

# **SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

## **Twenty Seventh MEETING REPORT**

Meeting held: September 5, 2005  
Members present: 66%  
Chair: Cllr. Derry Foley

### **SUMMARY**

Cllr. Derry Foley is the new chair of South Tipperary County Development Board.

The CDB reviewed the service delivery challenges relating to the County Upskilling Strategy at its September meeting following presentations from Board members Oliver Clancy, Terry Cunningham, Fionuala McGeever and Kathleen Prendergast. Four main challenges in providing a skilled labour supply for 2000 potential jobs in South Tipperary:

- Provide sound research on emerging job opportunities.
- Realising the potential labour supply from the following sources in the 2005-2008 period (live register – 300 jobs; redundant labour – 400 jobs; returning to work labour – 200 jobs; 400 net new entrants to labour force – 700 jobs migrant labour).
- Coordinated response to education and training needs.
- Doubling of the childcare/childminding services in the county.

The interagency group led by FAS will continue to meet twice a year to oversee the implementation of the County Upskilling Strategy. The Economic Programme Management Group will meet later in September to review progress in meeting the challenges identified and discussed at the Board meeting.

South Tipperary Forum has scheduled a series of six public meetings next October and is surveying more than 800 voluntary groups as it prepares its input to the County submission seeking to influence post 2006 NDP funding.

The CDB agreed to endorse a policy recommendation to the Government seeking a social guarantee for people who are in fear of losing benefits if they take steps towards employment. The guarantee would ensure that people who are unemployed, disabled, etc would not lose benefits if the transition to full employment failed and they had to return to unemployment (disability too severe, illness, etc).

## **1. Service delivery challenges in providing a skilled labour supply for 2000 potential jobs in South Tipperary**

Oliver Clancy (Chair of the interagency group progressing the County Upskilling Strategy), Terry Cummingahm (TEAGASC), Fionuala McGeever (Tipperary SR VEC) and Kathleen Prendergast (County Childcare Committee) made presentations to the CDB meeting on the service delivery challenges in ensuring an adequate supply of labour for emerging jobs in the county up to the end of 2008. The presentations were followed by inputs from other members. The key service delivery challenges and recommended actions arising from the presentations (including written material) and subsequent discussion are:

### *1.1 Identifying on a sound research basis the emerging job opportunities*

The enterprise development agencies represented on the CDB deal with less than 20% of the enterprises located in the county. Information is available on the emerging job opportunities in these enterprises. In particular, Guidant has committed to recruiting 1000 new staff in the period up to 2010. The County Childcare Committee has estimated that a further 175 full time and 154 part time jobs are required in facilitating childcare/childminding requirements of an additional 2000 jobs in the South Tipperary workforce. The Health Service Executive has difficulty sourcing skilled labour in a number of fields, particularly occupational therapists.

Given the changing nature of employment, the County Upskilling Strategy Group require a better picture of what kind of jobs will arise in the county, particularly from the 80% of enterprises, not in direct contact with agencies.

This challenge will be brought to the next meeting of the Economic Programme Management Group who will agree on how an emerging job opportunity database is delivered.

### *1.2 Maintaining a labour force and sourcing a labour supply for 2000 potential jobs*

The number of jobs in the county increased by 4000 between 1996 and 2002. The live register figures have dropped by approximately 800 in the 1996-2005 period. The jobs have also been filled by net new entrants, migrant labour, returning emigrants, women returning to the workforce and farm family members accessing off-farm income/employment opportunities).

Labour for new jobs in the 2005-2008 period can come from the following sources:

- Comparisons with other areas in the county indicate that the Live Register numbers in the Carrick on Suir area should be approximately 300 less than what they are. In response to a request from Carrick on Suir Town Council to the Minister of Enterprise Trade and Employment, FAS and the Department of Social

and Family Affairs have agreed to deliver a High Support Programme from October to March in the town. (300 potential job seekers)

