, including ongoing skill development, accompanied by a strong commitment to Combat Poverty's mission.

This is demonstrated by the fact that:

- Combat Poverty has a number of specialist posts as well as a number of civil and public service posts;
- Managers and staff at AP level have an average of 7 years service with Combat Poverty while a number of staff have been there since the establishment of Combat Poverty;
- 84% of staff have a third level qualification or higher;
- Two thirds of staff required specific qualifications to obtain their current post (eg. research posts require a Degree in Economics/Social Science; library position requires a qualified librarian);
- Particular areas of expertise are required, with staff having skills in community development, communications, research, HR and financial management; and
- A range of external consultants and specialist suppliers are in place to support Combat Poverty staff in fulfilling the organisation's functions.

A staff survey was undertaken as part of the Impact Assessment. The staff survey indicated that a significant proportion of Combat Poverty staff will not move with the organisation to Monaghan. Ten percent said that they would move, 16% didn't know and 74% said they would not move. This is reinforced by CAF findings which indicate that one staff member has applied to move to Monaghan.

The move will also damage the long term commitment of staff to Combat Poverty. Eighty four percent of respondents to the survey stated that they saw their long term future with Combat Poverty if it stayed in Dublin; this declined to 10% if Combat Poverty moved to Monaghan. Over 70% of staff considered the proposed move would create personal, housing, quality of life and educational barriers for them, rising to over 80% who foresaw family and career barriers.

Board members and stakeholders highlighted the loss of staff, along with distance from decision-makers, as the most high-risk elements of the proposed move.

Added to this, the transition period prior to the move is likely to lead to a reduction in morale, delays in the renewal of contracts, and a gradual loss of staff, so that by the time of the move only a small number of staff may remain. The additional difficulties likely to arise in relation to staff moving within the wider

civil service will also increase the feeling of uncertainty and will have a damaging effect on staff morale.

Many Board members spoke of their concern for staff in the face of this decision and on the stress and uncertainty it was creating for them and for their families.

International experience has also highlighted the serious effect of relocation on staff losses and on staff morale. International experience also shows that financial inducements are normally required to encourage staff to relocate.

3. Property/Facilities: Issues/Responses

At least a similar standard of accommodation and facilities would need to be provided in any proposed relocation, as outlined in section 1c. As Combat Poverty already has staff in Monaghan working for Border Action (in partnership with Pobal) it would make efficient use of resources to combine the two offices. The current Border Action offices could not accommodate the additional Combat Poverty relocated staff. Thus office premises are required for 60-70 staff. Additional ICT facilities would be required to facilitate video conferencing etc.

The limited infrastructure and services available in Monaghan make this location problematic. There is no train service to Monaghan and travel by car takes at least 2 hours from Dublin. There is a regular but infrequent bus service. The nearest train service is in Dundalk over 30 miles away. Access to other urban centres such as Drogheda and Dundalk is also difficult given the existing road network.

There are limited educational, business, retail and recreational facilities in the town. A number of Combat Poverty Agency staff have families who are, or will be, attending third level education institutions. There are currently limited third level education facilities within commuting distance of Monaghan, and this is seen as a serious drawback.

The limited health facilities are also a matter of concern, particularly the downgrading of Monaghan hospital and ongoing issues in relation to Cavan hospital.

4. Business: Issues/Responses

The current business model of Combat Poverty can be summarised as follows:

a) What the Organisation Does

- Provides advice to policy makers;
- Supports the development of an anti-poverty infrastructure;
- Plays a bridging role across the anti-poverty sector;
- Promotes public awareness of poverty – getting the message out; and
- Implements measures of the peace and interreg programmes in the Border Region.

b) How the Organisation Does its Work

- Employment of highly specialised, experienced and committed staff;
- Produces research and policy analysis;
- Demonstrates approaches to tackling poverty – project support and innovation;
- Integrates its work in pursuit of its overall policy influencing role; and
- Works on the basis of shared culture and ethos.

