

**CITY OF LIMERICK**  
**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**EDUCATION PLAN**  
**2006-2010**

**CLVEC MISSION STATEMENT**

*The City of Limerick V.E.C. recognises the ever-changing nature and needs of its local Community. It is committed to responding to these needs by continuously reviewing and adapting its policies and practices and ensuring the delivery of quality learning programmes and support services.*



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## FOREWORD



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee's Education Plan 2006-2010 which was adopted by the Committee at its May 2006 Meeting. This plan provides a comprehensive, yet flexible, framework for the on-going modernisation and development of this VEC as a public service organisation.

As our organisation faces an ever increasing range of new challenges and pressures in providing more and better services to a high quality standard, we are very conscious of the need to be more flexible and responsive to change. We believe it is vital that CLVEC continues to build on its excellent track record of providing relevant, high-quality learning programmes and services that meet our customer needs and provide value for money.

The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001, which updates and reforms the VEC Act 1930 and its various amendments, is now in the final stages of implementation nation-wide. The Act provides for structures and procedures that will enable CLVEC to meet, in as effective and efficient a manner as possible, the needs of vocational education in the area that it serves.

This Plan, which was developed through an inclusive partnership process, sets out our mission statement, goals, objectives, and identifies key deliverables during its lifetime. These will guide our organisation, over the next five years, as it endeavours to meet the needs and aspirations of all our stakeholders: learners, staff, parents, policy makers and the wider public. The CLVEC Committee will proactively support the achievement of the six goals prioritised in the Education Plan and, conscious of the ever-changing environment, will review progress on an ongoing basis. We are busy moving forward, taking on wider responsibilities and managing the challenge of new legislation. We are and will continue to be a dynamic, responsive and creative force for education provision in Limerick.

Our greatest single strength as an organisation is our highly committed staff. I would like to acknowledge their contribution to date in adapting to new ways of working, whether in the office or classroom, taking on new challenges and actively participating in the on-going development of City of Limerick VEC.

**Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon, Chairman**  
**May 2006**

## Introduction

The City of Limerick VEC is a Local Education Authority Body, which operates under the provisions of the Vocational Education Acts 1930-2001. It provides a wide range of learning opportunities and educational support services for people of all ages in its schools/colleges and centres of education in Limerick City. Through its extensive partnership activity at local level, it also ensures that learning is central to the local development agenda. This plan defines our contribution to this work and places it firmly in the context of the development of Limerick as a 'City of Learning'<sup>1</sup>.

The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001 requires VECs to deliver significant change in relation to the 'modernisation' of their public service organisations. CLVEC has grasped this opportunity, and responded positively to these requirements for change. In recent years it has successfully managed the implementation of a number of key initiatives including:

- Producing a Corporate Strategy 2004 -2009
- Establishing new structures, systems and procedures for management, financial control and accountability, as well as information and reporting
- Implementing a 'Code of Ethics'
- Implementing a Performance Management Development System

The production of this five year Education Plan is a further milestone for CLVEC in the management and support of significant change and modernisation in its organisation.

The plan is set within a number of contexts, from the local dynamics of a growing City – Limerick, to the changing national and European legislative and policy landscapes (Part 1). It takes account of the specific history and evolution of CLVEC, and builds on the strengths of the organisation as it is today (Part 2). At the heart of the plan are the mission, goals, objectives and actions of CLVEC (Part 3). These reflect ideas gathered from across the organisation, and provide strategic directions over the period 2006-2010. Finally, Part 4 incorporates a strategy for the implementation of the plan. It also identifies the key

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<sup>1</sup> Limerick City Development Board Strategic Plan 2002-2012.

deliverables by 2010, and underlines the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation processes to enable accountability and maximisation of opportunities for organisational learning.

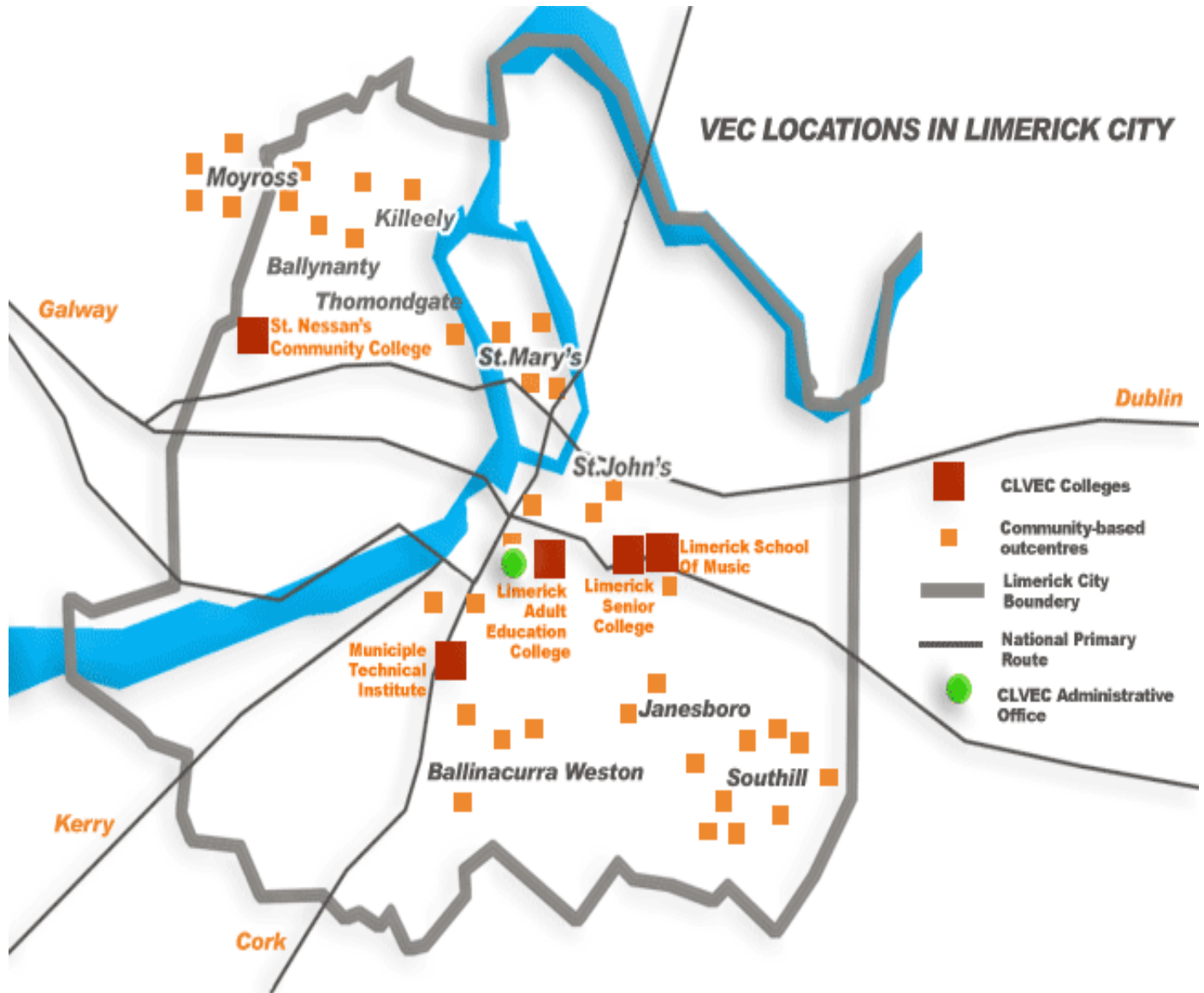
This plan is the culmination of huge work and effort by learners and clients, staff and managers within CLVEC. As such, it reflects the commitment of the whole organisation to the task of modernisation and change.

I would like to acknowledge the key role played by the CLVEC Local Partnership Group and the CLVEC Senior Management Team for their dedicated work in shaping this Education Plan. My particular thanks go to Ms. Maud Baritaud and Ms. Máire Kerrane of the Adult Education Service Development Team, for their expertise and contributions throughout the planning, development and production of this Plan.

It is my hope that this Education Plan will also provide focus and impetus for all of us in our work over the next five years.

**Deirdre Frawley**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**May 2006**

# CITY OF LIMERICK VEC LOCATIONS



## **PART 1 – Establishing the Context**

*Understanding the context within which CLVEC does its work is crucial to the task of setting down an effective plan of action for the next five years. This section looks at the changing profile of Limerick City from spatial, demographic, social and economic perspectives. It also scans the external environment, identifies the key legislative and policy influences impacting on the plan, and highlights the emerging implications and challenges for CLVEC as a statutory education provider.*

### **1.1 – PROFILE OF LIMERICK**<sup>2</sup>

Establishing the local context within which CLVEC operates requires an understanding of the key features of Limerick as a city in 2006.

While the population of the administrative borough of Limerick City is 54,023, the total population of the greater Limerick urban area (2002) is 86,998. This represents a growth of population in excess of 20% since 1996. However, with the exception of slight increases in population in the City Centre (administrative borough) area, the bulk of the increase 18.6% has been in suburban areas. This is an important factor, and any profile of Limerick City must begin by naming the geographic or spatial challenges which impact on the analysis.

