

## **Community in Partnership Delivers Enterprise Space Strategy**

A review undertaken by the Board of Ballyhoura Development Ltd. in 1998 identified key economic threats to the Ballyhoura Development area arising from the expected rationalisation of the agri-food processing sector and restructuring of farming following changes to the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Board saw the shortage of available enterprise space as a key deterrent to expansion by indigenous industries and attraction of new industry. The Board in partnership with local authorities and local and national enterprise agencies planned to animate, empower and support communities to build enterprise infrastructure by working in partnership with agencies and the private sector. This has resulted in €9m investment which provided 136,000 sq. ft. of enterprise space.

Advance factories have been built in Ballylanders, Charleville, Kilmallock and Mitchelstown, with 3 food units in Bruree, Hospital and Mitchelstown. A mill building was restored in Castletownroche with light manufacturing and office space.

Today direct employment is provided to 249 people by 11 businesses occupying the units. Five of these are new manufacturing and niche food processing businesses, while 5 of the businesses have sustained or grown employment since 2000. This demonstrates the value of a partnership of communities, statutory agencies and private entrepreneurs in developing sustainable rural communities.

Currently new enterprise start up facilities is being developed in 4 towns across the Ballyhoura Development area in partnerships with local authorities in Cork and Limerick. Collaborative approaches deliver added synergies, e.g. agreement to outreaching of LEAP enterprise training and supports by LIT in the proposed enterprise centre in Croom.