The key requirements for the successful working of Combat Poverty’s business model are:

ELEMENT OF BUSINESS MODEL	KEY REQUIREMENTS
<i>What the organisation does</i>	
Providing advice to policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready access to policy makers and to policy making fora • Ready access to other stakeholders in this area
Developing the anti-poverty infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly interactive role with a broad range of key stakeholders, thus the need for a high level of accessibility to these stakeholders, both in the formal and informal settings (through programmes, seminars, participation on committees, networking) • Access to specialist consultants and suppliers • Provision of information through the library, publications etc
Bridging the Divide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility by key stakeholders: C&V sector, local authorities, local community representatives, policy makers, government departments, policy influencing organisations, relevant structures (eg. NAPS)
Getting the message out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of specialist staff, supported by specialist suppliers, with a strong understanding of the issues

ELEMENT OF BUSINESS MODEL	KEY REQUIREMENTS
	and how best to inform the different audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to suitable venues for launches, media events and for networking • Need for face to face meetings, many of which are Dublin-based
Implementing the Peace and Interreg Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access by Director and Head of Projects
<i>How it does its work</i>	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to / retention of specialist, experienced and committed staff
Research and policy analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of key specialist staff with relevant experience and qualifications • Access to other research and educational institutions and to related research personnel
Demonstrating approaches to tackling poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready access to key stakeholders at the local, regional and national level – both statutory and community based
Integrating the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical proximity and good internal access and interaction
Shared ethos and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff group that is highly motivated and driven by Combat Poverty’s purpose and function rather than its career structure • A high level of commitment to supporting all aspects of Combat Poverty’s work, outside each individual’s own specific area or function

The relocation to Monaghan will have a significant impact on the current business model. This assessment is based on a survey of key stakeholders and informed by a review of international literature, as documented in the Impact Assessment.

The implications are set out, as per the business model structure as follows.

What the Organisation Does

Provides advice to policy makers – The Board and key stakeholders both expressed the view that the proposed move to Monaghan would have a very serious adverse affect on the ability of Combat Poverty to perform its most significant role, that of providing expert policy advice on poverty and related issues to decision makers and other key stakeholders, primarily based in Dublin. This was seen to be due to the increased difficulties of accessing key policy makers from a non-Dublin location as well as due to the loss of key specialist

staff which is likely to result from such a move. Such staff currently provide high quality advice and support to policy makers based on the development over the years of strong relationships of trust and a recognition of the expertise of such staff. Such linkages would take significant time and resources to re-establish. It is unlikely that this policy advisory role can be as effectively carried out from a more remote location or through increases use of IT.

Develops the anti-poverty infrastructure – The Board and key stakeholders expressed particular concern at the effect that the proposed move was likely to have on Combat Poverty’s networks within the research community, the anti-poverty sector and with specialist consultants. This was seen as likely to reduce the effectiveness and impact of Combat Poverty’s work.

The combined effect of likely staff losses and physical distance from many of the key players is likely to greatly diminish the role that Combat Poverty can play in maintaining and developing the anti-poverty infrastructure. Levels of interaction with representatives of the community and voluntary sector, with key research and consulting organisations, with educational institutions and with specialist suppliers, all primarily Dublin-based, is likely to reduce.

Without the leading role of Combat Poverty in this area, Board members and stakeholders considered that it is possible that the currently strong anti-poverty research sector, supported by the community and voluntary sector, will be weakened. This may in turn lead to a reduction in the quality and comprehensiveness of information available to inform the policy debate.

The bridging role – The overall decentralisation programme is likely to make the “bridging” work of Combat Poverty more difficult, as relevant government departments are dispersed throughout the country. Added to this, the increased distance between Combat Poverty and many of the key stakeholders that are remaining in Dublin (community and voluntary sector bodies, NESF, NESF, ESRI etc) will mean that Combat Poverty’s ability to fulfil this unique role will be reduced.

The staff, Board and stakeholders shared this concern, referring specifically to Combat Poverty’s role as a bridge between the poverty sector and key decision-makers. It was suggested that the effect of the move would be that Combat Poverty continues to produce outputs but that they would no longer be in a position to fully debate these outputs, or to influence policy making.

The loss of key staff and the likely reduction in research and innovation capacity will further undermine the quality with which this role can be played.

A key element in the success of this work currently is the trust that each participant has in Combat Poverty staff as individuals and as experts in their field.