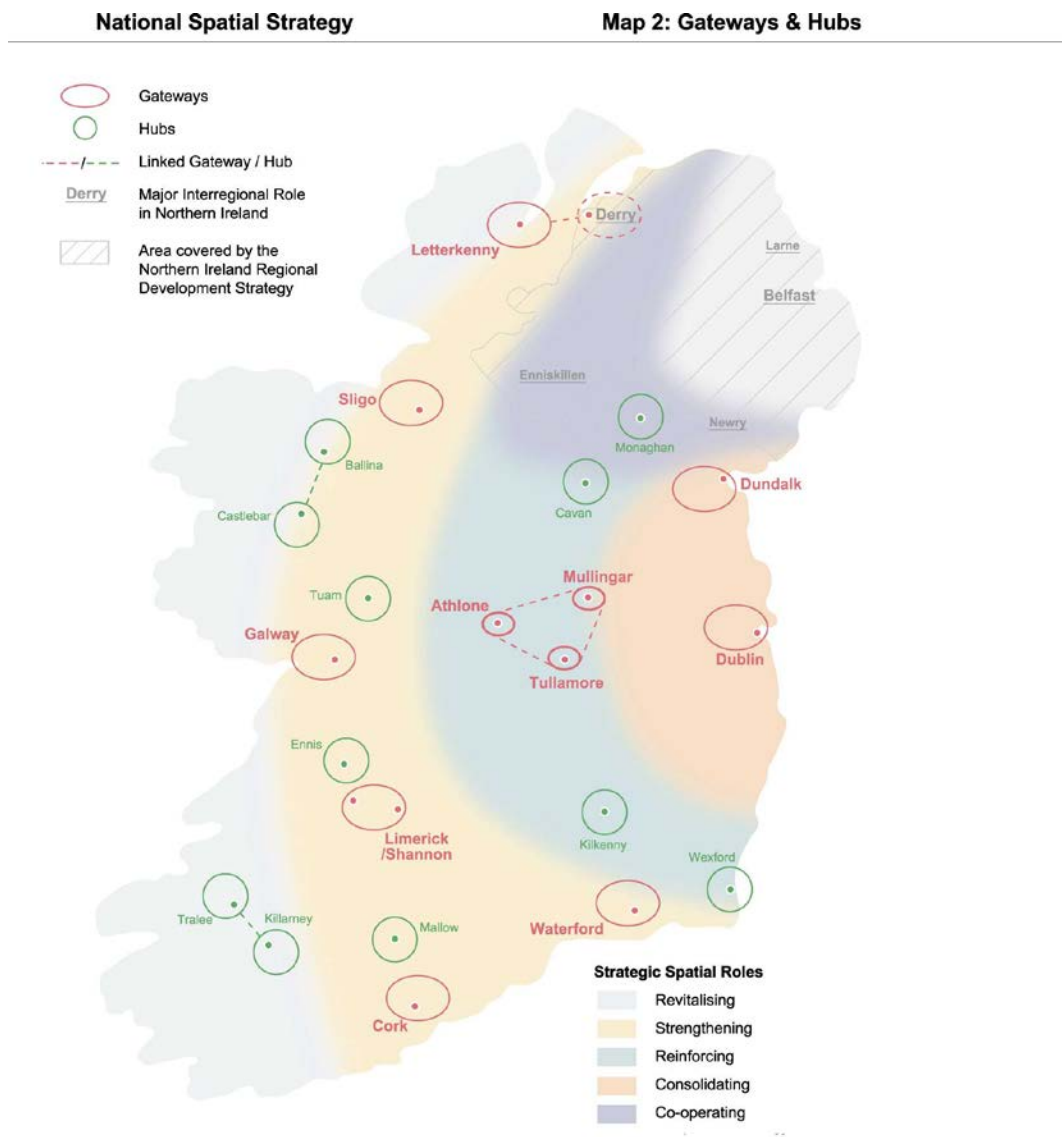
A recent Study commissioned by Limerick City Development Board “*Limerick – Profile of a Changing City*” (McCafferty, 2005) concludes that ‘*Limerick is a significantly under-bounded city, in that the administrative limits come nowhere close to encompassing all of the city’s population or built up areas*’. In order to portray a true profile, the CDB Study differentiates between the legally bounded area administered by Limerick City Council, and the greater ‘Limerick urban area’ that includes the main suburbs, or continuous built-up areas within the direct environs of the city. The fact that 41% of the total population of its greater urban area live in suburban areas outside of the City boundaries means that analysis of the City without their inclusion would present a very skewed picture.

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<sup>2</sup> Information in this section is extracted from Limerick - Profile of a Changing City (McCafferty, 2005). This study, commissioned by Limerick City Development Board, uses data collected during the CSO Census of Population 2002.



The under-bounded nature of Limerick City is further emphasised as an issue for this plan, when considered in the light of the vision for the City as set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)<sup>3</sup>. In this Strategy, Limerick is identified as one of five national ‘gateways’. In the NSS, gateways are defined as “strategic locations, nationally and relative to their surrounding areas....providing national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services”.



In this context, it is clear that an organisation like CLVEC serves a population well beyond the administrative boundaries of the City. It is also a fact that many of the people currently accessing and availing of its programmes and services come from areas outside of these

<sup>3</sup> National Spatial Strategy, 2002-2020.

boundaries. Statistics for the Limerick Senior College (PLC) offer a clear illustration of this point. Based on its 2005 cohort of 2,462 (day and evening enrolments), 41.5% of its students are from Limerick City, while 29% are from Co. Limerick, 16% are from Co. Clare and the remainder (13.5%) come from other counties.

A number of possible explanations exist for the previously mentioned increase in population in Limerick City Centre area, the most likely of which is the high percentage of young adults in private rented accommodation in and around this area. Another explanation is the high percentage of non-nationals availing of cheaper rents, or staying in hostels in these locations. This phenomenon of growing numbers of non-nationals (8.6%) is of particular significance for CLVEC since an increasing number of this target group are availing of Adult Education Programmes such as ESOL.

In line with generally increasing growth rates in the Irish economy, Limerick has also experienced significant growth since 1996. *'Employment in the urban area has increased by 25% ... and per capita disposable income in the wider Limerick City and County area is up by two-thirds'*. However, unemployment in Limerick City still sits at 13.9%. This is second highest unemployment level in the country, the national average being 8.8%.

Interestingly, the increase in employment levels is greatest in those areas of Limerick traditionally referred to as unemployment 'black spots'. While this is a positive development, it should be considered alongside the fact that the employment base in Limerick has shifted significantly from industries involved in food, textiles and clothing to so-called 'high-tech' sectors such as bio-technology and electronics. This points to changing needs of the labour market and a higher demand for a highly skilled work-force. In turn, such occupations demand higher levels of formal qualifications and those with lower educational attainments are less likely to be able to gain access to higher status, better paid employment opportunities. In addition, they are most vulnerable to unemployment, should there be an unforeseen downturn in the economy of the future.

Clearly an education provider such as CLVEC must be aware of these developments, and work at all levels to keep young people in education in its schools and youth training initiatives. It must also reach new clients, particularly in the workplace, which is a key learning site for the Knowledge Economy. In Further and Adult education settings it is vital to continue

to develop a range of relevant Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) and other Vocational Preparation Training Programmes (VPTP) for learners, thereby developing 'a bridge' to third level education for individuals who might otherwise be unable to access higher education. Other programmes such as Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) target and meet the needs of those with less than upper second level education, and community-based 'outreach' provision is central to increasing access and to reaching new 'hard to reach' target groups.

Despite huge optimism and growth in the City, as well as significant improvements in its streetscape and infrastructure over recent years, a key finding of the CDB Study for Limerick is that it is still an acutely divided city in socio-economic terms. The previously mentioned 'black spots' remain the areas worst affected by unemployment, having relatively low levels of educational attainment, high proportions of unskilled and semi-skilled workforce, high levels of early school leaving, lower household income levels, low levels of internet access and car ownership, and most local authority rentals. In addition, the ratio of lone-parent families is 1 in 4 in Limerick City, as opposed to 1 in 6 at national level. For these reasons, three geographic areas in the City (out of 25 nationally) were selected for inclusion in the RAPID programme, in the Southside, Northside and City Centre.

In this context, the degree of polarisation in Limerick between affluent and disadvantaged areas remains a key challenge for the future. This division is significantly more marked here, than in any other urban area in the country, and highlights the significant effort needed to tackle social and economic exclusion.

CLVEC is an active partner in many local development fora, and in co-operation with its partners, the organisation works on the development of effective strategies to promote and support social inclusion. Many of its schools and educational programmes are also faced with the challenges of dealing with 'disadvantaged' clientele. Some of its schools are located close to large urban housing estates, experiencing the previously highlighted 'disadvantages', and many of its programmes are specifically targeting the same geographical communities and wider communities of interest.

While this targeted approach to the delivery of programmes and services is essential, it also needs to be balanced with the broader brief of CLVEC as a public education provider. In this regard, the provision of a wide range of programmes and services, such as Information,

Nightclasses, Irish Medium Education, Music Education, etc is critical to meet the changing and emerging educational needs of the entire community of Limerick.

## **1.2 - LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY** <sup>4</sup>

CLVEC operates within an increasingly complex legislative and policy environment, and as a public service provider, has obligations to maintain the highest quality standards, while at the same time working within the clear boundaries of this agenda.

This section summarises primary pieces of legislation and selected key policies, and highlights the ensuing implications for our organisation. These are key challenges that this VEC has to address in order to fulfil its role in local and national development. Information is organised under three broad headings, which reflect some of the main **pillars of responsibility** identified in the legal frameworks under which VECs operate:

- (a) The responsibility to ensure quality and relevance in education and training provision**
- (b) The responsibility to demonstrate good practice in Corporate Governance**
- (c) The responsibility to implement best practice in the employment and support of staff**

### **Pillar (a): Quality and Relevance in Education and Training provision**

There are several **pieces of legislation** that define VECs functions, roles and responsibilities in this area. The most significant of these are named below in chronological order:

- The founding **Vocational Education Act (1930)**, which established VECs as statutory bodies, set out their functions and democratic structures and rooted these sufficiently to enable their retention even to this day. There were subsequent amendments to the Act in 1936, 1944, 1970, and most significantly for this planning process, **The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act (2001)**.
- **Refugee Act (1996)**: This provides a framework and legal procedure for processing and determining asylum applications. It also provides for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees (including rights of access to education and training).

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<sup>4</sup> Some material in this section has been taken directly from Co.Dublin VEC Strategic Plan 2004-2008 and the IVEA Information Pack and Handbook for Vocational Education Committee Members. Their work in this area is gratefully acknowledged.

- **The Education Act (1998):** This Act is the primary piece of legislation governing all aspects of primary, secondary and adult education in the Irish state. It sets out in detail all the statutory obligations of education providers (including VEC). The Act also provides for the establishment of Boards of Management (representative of all stakeholders) and in the context of VECs authorises them as the 'Corporate Body' and Patron responsible for the management and performance of the schools it maintains. It also paves the way for Whole School Evaluation (WSE) – a process where the inspectors from the Department of Education and Science carry out an evaluation of the quality of education being provided by a particular school. The work of the whole school is evaluated in the areas of Teaching and Learning, School planning and School management.
- **Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999):** This makes provision for the recognition of all learning activity within personal, civic, social or employment related settings. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has been established under the Act and a ten level National Framework of Qualifications put in place. For the first time, this framework offers a single, coherent qualification system for all levels of education and training in the State. Two new Awards Councils have been established within the Framework. These are the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). The Act also requires that all providers of further education and training programmes leading to FETAC awards establish procedures to quality assure their programmes and agree these procedures with FETAC.
- **Education Welfare (Act) (2000):** This provides for the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board, the appointment of Education Welfare Officers and it sets down requirements for systematic approaches to monitoring and reporting of children's attendance/non attendance at school. It also establishes procedures for suspensions and expulsions of students from school settings.
- **Teaching Council Act (2001):** This provides for the establishment of The Teaching Council to enhance professionalism and the quality of the education service by providing teachers, assisted by the education partners, with a formal structure to regulate their professio

- **The Youth Work Act (2001):** This provides a legal framework for the provision of youth work programmes and services (much of this has yet to be enacted).