The redevelopment of such trust, given a largely new staff cohort, would take considerable time and energy to rebuild, especially from a non-Dublin location.

The resulting lack of “presence” caused by the move was seen as likely to lead to a reduction in the perceived priority given by the government to the anti-poverty agenda.

Gets the message out – Combat Poverty has developed a highly efficient and sophisticated dissemination programme. While much of this can be maintained through the use of telecommunications, IT etc, the proposed move is likely to lead to a reduced impact in this area.

Opportunities for accessing the media and fora for disseminating its work, and for feeding it into the policy debate, will be reduced. Loss of proximity to specialist publishers and PR consultants is likely to increase costs and reduce the likely efficiency of such arrangements.

Board members and stakeholders considered that their current level of interaction with Combat Poverty would likely be reduced, particularly their attendance at seminars and launches, if these took place in an out of Dublin location. Added to this, the loss of known experts within Combat Poverty is also likely to reduce the extent to which Combat Poverty is seen as the central source of anti-poverty work in Ireland, at least in the short-term transfer period.

Implements the EU funded Peace and Interreg Programmes – The proposed move to Monaghan will facilitate existing interaction patterns between the Border Action office in Monaghan and Combat Poverty staff. It is also likely to lead to higher levels of contact with stakeholders based in the northern part of the country. Given the weak public transport links to Monaghan, particularly the lack of train transport, such access benefits are likely to be limited to quite a narrow area. Also, given the very different nature of the work being carried out in the Monaghan office and by Combat Poverty centrally, the potential for greater synergy is seen, by both Board members and staff, to be limited.

How the Organisation Does its Work

Staff – The staff survey indicated that a significant proportion of Combat Poverty staff will not move with the organisation to Monaghan. The move is also likely to damage the long term commitment of the staff to Combat Poverty, and many saw personal, housing, quality of life, family and career barriers. Board members and stakeholders highlighted the loss of staff, along with distance from decision makers, as the most high risk elements of the proposed move.

Added to this, the transition period prior to the move is likely to lead to a reduction in morale, delays in the renewal of short term contracts, and a gradual

loss of staff so that by the time of the move only a small number of staff may remain.

Research and Policy Analysis – the greatest threat to Combat Poverty’s research and policy analysis role is likely to arise from the loss of key staff that can be expected to occur before, during and after such a move. This will result in a significant loss of institutional memory and in a break down of well developed relationships with other key players in this area, especially in the community and voluntary sector, social partner organisations, state agencies, research institutions and academic establishments.

Demonstrates Approaches to Tackling Poverty – Combat Poverty performs its policy advisory, research and dissemination functions through its demonstration work on the ground. Accessing such projects is possible from a non-Dublin location as such work involves working with locally-based agencies and community groups. However, these demonstration projects also require access to the relevant central Government departments and to related agencies.

Integration of Functions – If the proposed move was to lead to a situation whereby some functions had to be outsourced this could seriously affect the integration and coherence of Combat Poverty’s work. It is also likely to result in higher costs. In the longer term, as many key staff spend more time commuting and working from home, the cohesion of the organisation could be further damaged.

The Shared Culture and Ethos – A combination of staff replacements, greater physical distance, and a reduction in effectiveness is likely to weaken the existing organisational culture and ethos. Efforts to maintain the current ethos in this context will require considerable investment of resources and energy, particularly in a time of reduced staff morale and staff losses.

5. Timing/Phasing: Issues/Responses

Combat Poverty does not yet have a timeframe for the proposed move. However, it is anticipated that there will be transitional issues and further issues post the move, as follows.

5.1 Transitional Issues

In relation to fulfilment of statutory functions:

- Networking and policy influencing opportunities will be reduced;
- Significant time and energy will be assigned to handle the move, thus reducing the organisation's ability to deliver on planned goals without additional resources;
- Some areas may be in the process of being outsourced;
- The internal cohesion of Combat Poverty's work will be reduced; and
- The work programme will not be fully achieved due to loss of staff, and with additional time required to manage the move.

In relation to staffing:

- While a number of key staff may remain in the short-term at least, if offered increased flexible working options and other incentives, most are likely to be in the process of finding alternative employment;
- Given the uncertainties involved it is likely that there will be considerable difficulties in filling vacancies that will arise during the transition period; and
- Staff morale will be low.

The move thus represents a high risk strategy for Combat Poverty in the transition period. During this period Combat Poverty is unlikely to fully fulfil its statutory functions. This is a view reinforced by the staff, the Board and the key stakeholders, and supported by the international literature.

5.2 Post Relocation

In the medium term it is very difficult to predict what the situation will be.

However, in relation to the fulfilment of functions we envisage:

- The impact of Combat Poverty's outputs will be reduced due to lack of integration and cohesion, lack of access to decision-makers, weak relationships with key players, and increased difficulties bringing key stakeholders together;
- Combat Poverty may have a more local/regional role, in the Border / Northern Ireland area, with a diminished national role;
- The anti-poverty infrastructure will be weakened and related issues will receive less attention from policy makers, research and education institutions and the media;

- The image of Combat Poverty as a key player in the anti-poverty arena may suffer long-term damage; and
- There may be a gradual drift back of activities to Dublin as the natural centre of interaction and influence. This has been found to occur in other countries.

In relation to staff we envisage:

- Many new staff will be working in or for Combat Poverty;
- Much of the time of key staff will be spent commuting to Dublin and to other relocated Departments /agencies, and to training in new staff;
- A number of vacancies will continue to exist, particularly in key areas like research and policy work; and
- The existing ethos will be weakened due to fragmentation of effort, activity and energy required to develop and maintain key contacts in other parts of the country.

6. Processes/Systems: Issues/Responses

Combat Poverty has an agreed, comprehensive Policy Statement on Human Resource Management and Development since 1999. A range of key policies, practices and procedures are in place. Flexible working arrangements and facilities are in place. These arrangements are availed of by most existing staff.

Combat Poverty Agency is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

Agreed processes are also in place in relation to event management, public communications, and publications policy. Combat Poverty has recently agreed a Communications Strategy. Project management and budget management principles and tools have also been adopted on a best practice basis. Training and support for staff at all levels in these practices is provided through the Agency's ongoing development and training plans.

A Performance Management Process is also in place, in which all staff participate. Combat Poverty Agency is also implementing a Modernisation Action Plan agreed under the terms of the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement.

A summary of IT and Record Management Systems is contained in Appendix 4. It should be noted that Combat Poverty has recently carried out a recent development and upgrading of its IT and Record Management Functions.

7. Outputs: Issues/Responses

As stated in 1d earlier, the main outputs which relate to the four general functions set out in the Combat Poverty Agency Act, 1986 are policy advice; project support and innovation; research; and public education.

The role of the Combat Poverty Library in this work (1c above) is also a critical component of the quality service which the Agency seeks to provide and maintain.

As elaborated through-out this Plan, Combat Poverty Agency needs to address how it can maximise the impact of its outputs from a decentralised location, see sections 4 to 10 of this Plan. There is a strong view that Combat Poverty will be able to continue to produce outputs but that it will no longer be in a position to fully debate these outputs, or to influence policy making.

8. Business Process Mapping & Re-engineering

Through the process of the agreed Modernisation Action Plan which is in place under the terms of the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement, Combat Poverty is pursuing a specific set of actions and objectives pursuant to a modernization agenda and consistent with the Agency's statutory remit.

In re-locating to Monaghan, Combat Poverty will have to carry out further work on how to re-engineer the business to deliver on its functions from a remote base.

9. Risk Analysis: Business Risks and Mitigation Actions

The Audit Committee of the Board and senior management have engaged in a risk management analysis of the operations of Combat Poverty. This work will identify the risks of providing policy advice on poverty from a decentralised location.

The Impact Assessment identified a number of risks in Combat Poverty's relocation to Monaghan. These can be summarised as follows:

What the Organisation Does:

- Significant reduction in Combat Poverty's policy influencing role;
- A reduction in the quality and quantity of anti-poverty research and related debate in Ireland;
- A diminution of the bridging role that Combat Poverty plays between different actors in the anti-poverty field;
- A reduction in access to the media and to opportunities for public debate on poverty issues: and
- Loss of presence in Dublin.