There have also been significant developments at European, National and Local levels in relation to **the policy context** within which VECs operate:

At European Level:

- **The concrete future objectives of Education and Training systems (EU) (2000):**  
This report from the Education Council to the European Council makes extensive recommendations about education and training systems towards the key objective of *‘developing the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010’*. This report was crucial since, for the first time, it made the link between Education and Training systems, national social and economic strategy, and the future of the Union. It also set out a coherent approach across all European countries to national education and training policy. Of particular relevance are the **Strategic Objectives for Education & Training up to 2010** :
  1. “Improving the **quality and effectiveness** of education and training systems in the EU”
  2. “Facilitating the **access of all** to education and training systems”
  3. “**Opening-up** education and training systems to the wider world”

These strategic objectives have been further broken down into thirteen common objectives and indicators and benchmarks have been identified for all. Member states are expected to report progress made at national level in relation to these common objectives. **The interim report on progress toward the Lisbon goals Education and Training 2010 (2004)** highlights a number of priority areas needing to be addressed immediately i.e. more effective and efficient investment in human resource development; more focus on making lifelong learning a concrete reality; establishing a Europe of Education and Training including a European qualifications framework. Progress in all these areas is central to the future development of the VEC sector.

- **Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality (2001):** This provides a clear definition of Lifelong Learning as *‘all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an*

*ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skill and competence*'. It called for investment in Education and Training systems across Europe, innovation in teaching and learning methods, and valuing informal and non-formal learning. In addition, it highlighted the need to focus on Active Citizenship, the development of new basic skills including IT and foreign languages, as well as re-thinking Guidance provision and *'bringing learning closer to the learner'* (Outreach).

- **EU Copenhagen Process (2002):** This provides a strategy to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training.

#### At National Level:

- **The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997):** This was the first national strategic approach to reducing poverty. It acknowledged that poverty was a multi-faceted problem which had its roots in structural inequalities; that it would not be simple to resolve, and required integrated and targeted approaches to resolution. Five specific thematic areas were identified for particular attention. These included: unemployment, income adequacy, educational disadvantage and different elements of disadvantage between urban and rural areas. A review of the NAPS was undertaken in 2001. This led to the production of **Building an Inclusive Society (2002)** and the addition of the further thematic strands for health and housing and the specific poverty issues for new target groups such as migrants and ethnic minorities.
- **National Development Plan (2000-2006):** Government strategy (as part of the EU Employment Strategy), for the overall development of the economy during the period. The NDP has four objectives:
  - Continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth
  - Consolidating and improving Ireland's international competitiveness
  - Fostering balanced regional development
  - Promoting social inclusion

The NDP Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme is of huge significance for VECs, as it sets out the parameters for many elements of the VEC's work. It defines specific measures and targets in areas such as education and training, lifelong learning, employability and employment, social inclusion, adult literacy, early school leaving, vocational training etc.



- **White Paper on Adult Education (2000):** This sets out a national 'Strategic Framework for the Development of Lifelong Learning' in response to the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness and the above mentioned NDP Operational Programme. Some of its key recommendations included increased spending on Adult Literacy, employment of Community Education Facilitators, the development of Part-time learning options (BTEI) and Adult Educational Guidance and Counselling Services. It also recommended a review of PLCs and the development of clear structures for the co-ordination of the Adult Education sector.
  
- **Mclver Report - Review of the PLC Sector (2001):** This makes recommendations re. the organisation, support, development as well as technical and administrative structures and resources, required in schools and colleges with large scale PLC provision.
  
- **Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning (2002):** This policy document, commissioned by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, emphasises the importance of coherent, interdepartmental planning. It re-iterates many of the recommendations of the White Paper and emphasises the importance of longterm commitment on behalf of government and citizens to lifelong learning.
  
- **Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group - Ahead of the Curve (2004):** This wide-ranging report on the future development of the Irish economy sets out significant challenges for government in relation to the strategic development of the economy in order to maintain competitive advantage. One of the five sources of competitive advantage identified was *World-class Skills Education and Training*. This means '*building on Ireland's historic commitment to education with a renewed focus on excellence and responsiveness to deliver skills appropriate to the needs of enterprise*'. It specifically highlighted the need to develop '*a formalised programme of lifelong learning*' and to up-skill the general workforce through a national '**One Step Up**' initiative.
  
- **National Workplace Strategy (2005):** Produced by the Forum on the Workplace of the Future in October 2003. The aim of the forum was to help build a clearer picture of

our workplaces and the changes that are needed to compete successfully in a modern knowledge economy. To this end, it identified nine characteristics of the competitive organisation of the future. They are: agile, customer centred, knowledge intensive, responsive to employee needs, networked, highly productive, involved and participatory, continually learning and proactively diverse. The strategy identified a series of recommendations under five strategic strands:

1. Increasing commitment to workplace innovation
2. Building capacity for change
3. Developing future skills
4. Improving access to workplace opportunities
5. Improving the quality of working life

It also made a series of specific recommendations for public service organisations, including calling for changes in areas such as job design and classification, skill and staffing requirements, performance management, use of IT, management structures and reward systems, as well as changes in culture, attitudes and behaviour.

#### At Local Level:

- **City Development Board Plan (2002-2012):** An integrated Strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of Limerick City and reflecting the strategic initiatives of all key stakeholders in the City. This document is key in the Limerick context since it places learning clearly at the heart of the local development agenda.
- **RAPID Plans (2002):** With the objective of Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development, three distinct geographical areas in Limerick City have been identified at national level as areas of acute social and economic exclusion. Multi-sectoral responses, based on extensive consultation, were put together to target social and economic inequities in these areas.

## **Key challenges for CLVEC in ensuring Quality and Relevance in Education and Training Provision**

### **Educational Provision**

- Delivering 'seamless' Lifelong Learning programmes and services, while at the same time working with distinct government departments, with varying policy priorities in relation to the Lifelong Learning agenda
- Delivering relevant PLC programmes in a policy context where numbers have been 'capped', and where an increasing proportion of adult students have little previous formal educational experience and are in need of extensive additional learning and other supports
- Contributing as a lead partner to the development of an effective Lifelong Learning Strategy within Limerick City, as part of the City Development Board Strategy, and implementing key strands of CLVEC's own provision within that strategy
- Clarifying our "niche in the market" and establishing our organisation within an increasingly competitive environment for educational providers
- Developing and implementing a Quality Assurance/Validation System to meet the requirements of all awarding bodies
- Addressing discipline issues in schools, in the context of maintaining a socially inclusive educational environment

### **Staffing/Structures**

- Identifying resources to balance the effective delivery of core programmes and services with the increasing demands for partnership initiatives, particularly in relation to local development and social inclusion strategies
- Maintaining levels of educational provision in the context of increasing pay costs. This is particularly difficult since the introduction of Protection of Employees (Part-time Work Act) (2001)
- Delivering coherent Youth Services in the absence of any structures or significant resourcing

### **Organisational Development/Management**

- Promoting integration and new 'ways of working' across all VEC programmes, including integrated use of Information and Communication Technologies
- Fulfilling the role of Patron for our schools and taking full responsibility for the challenges of managing all finances and human resources within set legal parameters
- Balancing the rights of learners, parents, staff and school management and working out the complexities of legislation in ways that are open, systematic and fair to all the stakeholders

### **Access**

- Increasing access to our programmes and services by extending the range and number of available learning sites (work-place, community, virtual learning sites etc)

## Pillar (b): Good Governance

*“Corporate governance comprises the systems and procedures by which entities are directed and controlled.”*<sup>5</sup> We believe that good education delivery and good administration are inextricably linked and the importance of integrity, transparency, accountability and control in the governance of any organisation cannot be overstated. The relevant policies and legislation in this area are:

- The **Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) (1994)**: Emphasises the need for management in public service organisations to make substantial contributions to national development, through the provision of services to the public, which are both excellent in quality and effective in delivery.
- **Better Local Government (1996)**: Seeks to bring together both the democratic and participative partners to marry the strengths of both and deliver better local government. In addition it presents “a vision for the Civil Service”, particularly focusing on greater openness and accountability as well as a mission of quality customer service.
- **The Rochford Report (1998)**: Arising out of the School Commission Report (1996), this identifies appropriate administrative structures, grades and staffing levels for VECs.
- **Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005**: The sixth in a series of agreements between Government and the Social Partners, it identifies a number of areas where sustained effort from all parties would lead to significant return for the community. Benchmarking agreements under this programme identified specific deliverables in all sectors (including education) in exchange for increased wage payments.
- The previously mentioned **Vocational Education (Amendment) Act (2001)** has a key emphasis on expectations for governance and accountability. This Act presents VECs

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<sup>5</sup> Code of Practice for the Governance of Vocational Education Committees. Circular Letter No. F11/05

with a new model of operation, one which specifies clear functions for the VEC Committee in overseeing the implementation of policy and Executive functions for the Chief Executive Officer in the effective day-to-day administration of the organisation.

The Act also paved the way for a **Code of Practice for the Governance of VECs (Circular Letter F11/05)**: A Code promoting best practice in governance and management in the VEC system. Areas covered under the Code include Information and Reporting; Financial Control and Accountability; Planning; Code of Conduct and Quality.