How the Organisation Does its Work

- A reduction in specialist staff;
- Loss of well established relationships with key stakeholders and policy makers;
- Reduction in staff morale and motivation due to the uncertainties resulting from the planned move;
- Need for many staff, particularly key staff, to devote considerable time to recruitment, training and development of new staff, and for less time to fulfil the organisations' functions to the level currently planned and provided for;
- Significantly reduced access to policy makers resulting from loss of presence in the capital; and
- Increased resources required for retraining and development of replacement staff.

Operational

- An increase in logistical difficulties and related costs involved in trying to carry out Combat Poverty's existing work programme from a non-Dublin location.

Overall, the proposed move is likely to lead to a significant loss of effectiveness and efficiency, resulting in a situation in which there is a serious risk that the organisation's impact will be reduced. Even though the organisation will continue to produce outputs, it is likely to have a greatly reduced ability to influence decisions based on these outputs.

Mitigation Actions

A number of mitigation actions are suggested to address the key risks. These are outlined as follows:

Loss of Key Staff – Suggested Mitigation Actions

- Retain existing staff for as long as possible during the change over period. Offer incentives to stay during this period, including greater availability of flexible working arrangements especially working from home;
- Appoint and train shadow staff as soon as possible to ensure some continuity and to reduce organisational memory loss;
- Support staff on an individual basis to explore available options;
- Increased use of flexible working.

Loss of Institutional Memory – Suggested Mitigation Actions

- Undertake a concerted effort to recode procedures, policies, guidelines, contacts, precedents, ways of operating etc, to retain as much organisational memory as possible.

Increased Distance from Decision-Makers and Other Key Stakeholders – Suggested Mitigation Actions

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Communication Strategy – internally and externally;
- Obtain funding to resource a more IT based approach to communicating with clients, including funding for client access to such facilities;
- Undertake a concerted drive to consolidate existing contacts, inform them of the move and of available contact opportunities;
- Retain a presence in Dublin, including a staffed office in Dublin, perhaps in co-operation with another body in a similar situation;
- Consider outsourcing some functions.

While these mitigation actions are proposed they are unlikely to fully mitigate the identified risks. A number of the mitigation actions have cost implications, such as increasing IT capability, allocation of existing staff to train in new staff, to record procedures, etc, and provision of incentives and supports for existing staff.

Incentives to retain staff through a period of uncertainty, and to encourage existing staff to move with Combat Poverty, are unlikely to be available given that such actions have financial implications that are not included under the Government's current decentralisation programme.

Given the current high level of flexible working arrangements in Combat Poverty the potential to increase such arrangements is limited, without adversely affecting performance.

The extent to which more IT based interaction can alleviate some of the effects of increased distance from clients is likely to be small, given the complexity of existing interactions, and also due to the lack of resources available for such investments among many of Combat Poverty's stakeholder base.

The option of retaining a Dublin office at the same time as having an office in Monaghan has high cost implications and is likely to significantly reduce the cohesion and effectiveness of the organisation.

10. Project Management

To date, the proposal to relocate to Monaghan has had a widespread impact on normal working pressures and relations given the small size of our organisation. The process of staff and stakeholder consultation, and the identification and clarification of key issues has thus far been a collaborative process, led by the Board and Director of Combat Poverty.

The Head of Organisational Management and Development and the Director have been the main liaison and contact persons in the process to date, underlining the priority attached to the overall project management process.

The Partnership Committee of Combat Poverty as well as the Board Decentralisation Sub-Committee, referred to earlier, form key supports to the process.

Information-sharing and communication with staff, as well as the ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, as outlined earlier in 1f, are being emphasised as of paramount importance in the initial phases of what is still an uncharted route.

When further information is available in terms of accommodation and timeframe, a more detailed project management plan will be drawn up with detail on timelines, key milestones and actions.

This Project Management Plan will be overseen by a Committee, to be established, comprising Combat Poverty Board, staff and key stakeholder organisations. This Committee and the Project Management Plan will seek to minimise the risks to the business of Combat Poverty and to seek adequate resources to support the move.

11. Estimated Costs

The costs of the move have been estimated as follows:

Transition Period	Staff Time Required	Estimated Costs for 6 month period €
Performance of Functions		
Additional staff required to continue to perform functions while dealing with the staffing and other issues outlined below	1 additional staff member per section*, plus ½ Director to oversee management of transition period	94,794
Recording of Procedures	1 additional staff member per section*	47,239
Staffing		
Staff Recruitment and Training	½ one Management staff member full time	94,794
Staff Shadowing	1 day per week per staff member	34,932
Other Costs		
Staff Recruitment	€3,000 per new staff member (24 staff)*	130,000
Staff Development (attending courses)	€3,000 per new staff member**	72,000
IT development		Unknown
Total		€545,759
POST MOVE		ANNUAL COSTS
Performance of Functions		
Additional staffing time required	1 additional staff member per section and ½ Director time	189,587
Travel and subsistence	Doubling of existing travel and subsistence costs	94,478
Staffing		
Ongoing staff recruitment, training and shadowing	1 day per week per staff member	54,111
TOTAL		€598,175

* HEO at mid point of the scale

** some savings might be possible here if group recruitment and training could be used.

These calculations indicate that transition costs, for a six month period, excluding IT and related costs, could amount to €500,000. They also indicate that additional costs, post move, could be almost €600,000 in the first year, excluding actual relocation costs.

These costs might be mitigated by slightly lower rental costs in Monaghan. However, this has not been allowed for given that it is likely that Combat Poverty will have to either maintain an ongoing Dublin presence or will have to regularly rent facilities in Dublin for meetings, launches, seminars etc.