Other significant pieces of legislation relating to delivering open and transparent public services are:

- **Freedom of Information Act (1997)**
- **Data Protection Acts (1988-2003)**
- **Official Languages Act (2003)**

#### **Key challenges for CLVEC in demonstrating Good Practice in Corporate Governance**

- Delivering on requirements for modernisation, development and accountability including the establishment of new management structures, the preparation of this five-year Education Plan, an Annual Service Plan and an Annual Report
- Keeping all partners and employees informed and up-to-date on progress, achievements and blockages. Everyone including Committee members, staff, learners, clients and the public need to be kept informed and consulted with to varying degrees. This requires excellent technologies and constant effort
- Designing and implementing a range of relevant internal monitoring systems for the dual purposes of accountability and planning for future development
- Modernising CLVEC and meeting legislative requirements without additional resources
- Establishing effective procedures for identifying and evaluating all risks which could prevent the VEC from achieving its objectives

## **Pillar (c): Employment and Support of Staff**

A raft of legislation is in place to provide for the employment and support of staff. Many are self-explanatory in terms of their focus and CLVEC must remain in compliance with all of them. They include:

- **Redundancy Payment Act (1967 -1991)**
- **Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts (1973-1993)**
- **Unfair Dismissals Act (1997-1993)**
- **Payment of Wages Act (1991)**
- **Organisation of Working Time Act (1997)**
- **Employment Equality Acts (1998 & 2004)**
- **Parental Leave Act (1998)**
- **Equal Status Act (2000)**
- **Protection of Employees (Part-time work) Act (2001)**
- **Protection of Employees (Fixed-time work) Act (2003)**
- **Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004**
- **Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act (2004)**
- **Public Service Management (Recruitments and Appointments) (2004)**
- **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1997)**
- **Equality Act (2004)**

### **Key challenges for CLVEC in the Implementation of Best Practice in the Employment and Support of Staff**

- Keeping staff up to date on all information relating to their employment
- Meeting the standards required by Health and Safety and Equality legislations in buildings that predate the legislation and are difficult to adapt
- Adapting HR practices to meet the increasing demands for flexibility and family-friendly patterns of work and service delivery
- Accessing additional resources to establish new roles and set up new structures to manage key growth areas
- Balancing the needs and entitlements of staff to secure long-term employment with the requirement to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of learners
- Developing leadership skills at all levels in the organisation in order to effectively and efficiently manage change
- Implementing a new fully integrated HR/Payroll Management System

## **PART 2 – Overview of City of Limerick VEC**

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of CLVEC, this part highlights key milestones since the establishment of the VEC, which led to its current shape and structures. It also describes the wide range of activities provided by CLVEC today, from its Educational Provision, to its Support Services and Partnership Initiatives.

When CLVEC first met in 1930, the Committee employed 25 staff, including 13 part-time teachers and expended €8,550. Today, CLVEC has an operating budget of €22.5 million per annum and employs staff<sup>6</sup> full time and part time to a total of 467 full time equivalents.

### **2.1 - BACKGROUND TO CLVEC**

Technical and continuation education within the City traces its beginnings back to the formation of the Limerick Athenaeum Society in 1853. The Society's aims included "the promotion of Literature, Science, Art and Music". Prior to 1930, responsibility for technical and continuation education laid with Limerick Corporation, under the terms of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889.

A few key milestones have shaped CLVEC current structures:

- Athenaeum Building, which was built in 1833 as a Town Hall for Newtown Pery, was bought by the Limerick Athenaeum Society in 1854 to establish a "Temple of Learning" and has since then been used as an education centre in the City. It has been in public ownership since 1896 and is today the Head Office of City of Limerick VEC.
- In 1889, the Limerick Technical Instruction Committee was established to provide for the advancement of technical education in Limerick and from that date, technical education has been a living factor in the municipality.
- In 1911, the Municipal Technical Institute (MTI) in O'Connell Street was built to provide a central location for technical instruction, which had, up to then, been provided in seven different locations around the city, including Athenaeum building. It was

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<sup>6</sup> However, the total number of paid employees in the tax year ended 31/12/05 was 640 (including sessional staff).

extended in 1926 to group the Commercial Department, the Building and Engineering Departments and the School of Art. It was from this nucleus that some of today's finest educational institutions evolved e.g: Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick Senior College, Limerick Adult Education College, Limerick Municipal School of Music, and the Limerick School of Art and Design.

- In 1930, City of Limerick VEC, the successor to the Technical Instruction Committee, was formed under the provisions of the Vocational Education Act, which allowed local committees to determine and respond to the educational needs of their area. The clear focus for VECs (under the Act), on vocational or more technical education highlighted the need, which had been identified, for greater relevance in curricula and an increasing focus on 'technical' competencies in the development of a modern state. This Act established VECs as statutory bodies, set out their functions and democratic structures and rooted these sufficiently to ensure their retention to this day.
- In 1961, the old County Infirmary Building and Nurses Home in Mulgrave Street was acquired to provide a new home for the Committee's expanding range of education programmes, particularly in the areas of general education, commerce and music education. That campus is now known as Limerick Senior College and the Municipal School of Music.
- In 1978, St Nessans Community College was established on a green field site in the North of the City, specifically to meet the needs of the community, both in formal and informal education and recreation.
- In the early eighties, CLVEC's first Adult Education Officer was appointed to organize and manage the development and provision of adult education programmes in response to local needs. Shortly afterwards, an Adult Education Board was established as a statutory Sub-Committee of the City of Limerick VEC.
- The most recent development was the approval by the Minister for Education & Science in 2005 for the establishment of a new co-educational Irish Medium Post Primary School to be opened in September 2006, under the auspices of City of Limerick VEC.

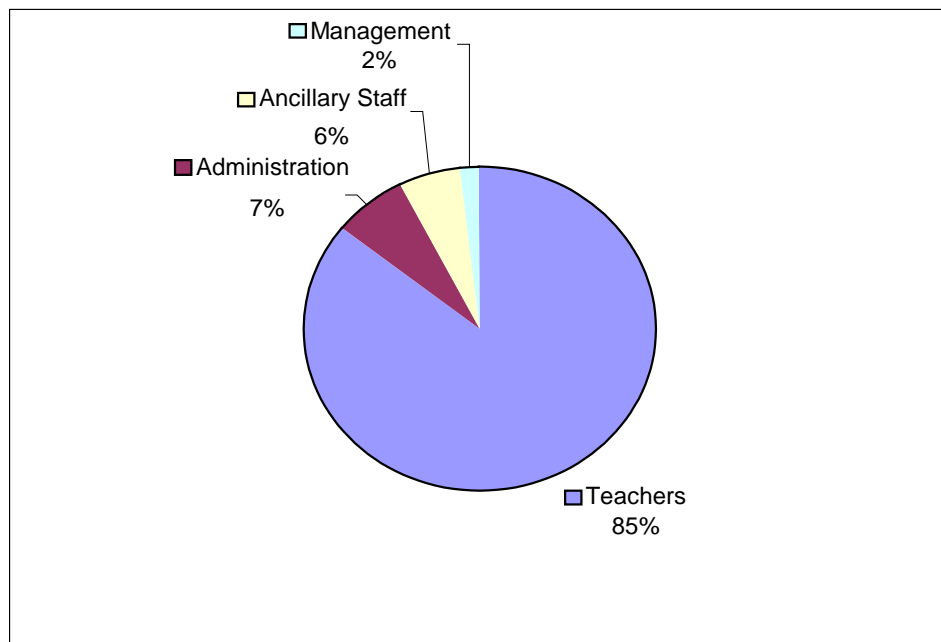
Today, CLVEC provides educational and support services to over 10,000 learners at 7 principal centres and approximately 60 out-centres around the City. It also provides support services such as information, grants, guidance etc to in excess of 15,000 customers across the City.



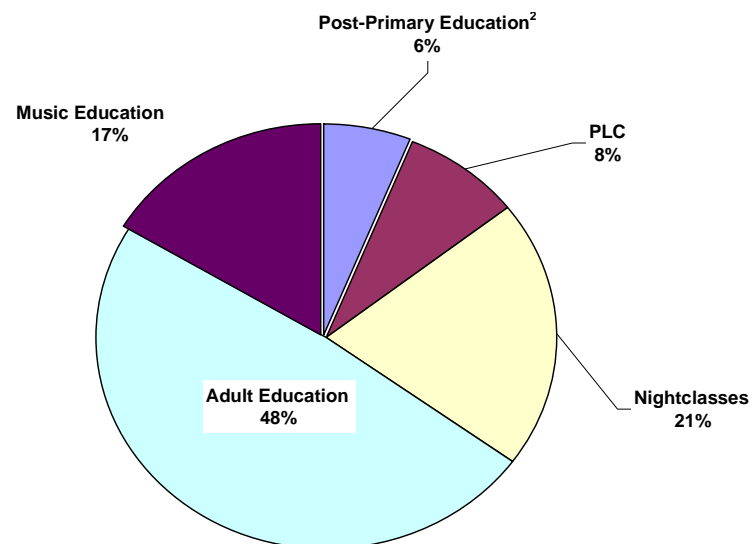
CLVEC Head office is located in the historical and newly refurbished Athenaeum Building, 30 Upper Cecil St., Limerick. Its other main centres are:

- Adult Education College, Presentation Court, Sexton St., Limerick
- Limerick Senior College, Mulgrave Street, Limerick
- Municipal School of Music, Mulgrave Street, Limerick
- Municipal Technical Institute, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick
- St. Nesson's Community College, Moylish Park, Limerick
- Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, Neville House, Sir Harry's Mall, Limerick