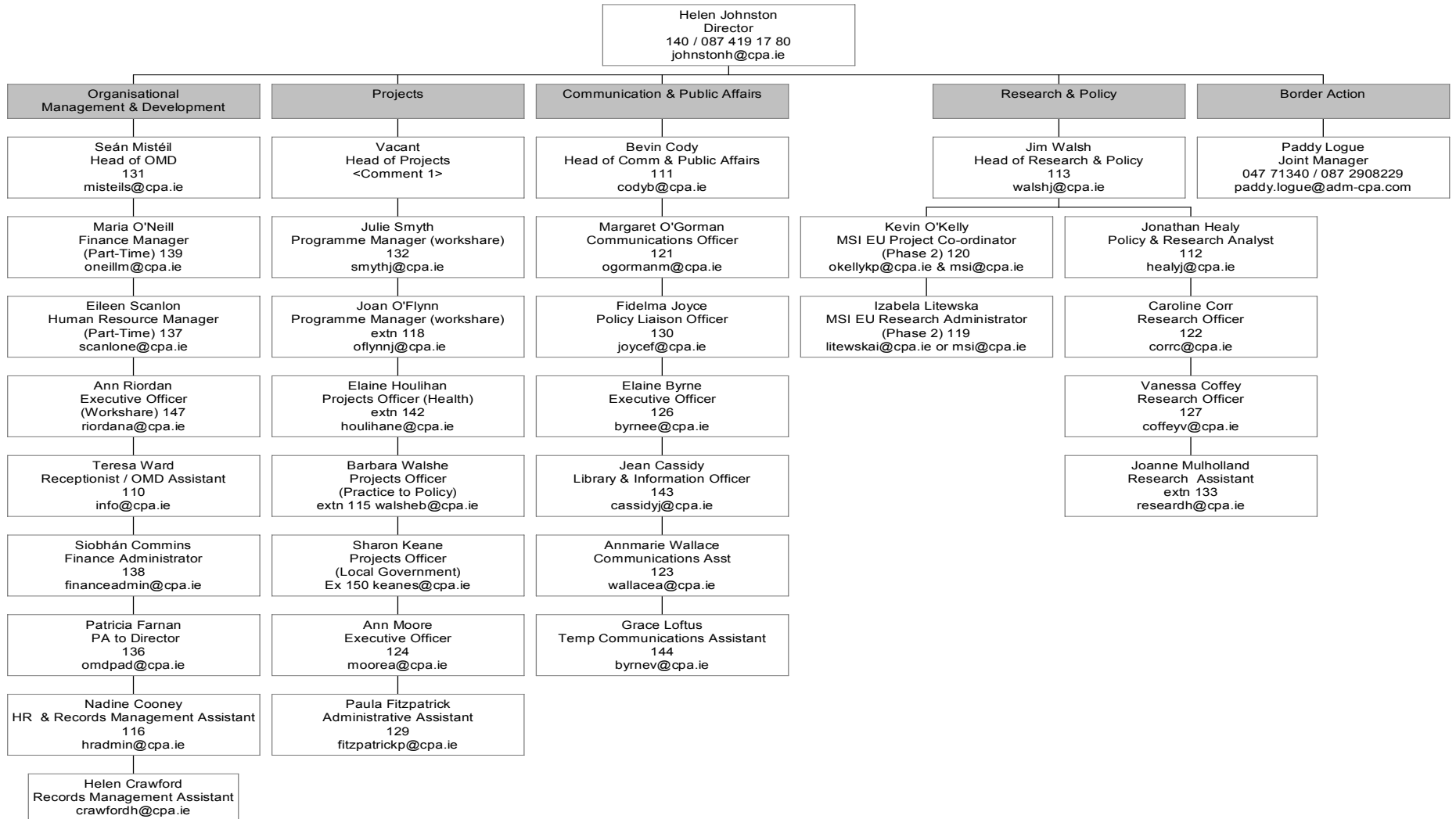
12. Conclusions

Combat Poverty has a unique role and related responsibilities in relation to addressing issues of poverty and social inclusion in Ireland. This unique role is best expressed in terms of the organisation's remit in relation to informing the policy debate on poverty and social exclusion issues, on developing the anti-poverty infrastructure, and in building a bridge between those who live in poverty, and their representatives, and those who influence and formulate policy in this area. Added to this, Combat Poverty possesses a unique range of experience in carrying out this work, which it has built up over many years.

Given the high and sustained level of risk associated with the proposed move of the Combat Poverty Agency to Monaghan it is considered that the organisation cannot adequately fulfil its unique role from the proposed new location.

Possible mitigation actions are likely to have only a limited impact due to the nature of Combat Poverty's statutory functions, the profile of many of its stakeholders, the attitudes of its staff to the move and the continuing need to interact with stakeholders that will remain primarily Dublin based. The wider decentralisation programme is likely only to increase these difficulties.

The key costs associated with the move will arise primarily from staff losses associated with the move. Thus the move will seriously reduce the efficiency of the organisation. It should be noted that even if the additional resources required were to be made available, it is likely that the effectiveness and impact of Combat Poverty would still be significantly reduced due to the effect of the proposed move on the ability of the organisation to fully fulfil its functions, particularly its policy advice and networking role, from a non-Dublin location.



Appendix 2 – Board of Combat Poverty Agency

Brian Duncan, Chairperson	Mercer Ltd. Dublin
Pearse O'Hanrahan Vice Chairperson	Dundalk, Co. Louth
Helen Johnston	Director, Combat Poverty Agency
Maria Corrigan	Leopardstown, Dublin 18
Frank Curran	Killybegs, Co. Donegal
Anthony Gavin	Celbridge, Co. Kildare
Maria Gorman	Listowel, Co. Kerry
Tony Lane	Kinsale, Co. Cork
Seamus McAleavey	Director, NICVA, Belfast, Northern Ireland
Tony O'Callaghan	Killybegs, Co. Donegal
Orlaigh Quinn	Department of Social and Family Affairs
Alice Robertson	Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Margaret Sweeney	Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Olive Sweetman	NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare
Callista Bennis	NUI Limerick, Co. Limerick
Barbara Walshe	Staff Board Member

Appendix 3 - IT Systems and Record management

IT Systems

Combat Poverty Agency has over 30 workstations which are networked. A major upgrade of the system has been ongoing in 2005, continuing into 2006.

Several customised and specialised databases are used within the Agency.

The Combat Poverty Agency website (www.combatpoverty.ie) was upgraded in 2003 and has an extensive range of information and links to other sites. It is widely accessed by academics, researchers, 2nd and 3rd level students, educationalists and other statutory organisations as well as many local and voluntary groups.

Record management

A customised records management system has been in place for several years, supported by Arcline Ltd. This system has also been upgraded in 2005, particularly with regard to electronic records.