**Figure 1: 2005 CLVEC STAFF per Category**

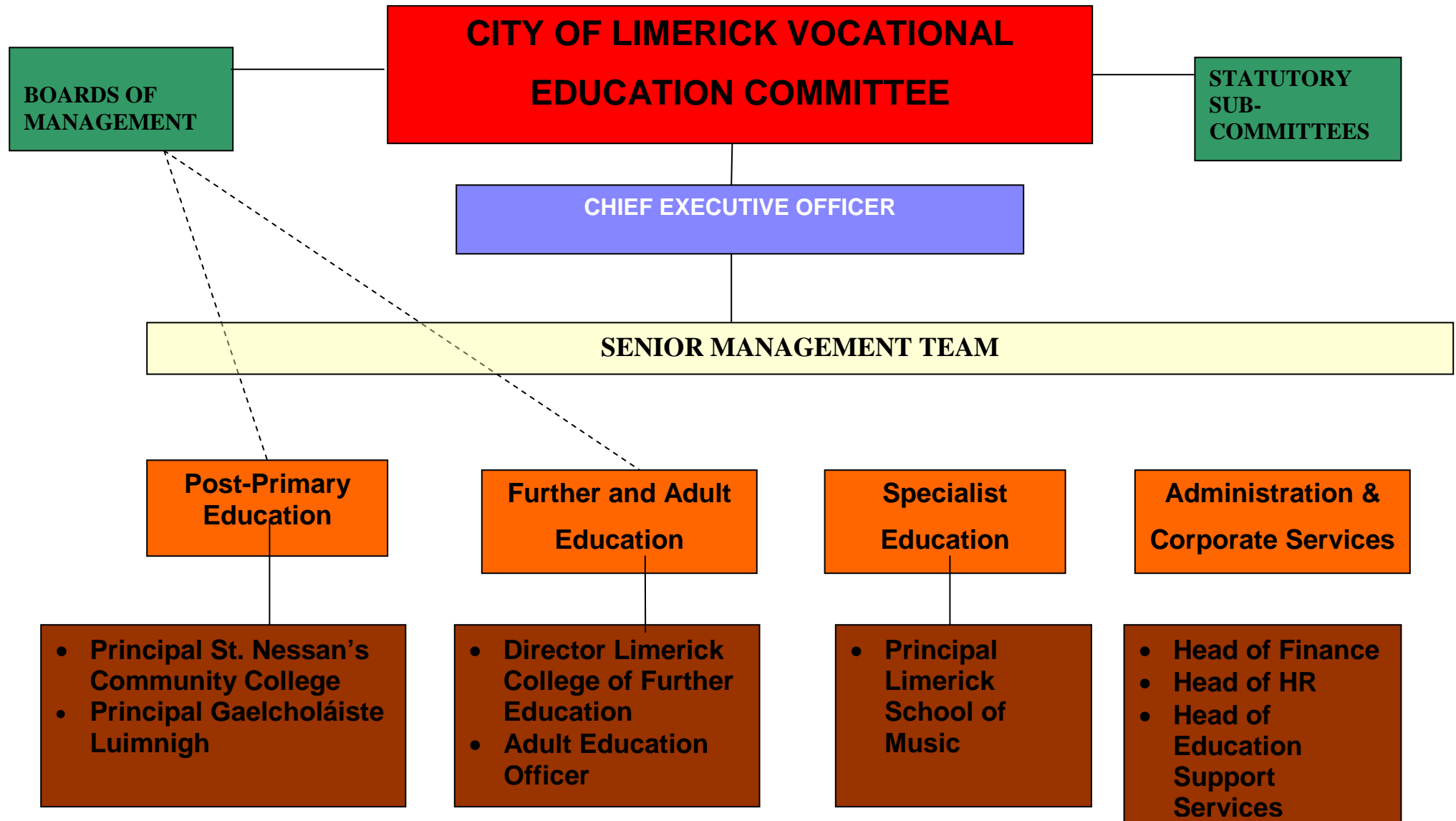


**Figure 2: 2005 CLVEC Learners per Sector <sup>1</sup>**



1. In 2005, the total number of CLVEC Learners was 8,494
2. This does not include Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh which will open in September 2006.

## 2.2- CLVEC SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES



The Management and Administrative structures of CLVEC can be described as follows:

### ***VEC Committee***

The Committee is comprised of elected public representatives, parents, staff representatives and other community sectoral interests. It is responsible for overseeing the development and management of City of Limerick VEC. Its monthly meetings are held in public.

### ***Statutory Sub-Committees***

Sub-Committees are established to carry out specific or delegated functions. They may be established in accordance with particular legislative or regulatory requirements, or on the Committee own initiative. These include:

- ❑ **Finance Sub-Committee** – This group reviews and reports to the Committee on all financial aspects of the Scheme, including Education and Service Plans budget monitoring, as well as large contracts awarded to the VEC.
- ❑ **Audit Committee** – This group reviews and reports to the Committee on internal audit systems to ensure quality and accountable financial accounting and compliance with relevant regulations and legislation.
- ❑ **Local Partnership Working Group** – This group comprises Management, staff and Union Representatives, and was set up to implement the partnership process at local level in order to achieve the objectives of modernization and change of the PPF.
- ❑ **Boards of Management** - These are established in accordance with the provision of the Education Act (1998), and comprise parent, teacher and VEC representatives. The Board's main function is to manage the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students. It has responsibility to the VEC for drawing up the school plan and for overseeing its implementation.
- ❑ **Adult Education Board** - It is a statutory Sub-Committee of CLVEC. Its composition reflects the wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations with involvement in Adult Education in Limerick City. The Board meets monthly to plan, monitor and review the overall Adult Education Service provided by the VEC. At Board meetings, decisions are made regarding Adult Education issues and Adult Education budgets, which have been assigned to the AEB by the VEC.

### ***Senior Management Team***

The Senior Management Team is led by the Chief Executive Officer and includes the School Principals, the Adult Education Officer, the Finance Officer and the Personnel/Administration Officer. Its role is to plan for and manage all operational aspects of the Scheme.

### ***Senior Administration Team***

The Senior Administration Team is led by the Chief Executive Officer and comprises the Finance officer and the Personnel/Administration Officer.

### ***Schools/Centres Management Team***

The Schools, Adult Education Service and Administration Section each has its own Centre/Service Management Team. Each team has responsibility for the planning and delivery of the service in their specific settings.

## **2.3 - DESCRIPTION OF CLVEC EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

City of Limerick VEC educational provision offers a wide choice of learning programmes for young people and adults of Limerick City and its environs and provides Post-Primary Education, Further and Adult Education and Specialist Music Education. It expended a budget of €22.5 million in 2005.

### **2.3.1 Post-Primary Education**

CLVEC provides a broad-based curriculum at post-primary level at St. Nessian's Community College, a non-denominational, co-educational school catering for the needs of students between 12 and 18. Those programmes include a 3 year programme leading to Junior Certificate, a Transition Year Programme and a 2 year programme leading to Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied. The school makes a particular effort to cater for a wide span of needs and is noted for the range of options it offers students. Extra curricular activities such as sports, young scientist competition, form an important part of the educational programme. City of Limerick VEC and the Bishop of Limerick are the joint patrons of St. Nessian's Community College.

In addition, the Minister for Education & Science approved the establishment of a new Irish Medium Post Primary School to be opened in September 2006, under the auspices of City of Limerick VEC. Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh will offer a comprehensive curriculum to boys and girls from Limerick City and surrounding environs, including a broad range of extra curricular activities. The School aims particularly to incorporate high levels of ICT in Teaching and Learning.

### **2.3.2 Further and Adult Education.**

Over the last twenty years, CLVEC has worked consistently to promote, develop, and provide relevant educational opportunities for young people and adults, particularly for those most disadvantaged, educationally or socially. Further and Adult Education provision now represents 43% of the CLVEC budget, and has developed an approach based on collaborative work-practices, “joined-up thinking” and inclusivity of all its learning programmes and support services.

#### ***Adult Learner Support Service (Literacy)***

The Adult Learner Support Service offers a confidential, free, literacy learning service to all adults in the Limerick City area, who have reading and writing difficulties. In addition to providing practical support in reading and writing skills, it also seeks to promote personal development and enable literacy learners to interact with others in a similar situation. Programmes are tailor-made to suit learner needs and are delivered in-group and one to one settings, by both volunteer and paid tutors.

#### ***Back to Education Initiative***

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) provides part-time education programmes to anyone who has left full-time education. The aim is to give people an opportunity to combine a return to learning with family, work and other responsibilities. Priority is given to those with less than upper second level education. Programmes are offered on a part-time basis, in the mornings, afternoons, evenings and weekends. Courses are free to holders of, or dependents of persons with Medical Cards, Unemployed payments, Means-tested Welfare payments and Family Income Supplement. Other unwaged adults with less than Leaving Cert. are eligible to a reduction in their fees. All others pay the full costs.

## ***Community Education Programmes***

This is a flexible, community-based service, run in partnership with Community Groups. It offers a wide range of courses and programmes, both accredited and non-accredited. Courses, which vary in duration, level and delivery mode, are specially designed to meet the needs of a particular group of learners, in a particular place, at a particular point in time. A fundamental principle of Community Education provision is to support local development and empower individuals and communities to gain skills and qualifications, which will ensure their active participation in society, and provide access for them to further education and employment opportunities.

## ***Limerick City Drugs Prevention Strategy***

The Limerick City Drug Prevention Strategy has been developed in conjunction with a range of local partners and seven Community-based groups are now being funded through the Strategy. The purpose of the funding is to develop youth facilities and services in disadvantaged areas where a significant drug problem exists or has the potential to develop, with a view to attracting young people at risk of becoming involved in drugs, into more healthy and productive pursuits. The Strategy also has a strong focus on training of local activists and personnel and an accredited City-wide Community Addiction Studies programme has been delivered annually for the past two years.

## ***Post-Leaving Certificate***

Post Leaving Certificate courses are offered in Limerick Senior College, which provides one and two year full time programmes offering general education and training, as well as work experience, aimed at young people and adults who have completed upper second level education, but who wish to further their education to gain accreditation and/or employment. Limerick Senior College specialises in the provision of a comprehensive range of courses at undergraduate and professional level over several disciplines. These include Computers, Business, Accounting, Marketing, Tourism, Teleservices, Languages, International Trade, Teacher Training, Childcare, Health Education, Art & Design, Photography, Interior Design, Fashion, Hairdressing, Beauty & Complementary Therapy etc. A wide range of Hobby and Leisure courses are also offered on a part-time evening basis.

### ***Prison Education***

The Department of Justice and the City of Limerick VEC jointly support this programme. It includes the provision of a range of courses and programmes for adults detained in Limerick Prison. Programmes are both accredited and non-accredited and run during specified hours in both daytime and evening. They are attended on a voluntary basis by prisoners, and are delivered in dispersed locations in the prison complex, as well as in a centrally located Education Centre. Programmes offered are wide-ranging and include options to meet the full range of student needs i.e. Basic Education to Open University.

### ***Self-Financing Classes***

Fee paying provision is available, through day and night classes offered by Limerick Senior College (on a self-financing basis), and in 2005 there were a total of 1,760 students on the register. A wide range of courses is available to suit the needs of school leavers and mature students alike. These courses include: Computer Applications, Business Management, Accounting Technician, Tourism, Teleservices, Languages, Marketing, International Trade, Information Processing, Reception, Teacher Training, Childcare, Health Education, Art, Photography, Interior Design, Fashion, Hairdressing and Beauty & Complementary Therapy. A recent development is the delivery of a range of programmes on a contract basis for the up-skilling of the current workforce e.g. relevant programmes for staff of the Health Service Executive.

All courses are accredited by a number of prestigious validating bodies. The approval of the College by these bodies is a benchmark of the high quality of courses, facilities and tuition on offer.

### ***Teaching Services to other Institutions***

Teaching services are provided by CLVEC to a range of education, training and social service organisations across the City. The target groups include children in care, unemployed adults, out of school youth, and ex-prisoners. Following an application process, a range of organisations and projects are allocated teaching hours by the Dept. of Education and



Science. While specific teaching requirements are identified by Centre Managers, the Service is administered by CLVEC.

### ***Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme***

VTOS is a full time learning programme for 210 adults over 21 years old, and in receipt of a social welfare payment e.g. unemployment, one parent, disability etc. The programme offers a range of learning options specifically tailored to meet participants' educational needs. Participants, on completion of their one or two year programme can progress to further education or training or to employment.

### ***Youthreach Programmes***

Youthreach is a full-time programme of education, training and work experience for adolescents. The 100 young people who attend are between fifteen and nineteen years of age and have attained no formal educational or training qualifications.

Youthreach aims to develop independent-minded young adults by providing a range of practical, academic, personal and social skills in a positive learning environment. The programmes includes a Foundation Phase or Pre-Junior Certificate Phase that develops the skills essential for further learning – Communications, Mathematics, Life Skills along with a choice of vocational options such as Catering, Computers, Woodwork, Metalwork, Sports, Art and Crafts. A progression phase, which includes National Vocational Awards as well as Dept. of Education Certification, is available to students who wish to take up these options.

### **2.3.3. Specialist Music Education**

The Vocational Education Acts 1930-2001 can be described as enabling legislation and this has proved to be a significant strength in the provision of specialist education to meet the particular needs of a local community. Down through the years, City of Limerick VEC has provided education in Art, Outdoor Education, and Engineering.

The Municipal School of Music is now the Committee's most significant area of specialist education. Established in 1961 in response to local demand it has continued to provide music education, both practical and theoretical, for all age groups at all levels up to Diploma Level.

The school currently has 1,400 students. The school provides tuition on a one to one basis in all orchestral instruments and group tuition in the theory of music. The School has three orchestras; Junior, Middle and Senior, all of which perform publicly on a regular basis. A special feature of the School of Music is the Early Music Consort and the String Instrument Making Class. Students of the school progress on to a variety of paths which include, Third level Music Education, Orchestral performers, recording and live individual Artists, and hopefully all continue to be lifelong lovers of music.

## **2.4 - CLVEC SUPPORT SERVICES**

This section provides a detailed description of the growing number of support services provided by CLVEC to its learners and the Public. They include:

### ***Adult Educational Guidance Service (AEGS)***

The CLVEC Adult Educational Guidance Service was established in 2002 through the collaborative efforts of CLVEC, the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Paul Partnership Limerick, with subsequent funding from the Dormant Accounts. In 2005, AEGS was mainstreamed to offer a professional Guidance Service for adults who are disadvantaged educationally, economically and/or socially and to enable them to make informed choices about their learning and career options. The Service provision includes a city-centre based Information and Advice Service, programme and community-based guidance counselling services for individuals and groups, as well as access to a network of partners offering complementary supports.

### ***Ancillary Services***

Ancillary Services include maintenance, care taking, security, cleaning and canteen services, which are provided in daytime and evening, in all CLVEC buildings. These Services are critical to maintaining a high quality learning environment.

### ***Childcare Support***

City of Limerick administers a childcare fund to support access of parents to VTOS and Youthreach programmes. This childcare allowance can be used to secure a place in a

community or commercial crèche subject to payment of a maximum of € 63.50 per week per child, or for the payment of a child minder also to a maximum of € 63.50 per week per child (2005).

### ***Post-Primary School Transport***

The School Transport Scheme was established in 1967. VEC staff, through the appointment of CEO's as Transport Liaison Officers for each VEC's administrative area, have an involvement in the Post-Primary School Transport Scheme<sup>7</sup> which includes: Assessment of eligibility, Co-ordination of Routes and Co-ordination of School Holiday Roster.

These tasks are carried out in co-operation with the Post-Primary Schools and Bus Eireann who administer the Scheme as agents for the Department of Education & Science.

Each Post Primary School Centre in the country was allocated its own Catchment Area in 1967. A number of schools in the one locality may share a Common Catchment Area. Limerick City's 16 Post-Primary Schools share a Common Catchment Area, which covers a wide area outside the City. It stretches from Broadford in the North, to Grange (Kilmallock) in the South (a distance of 20 miles) and from Castleconnell in the East, Kildimo in the West (a distance of 17 miles).

### ***Programme and Organisational Development Support***

A team of three Development Officers working in the specialist areas of Programme and Staff Development, Learning Technology Development, and Research and Evaluation Development provide development and support for the Adult Education Service and the entire organisation. They work closely with the AEO, Head Office Management Personnel, and the Coordinators of all Learning Programmes and Support Services. Their common focus is to ensure that the Adult Education Service is strategic in its approach to future development and that, effective and relevant systems for the development and delivery of its programmes and services are put in place. Their priorities are the needs of those Learners with basic and second-chance education needs.

### ***Public Information Service***

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<sup>7</sup> VECs have no involvement in the Primary School Transport Scheme

CLVEC provides information to the Public in various formats. Its most familiar publication is the *Annual Adult Learning Opportunities in Limerick City*, which celebrated its 10th edition in 2005. This free publication is a cornerstone of our advisory and Information service, and includes not only adult learning opportunities provided by the VEC sector, but also by other Statutory sectors, Private Schools and Colleges, and the Voluntary and Community sector. In addition to the Information Resource Room that is part of the Adult Educational Guidance Service (AEGS), CLVEC also provides an information service to the wider public through its Reception Staff in all six CLVEC buildings. In addition, all Schools and Centres provide information in various formats, including brochures, websites, public advertisements, etc.

### ***Student Grant Schemes (Post Leaving Certificate and Third Level)***

City of Limerick VEC. awards grants to students residing in the VEC's Administrative Area to pursue courses in institutes and colleges both in Limerick and in other parts of the country through 3 schemes:

- 1 ***PLC Scheme*** covers Post Leaving Certificate courses pursued in approved PLC Centres throughout the country, e.g. Limerick Senior College, Central College Limerick. Currently there are 129 students in receipt of grants under this scheme.
- 2 ***TLT Scheme*** covers Middle Level Technician (MLT) courses of one and two years duration leading to a qualification at Level 6 (Higher Certificate) and Higher Technical and Business Skills (HTBS) courses of three years duration and/or one year "Add-on" leading to a Level 7 (Ordinary Bachelor Degree) qualification. City of Limerick VEC processes the grant applications under this scheme and the payments are made through the institutes. There are currently 162 students receiving grants under this scheme.
- 3 ***VEC Scheme*** generally caters for students pursuing degree courses in third-level institutions e.g. Limerick Institute of Technology. It also caters for students who hold a National Certificate or National Diploma (gained from attendance at courses covered under the TLT Scheme) and are progressing to approve degree courses in a third-level institution. City of Limerick VEC is currently administrating grants in respect of 138 students under this scheme, a combination of new awards and renewals.

### ***Disadvantaged Youth Grant***

The Disadvantaged Youth Grant is a Special Fund from the Department of Education and Science, which aims to provide out-of-school youth work programmes and services for young people in particular need, who are from disadvantaged areas. This fund which is administered by CLVEC, provides annual grants to eleven Youth Organisations in the most disadvantaged areas of Limerick City, and supports them through the application and reporting processes.

## **2.5 - PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES**

CLVEC has forged many strategic alliances at local level, and is engaged in planning, development, delivery and evaluation for a) multi-agency educational initiatives, and b) multi-agency local development initiatives.

a) There are many examples of **multi-agency educational initiatives** across the City, such as the *Point 2 Enterprise Education Project* (EU Equal Project) involving Paul Partnership, CLVEC, Limerick Institute of Technology, University of Limerick and FAS, or *Tipping the Scales* (Women Equality Project), and the *Return to Education Programmes* (FAS, ALSS), etc. Over the years, CLVEC has worked closely with the Paul Partnership, to strategically address educational disadvantage and to put in place targeted initiatives that support communities to access and improve educational opportunities in their localities. This work is spearheaded by the Education and Training Sub-Group of PAUL, which is resourced and supported by an Education Coordinator (employed by CLVEC). CLVEC is also represented on the PAUL Board and on a number of its sub-groups.

b) CLVEC is also engaged in a number of initiatives, primarily focusing on **local development** and putting in place educational programmes to address social and economic exclusion. It works in partnership with the Limerick City Development Board (CDB), which is led by local government and is representative of local development bodies together with the State agencies and social partners operating locally. CDBs have brought together the key players at local level to engage in a process of long-term planning for each county or city. Key

structures of the CDB on which CLVEC is represented are: the Board itself, the City of Learning Steering Group (of which CLVEC is the lead partner), the Social Inclusion Measures Working-Group (SIM) and the Limerick City Childcare Committee.

## PART 3 – CLVEC Education Plan

### **3.1 - PLANNING AND CONSULTATION PROCESS**

In 2002, a local planning process was developed to produce the CLVEC Corporate Strategy which is the backbone of this Education Plan. This process was implemented as part of the organisational modernisation and change process co-ordinated by the National VEC Partnership Forum. The CEO of CLVEC invited all the key local partners (ASTI, IMPACT, SIPTU, TUI and VEC Management) to participate in a Local CLVEC Partnership Group. This group, in co-operation with the CLVEC Senior Management Team identified the strategic directions for the organisation and in turn, CLVEC individual schools and education centres established their own internal planning teams to identify their own strategies specifying key goals and objectives.

This CLVEC Education Plan brings together all of these separate, but inter-dependant strategies into one overarching plan. Overall, the process has involved extensive consultations, which were designed to elicit the views of all the main stakeholders involved in CLVEC education and training provision. The table below provides a list of methods used to consult with the main stakeholders involved.

**Table 1: Consultation Methods**

GROUP CONSULTED	METHOD OF CONSULTING
LEARNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Evaluation sheets</li> </ul>
STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Staff meetings</li> <li>• Staff focus groups</li> <li>• Administration/ancillary Staff Consultation Day</li> <li>• Adult Education Service Staff Fora</li> <li>• Circulation of draft plans and Corporate Strategy</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT/SENIOR STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Management Meetings</li> <li>• VEC Partnership Group meetings</li> <li>• Draft Education Plan posted in StaffZone (extranet)</li> </ul>

PARENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings of Parents Association, St Nessans Community College (and subsequently with wider parents group)</li> </ul>
VEC COMMITTEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulation of all draft plans for schools, services and programmes</li> <li>• Circulation of CLVEC Education Plan for discussion and approval</li> </ul>
ADULT EDUCATION BOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning meetings for the Adult Education Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Meetings to discuss/approve draft Plans</li> </ul>
UNIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulation of draft Corporate Strategy for consultation purposes</li> <li>• Meetings with TUI, ASTI, SIPTU, IMPACT</li> </ul>
WIDER PUBLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting of City Development Board, City of Learning Steering Group</li> <li>• Focus group meetings with Community personnel</li> <li>• Posting of Draft Education Plan on CLVEC website</li> </ul>

The formulation of these strategies was enabled by the commitment, effort and broad-based participation of management, staff and learners within the schools and education centres. The range of consultation methodologies used during the planning process provides ample evidence of the participation of all the key stakeholders in the compilation and production of the CLVEC Education Plan.

The CLVEC Education Plan 2006-2010 prioritises a number of key organisational themes and provides the framework for implementation of a range of related actions and strategies. It highlights the key strategic directions for the organisation and its management of schools, and education centres, programmes and support services over a five-year period. These strategic directions form key themes that are reflected in specific schools and education centres plans.

### **3.2 - CLVEC MISSION STATEMENT**

The City of Limerick V.E.C. recognises the ever-changing nature and needs of its local Community. It is committed to responding to these needs by continuously reviewing and adapting its policies and practices and ensuring the delivery of quality learning programmes and support services.



### **3.3 - CLVEC GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS**

#### **GOAL 1 – QUALITY AND RELEVANCE**

The needs and rights of learners and clients will be central to our ways of working and inform the development of quality programmes and services.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

##### **Actions**

- 1.1.1 Develop and implement a CLVEC Quality Assurance System
- 1.1.2 Register with FETAC as a Quality Assured Provider
- 1.1.3 Meet the recognition standards of other validating bodies
- 1.1.4 Produce programme validation plans in line with FETAC quality standards

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.2 CUSTOMER CARE**

##### **Actions**

- 1.2.1. Develop, adopt and implement a Customer Service Charter and Plan, in consultation with our clients and staff
- 1.2.2. Seek feedback from our customers on a regular basis
- 1.2.3. Develop systems that enable us to respond promptly to client queries and complaints
- 1.2.4 Raise staff awareness on customer care issues
- 1.2.5 Ensure that Health and Safety standards are in line with the needs and rights of learners and clients (see Goal 5, Obj.5.2)

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.3 FLEXIBLE & INNOVATIVE DELIVERY**

##### **Actions**

- 1.3.1. Offer increased flexibility in response to both internal and external customer needs
- 1.3.2 Provide learning programmes at times, in ways and in locations that suit the needs of our learners
- 1.3.3 Be proactive in the development of innovative educational responses, to meet emerging needs and gaps in existing provision
- 1.3.4. Facilitate all staff to be innovative and adaptable in their teaching practice and ways of working

## **OBJECTIVE 1.4 LEARNER SUPPORTS**

### **Actions**

- 1.4.1. Ensure learners have access to a range of relevant learning supports (including Educational Guidance and Counselling, Literacy/Numeracy, etc)
- 1.4.2. Administer Mature Students Grants for learners wishing to access full-time Third Level Educational opportunities
- 1.4.3. Continue to administer the post-primary Transport Scheme

## **GOAL 2 – ACCESS**

More people, of all ages, will be accessing and benefiting from our programmes and services.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.1. PROMOTION OF PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES**

#### **Actions**

- 2.1.1. Advertise CLVEC provision through use of all relevant media (local press, radio TV and website( etc)
- 2.1.2. Encourage the production and distribution of relevant promotional and information materials, through the range of media
- 2.1.3. Encourage programmes and services to participate in and host promotional events
- 2.1.4. Fulfill the requirements of the Official Languages Act (2003) for the VEC sector, to ensure better availability and higher standards of services through Irish

### **OBJECTIVE 2.2. EQUALITY**

#### **Actions**

- 2.2.1. Design, adopt and implement policies on equality and diversity in line with current legislation
- 2.2.2. Conduct an accessibility audit for CLVEC buildings and implement key recommendations
- 2.2.3. Lobby at local and national level for the provision of additional supports for learners (e.g. childcare, assistive technologies, etc)
- 2.2.4. Ensure that the range and nature of CLVEC provision promotes social inclusion at local level
- 2.2.5. Open and develop a new Irish Medium Post Primary School, to offer a comprehensive curriculum to boys and girls from Limerick City and environs

### **OBJECTIVE 2.3. NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

#### **Actions**

- 2.3.1. Conduct audits in all CLVEC buildings to establish current situations in relation to Information and Communication Technologies

- 2.3.2. Use a coordinated planned approach to the use of ICT to develop consistent and effective cross-organisational systems
- 2.3.3. Up-skill staff in the effective use of ICT, in line with training needs assessment
- 2.3.4. Keep ICT infrastructure and equipment in CLVEC buildings up-to-date
- 2.3.5. Implement effective ICT policies to ensure the safe, secure and appropriate use of new technologies
- 2.3.6. Develop and maintain the CLVEC website ([www.clvec.ie](http://www.clvec.ie))

### **GOAL 3: OPENNESS AND MODERNISATION**

A coherent, open, transparent organisation will be in place.

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.1. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Actions**

- 3.1.1. Support staff to adopt a planned approach to the management and development of all programmes and services
- 3.1.2. Develop policies and procedures, in line with new developments and changing legislation
- 3.1.3. Develop the Administration Service in line with 'best practice'
- 3.1.4. Lobby for the further appropriate adaptation of Management structures to enable the effective implementation of the CLVEC Education and Service Plans
- 3.1.5. Fully implement the provisions of the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001
- 3.1.6. Implement the Codes of Practice for Corporate Governance of VEC's

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.2. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### **Actions**

- 3.2.1. Ensure that relevant, clear and up-to-date information on the role and operation of CLVEC is available to staff and the public
- 3.2.2. Use clear financial control procedures and practices to guarantee value for money and the financial integrity of the organisation
- 3.2.3. Ensure CLVEC accountability to relevant local area-based planning structures
- 3.2.4. Publish a CLVEC Annual Service Plan and Report

### **OBJECTIVE 3.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

#### **Actions**

- 3.3.1. Gather reliable baseline data about the organisation on an ongoing basis to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and increase accountability
- 3.3.2. Monitor and evaluate service organisation, delivery and performance on an ongoing basis

<b>GOAL 4: STAFF</b>
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A positive working environment will be in place across the Organisation.
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### **OBJECTIVE 4.1. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

#### **Actions**

- 4.1.1. Develop the Personnel Department within CLVEC, to ensure its capacity to respond effectively to the changing needs of staff
- 4.1.2. Develop the use of StaffZone for Staff Induction purposes
- 4.1.3. Provide all staff with clear job descriptions and contracts of employment
- 4.1.4. Adopt and implement a Respect and Dignity policy
- 4.1.5. Implement a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) across the organisation, in line with national guidelines
- 4.1.6. Implement the new HR/Payroll Management Information System

### **OBJECTIVE 4.2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Actions**

- 4.2.1. Produce a code of practice for the employment of people with disabilities
- 4.2.2. Introduce family friendly work initiatives for staff

### **OBJECTIVE 4.3. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Actions**

- 4.3.1. Develop clear CLVEC guidelines in relation to Staff Development
- 4.3.2. Facilitate staff to avail of relevant training and ongoing in-service opportunities
- 4.3.3. Design and deliver specific training programmes to meet the needs identified through the PMDS

## **OBJECTIVE 4.4. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION-SHARING**

### **Actions**

- 4.4.1. Establish clear structures for the dissemination of information across the Organisation
- 4.4.2. Ensure staff are informed and updated on all CLVEC policies and procedures
- 4.4.3. Explore the potential of ICT to facilitate networking/ communication and exchange of information among staff

## **GOAL 5: PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Our buildings and facilities will be modernized to provide safe, welcoming and user-friendly environments for learners, customers and staff.

## **OBJECTIVE 5.1. BUILDINGS**

### **Actions**

- 5.1.1 Conduct a structural survey of the MTI building to develop specifications for its extension and renovation
- 5.1.2 Pursue Capital Funding to resource the renovation and development of existing CLVEC School Buildings
- 5.1.3 Complete the construction and fit out of the new building for St Nessian's Community College
- 5.1.4 Equip and open a new Irish Medium Post Primary School in Limerick City (Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh)
- 5.1.5 Identify and pursue the development of a permanent site for Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh (after its three-year development phase 2006-2009)
- 5.1.6 Increase the accommodation provision for the Municipal School of Music
- 5.1.7 Identify and follow up on potential uses for Athenaeum Hall

## **OBJECTIVE 5.2. HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Actions**

- 5.2.1. Promote an awareness of Health & Safety among staff and clients
- 5.2.2. Maintain an up-to-date CLVEC Parent Safety Statement
- 5.2.3. Maintain up-to-date Health & Safety Statements for all CLVEC buildings

5.2.4. Ensure that Health & Safety Risk Assessments are conducted on a regular basis

5.2.5. Designate, train and support Health & Safety Staff in all CLVEC buildings

### **OBJECTIVE 5.3. MAINTENANCE**

#### **Actions**

5.3.1 Provide effective ancillary services in all CLVEC buildings

5.3.2 Provide for the ongoing maintenance and repairs of buildings

5.3.3 Provide for the ongoing maintenance of equipment

### **GOAL 6: INTEGRATION**

Teamwork and partnership approaches will characterise our work, enabling us to maximize the use of resources and promote local development.

### **OBJECTIVE 6.1. RESOURCE-SHARING**

#### **Actions**

6.1.1. Audit the range of CLVEC facilities and resources

6.1.2. Develop coherent systems to manage the sharing of CLVEC facilities and resources

6.1.3 Maximise the use of public money by sharing resources with partners at local level

### **OBJECTIVE 6.2. TEAMWORK**

#### **Actions**

6.2.1. Organise a range of activities and opportunities for staff to keep them abreast of changes and developments and enable them to voice their views and share ideas

6.2.2. Facilitate the range of staff in the organisation, i.e. teaching, ancillary, administration and development staff, to work effectively together

6.2.3. Further develop the 'culture of partnership' across the Organisation

### **OBJECTIVE 6.3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Actions**

6.3.1. Engage with a range of partners in ways that ensure that Lifelong Learning is central to local development

6.3.2. Promote social inclusion through targeted educational initiatives

- 6.3.3. Continue to represent City of Limerick VEC in local fora in order to play an effective role in Strategic Planning at Citywide level
- 6.3.4. Work with others on co-ordinated and integrated responses to prioritised Education and Training issues
- 6.3.5. Lead the City Development Board Steering Group to establish Limerick as a “City of Learning”
- 6.3.6. Work with other local partners to implement the provisions of the Youth Work Act (2001)



## **PART 4 - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

### **4.1 - STRUCTURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The CLVEC Education Plan is a landmark development for the future of the Organisation. The scale and variety of its content make it essential that clear implementation structures are in place, so that the goals and objectives that have been identified can be realized within the five-year period.

While the CEO is responsible for the implementation of the Education Plan, staff in all CLVEC Educational Institutions, Support Services, Administration and Corporate Services have an important role to play during the implementation process. The Education Plan 2006-2010 prioritises a number of key organisational themes and provides the framework for implementation of a range of related actions and strategies. It highlights the key strategic directions for the organisation, which form key themes to inform individual Schools/Education Centres Plans. Each school plan will highlight the specific role it will play in the realisation of the overall goals and objectives of the Organisation.

In addition, the Education Plan will be backed up by an Annual Service Plan, which will identify priorities and allocate resources for the implementation of the actions included in the Plan.

## 4.2 - KEY DELIVERABLES OF THE CLVEC EDUCATION PLAN

### Goal 1 – QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

OBJECTIVES	KEY DELIVERABLES	TIMEFRAME
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CLVEC Adult Education Service recognised as a FETAC Quality Assured Provider</li> <li>➤ CLVEC PLC College recognised as a FETAC Quality Assured Provider</li> <li>➤ Systems, procedures and designated staff in place to support the programme validation process</li> <li>➤ RPL policies and procedures in place and operational in Adult and Further Education</li> </ul>	<p>May 2006</p> <p>December 2006</p> <p>December 2007</p> <p>2007/2008</p>
<b>Customer Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Customer Care Charter and Plan produced</li> <li>➤ Customer Comment Cards available in all reception areas throughout CLVEC</li> <li>➤ Staff Training on Customer Care</li> </ul>	<p>July 2006</p> <p>December 2006</p> <p>2006/2007</p>
<b>Flexible and Innovative Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New, innovative educational initiatives developed and implemented</li> <li>➤ Increased links with external community groups (outreach provision)</li> <li>➤ Range of workplace learning initiatives in place</li> <li>➤ Provision of Post-Primary education through the medium of the Irish Language – Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2006</p> <p>September 2006</p>

<b>Learner Supports</b>	➤ Effective administration of grants and other schemes	Ongoing
	➤ Revised DES Guidelines for Grants implemented	September 2006
	➤ Increased confidentiality for Grant applicants	September 2006
	➤ Increased focus on role and provision of Educational Guidance for adult Learners	Ongoing
	➤ Self-Managed Learning and Information Resource Centre operational	January 2007

## Goal 2 – ACCESS

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>Promotion of Programmes and Services</b>	➤ Clear promotional strategies in place for all CLVEC schools, centres and services	Ongoing
	➤ Adaptation of CLVEC website, particularly in relation to Guidance and Information	Ongoing
<b>Equality</b>	➤ CLVEC Equality and Diversity policies	2006/2007
	➤ Accessibility audit conducted in all CLVEC buildings	March 2007
	➤ New CLVEC Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh opened	September 2006
	➤ Facilities of the new St Nessan's Community College available to the wider community	January 2007

<b>New Technologies</b>	➤ New Microsoft Campus License introduced	December 2006
	➤ Sub-group established to look at Licensing issues across the organisation	December 2006
	➤ Improved cross-organisational systems through use of technologies (e.g financial packages, etc)	Ongoing
	➤ Up to date ICT infrastructure in schools and centres	Ongoing
	➤ Standardised ICT infrastructure in all admin offices and centres	December 2006
	➤ Regular updating of CLVEC Website and extranet e.g. <a href="http://limericksc.ie">.limericksc.ie</a> , <a href="http://gcluimnigh.eu">.gcluimnigh.eu</a>	Ongoing
	➤ Appropriate Management Information Systems in place in the Adult Education Service	

### Goal 3 – OPENNESS AND MODERNISATION

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>Organisational Development</b>	➤ School/Centre plans reviewed and updated	As required
	➤ Appointment of new Staff e.g. Education Officer, Youth Officer, Quality Assurance Officer, Health and Safety Officer, etc	As approved by DES
	➤ Risk Management System introduced	2007/2008
	➤ Complete Code of Practice for Governance of CLVEC	2007
	➤ Training for Boards of Management/Management Committees	Ongoing

<b>Transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual Service Plan published</li> <li>➤ Annual Report published and available on CLVEC website</li> <li>➤ Accrual Accounting system implemented</li> <li>➤ Centre/School specific reports available</li> </ul>	<p>Annually 2006-2010</p> <p>Annually 2006-2010</p> <p>December 2006</p> <p>Annually</p>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review of the Education Plan</li> <li>➤ Consultations carried out with clients</li> <li>➤ Internal Monitoring and Evaluation systems in place</li> <li>➤ Evaluations of schools and services conducted</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>As required</p>

#### Goal 4 – STAFF

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>Personnel Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CLVEC Staff Induction Pack Developed</li> <li>➤ Respect and Dignity Policy adopted</li> <li>➤ Staff Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) implemented</li> <li>➤ New Personnel Management System (Core) introduced</li> </ul>	<p>December 2006</p> <p>2006/2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2006</p>
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Code of Practice produced for the employment of people with disability</li> <li>➤ Family-friendly work initiatives put in place for staff</li> </ul>	<p>2007</p> <p>2007</p>

<b>Staff Training and Development</b>	➤ CLVEC Staff Development Policy and Guidelines developed	2007
	➤ Staff Development Plans in place	Ongoing
<b>Communication and Information Sharing</b>	➤ StaffZone promoted across the organisation	Ongoing
	➤ All staff have email addresses and access to ICT resources	Ongoing
	➤ “Progress” CLVEC Newsletter produced and circulated to all staff	Ongoing
	➤ Employee Self-Service Access to HR/Payroll to view/change certain personal data introduced	2007/2008

## **Goal 5 – PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>Buildings</b>	➤ Structural survey of MTI Building conducted	December 2006
	➤ New facility for St Nessans Community College in place	2006
	➤ Refurbishment of roof and replacement of windows in Limerick Senior College	2007
	➤ Lease and fit-out of building for Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh completed	2006
	➤ Facilities for School of Music upgraded	2007
<b>Health and Safety</b>	➤ Revised Health and Safety statements in place in all CLVEC buildings	Ongoing
	➤ Health and Safety personnel in place in all CLVEC buildings (H&S Coordinators, First Aiders, Fire Marshalls, Fire Wardens, H&S Reps, etc)	2006

	➤ H&S Committee established	2006
<b>Maintenance</b>	➤ Coherent systems in place for planning, development and refurbishment of CLVEC buildings	

## Goal 6 – INTEGRATION

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>Teamwork</b>	➤ Staff Networking promoted and facilitated across CLVEC	Ongoing
	➤ Work of Local Partnership Group and Senior Management Team fully integrated within development of organisational strategies	Ongoing
<b>Local Development</b>	➤ City of Learning Steering Group Strategy developed	2007
	➤ Targeted educational initiatives to promote social inclusion developed	Ongoing

### **4.3 - MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION PLAN**

The whole-organisational planning process, which has taken place over the past few years, has been a critical step in supporting change in the organization. The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Plan will be just as critical in sustaining this organisational change over the life of the CLVEC Education Plan (2006-2010).

Under the requirements of the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act (2001) the organisation is committed to the development of an Annual Service Plan, which will outline the resources allocated to implement the priorities identified in the Education Plan.

Participative planning processes have already been undertaken in CLVEC schools and education centres, and regular consultations will ensure key stakeholders of the education Plan have an input in highlighting key areas of progress and possible challenges for change. These regular reviews will provide opportunities for the Education Plan to be amended as and when required.

In accordance with the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act (2001), the Chief Executive Officer of CLVEC will report each year through the production of an Annual Report to the Vocational Education Committee and to the Department of Education and Science, on progress in relation to the implementation of the Education Plan.



# APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1 – City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee 2004-2009**

The Committee is comprised of elected public representatives, parents, staff representatives and other community sectoral interests. It is responsible for overseeing the development and management of City of Limerick VEC. Its Monthly Meetings are held in public. Membership, at May 2006 was as follows:

<b>Chairman</b>	Cllr. Kieran O' Hanlon
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Cllr. Joe Leddin
<b>Members</b>	Cllr. Maria Byrne
	Cllr. John Gilligan
	Cllr. Michael Hourigan
	Cllr. Kathleen Leddin
	Cllr. John Ryan
	Cllr. Dermot Scully (resigned in 2005)
	Cllr. John Cronin (appointed)
	Cllr. Lily Wallace
	Ms. Monica Fitzpatrick
	Mr. Michael Kelly
	Ms. Edel Leamey
	Ms. Catherine Aylmer
	Mr. Jack Bourke
	Dr. Eileen Lenihan
	Mr. Sean Treacy

## **APPENDIX 2 - Education Planning Teams**

### **Senior Management Team**

Deirdre Frawley, Chief Executive Officer

Michael Fitzgerald, Principal Limerick Senior College

Mary Hamilton, Adult Education Officer

Eugene O'Brien, Principal St Nessans Community College

David O'Connell, Principal Limerick School of Music

John O'Connor, Administration & Personnel Officer

Denis Treacy, Principal Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh

Mary Troy, Finance Officer

### **Partnership Working Group**

Deirdre Frawley, Chief Executive Officer

Eileen Columby, IMPACT Representative

Mary Hamilton, Adult Education Officer (Chairperson)

Eugene O'Brien, Principal St Nessan's Community College

John O'Connor, Administration & Personnel Officer

Aileen O'Sullivan, IMPACT Representative (Secretary)

Josephine Ryan, SIPTU Representative

Mary Troy, Finance Officer

### **APPENDIX 3 - Glossary**

AEB	Adult Basic Education
AECS	Adult Education Guidance Service
AEO	Adult Education Officer
ALSS	Adult Learner Support Service (CLVEC Literacy Service)
AONTAS	the Irish National Association of Adult Education
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CDB	County/City Development Board
CEF	Community Education Facilitator
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLVEC	City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee
DES	Department of Education and Science
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMPACT	Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union
IVEA	Irish Vocational Education Association
LIT	Limerick Institute of Technology
LSC	Limerick Senior College
MTI	Municipal Technical Institute
NCGE	National Centre for Guidance in Education
NDP	National Development Plan (2000-2006)
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
PPF	Programme for Prosperity and Fairness
RAPID	Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development
SIMs	Social Inclusion Measures subgroups of CDB
SIPTU	Services Industrial Professional Technical Union
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland
UL	University of Limerick
VPTP	Vocational Preparation Training Programme
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VECNPF	Vocational Education Committees' National Partnership Forum
VTOS	Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme

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