- Looking at the changing jobs profile in South Tipperary, there may be redundant labour availability arising from the agricultural, manufacturing and construction sectors. Farm families reviewing their options in the current agricultural support environment have two choices – scaling up which will create additional labour demand both on and servicing farms or scaling down (an option likely to provide more time for off-farm work). Evidence from Co Waterford suggests that 75% of farmers are likely to choose the scale down option and one third of those have already done so. The numbers training for farming have dropped dramatically. Based on South Tipperary figures (845 small holders in 2004), up to 600 people may be available to enter employment other than farming in the period up to 2008. Realistically the numbers are likely to be 400 or less. TEAGASC has committed to delivering ‘options review’ programmes to 400 additional farm families in the 2005-2008 period. FAS, Tipperary SR VEC and Tipperary Institute have a range of training and education certified courses which can be targeted at those already in employment but in sectors likely to shed jobs. There is a need for a data base to provide up to date information of course availability. The agencies also need data arising from good information systems on job opportunities to provide relevant education and training. (Net 400 potential job seekers).
- New entrants to the workforce having left the education system with qualifications. A particular challenge in planning for the future is to encourage students to target qualifications in areas where there are existing skill shortages and in areas with predicted job growth. There are approximately 1300 new entrants each year from South Tipperary population to the labour force, while approximately 700 people each year reach age 66. Not all of the annual net labour force gain of 600 remains in South Tipperary. The main reason for this is that the majority of third level students access third level education outside the county. Research from Enterprise Ireland indicates that 75% of graduates from the region leave the region. Tipperary SR VEC has 240 places on post leaving certificate courses in the county. There is also a potential net gain from the students in Tipperary Institute, many of whom will have come from other counties. Those who do not access third level education are highly likely to remain in the local workforce. Based on proxy calculations, it is estimated that there should be an additional net gain from new entrants (entrants minus retirees) of approximately 100 a year. (400 net potential job seekers over 4 years). Enterprise Ireland has recommended that new strategies be developed to get a better net return in the region from the ‘new entrants labour’. The Economic Programme Management group will discuss this recommendation.
- Those returning to the workforce as a result of additional educational qualifications. Tipperary SR VEC currently has 100 places on its VTOS

programmes. FAS also has a range of initiatives targeted at those wishing to upskill and return to work. (200 potential job seekers).

- ❑ Returning emigrants: regional initiatives led by Enterprise Ireland during the 2002-2004 period were not particularly successful.
- ❑ Migrant workers (A minimum of 700 additional migrant workers is likely to be required to meet labour supply needs up to 2008 in South Tipperary). The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group plans to review services to migrant workers in November 2005.

### *1.3 Ability to respond to training and development needs*

An identified gap is the lack of interaction between employers and education services. Employers may not be aware how the continuing education environment in the county has been transformed since 2002. Tipperary SR VEC has improved the quality and the quantity of its adult education provision. The focus has shifted to certified education programmes which can be delivered in modules if required. Staff resources in the area have increased from one to three (shortly to go to four) enabling the VEC to become far more proactive in consulting on and researching educational needs. A wider Adult Education Board may address the current gap with employers. The VEC also delivers literacy services, but this is an area which requires huge time in 1:1 tuition. Present resources only enable the delivery of a one hour per student service each week. The agencies are also involved with the local development companies and RAPID in the delivery of the TIME project (targeting women).

Tipperary Institute has also created opportunities as it delivers more HETAC programmes within the county.

FAS and the County Enterprise Board have more direct contacts with employers. FAS has committed significant resources to competency development and one step up programmes within the Regional Employment Strategy.

The County Upskilling Strategy Agency Group, plans to meet twice a year. Part of the Group's remit will be to provide a mechanism for large employers in South Tipperary to inform educational providers of skills that are in demand.

There are also infrastructural gaps which limit the delivery of services. There is only one dedicated adult learning centre in the county. Given the increasing and continuing requirement for the upskilling of a 34,000 + workforce, the Upskilling Group needs to review the requirements in terms of specialized education/training centers and the delivery of outreach services (via mobile units).

#### *1.4 Delivery of more childcare/childminding services in the county*

The County Childcare estimates that the current provision in 2005 will need to be doubled by 2008. Supports for the community based services is likely to be recommended as a priority in the county submission influencing the next National Development Plan. But it is the private sector that currently provides the best opportunity for growth, with a requirement that developers provide a building for childcare where 75 or more units are being built. A significant issue that has arisen is that 75 houses will not provide a market to sustain a commercial childcare business. One of the recommendations from the local authority is that masterplans for zoned areas be developed, through which agreement is reached with all the developers involved on a commercially sized childcare facility. This type of agreement should assist the County Childcare Committee in sourcing operators for new childcare buildings.

### **2. CDB priority action on preparing a county submission for the post 2006 National Development Plan and/or its successor.**

South Tipperary Forum has scheduled a series of six public meetings next October to seek input on the themes of economic development, cultural development, social issues, managing the environment for a sustainable future, the future of local development and sports. The Forum is preparing its input into the county submission in co-operation with the Citizens Information Services, Tipperary Institute and Tipperary LEADER. Questionnaires are being sent to more than 800 voluntary groups in the county.

Following a request from the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group who had reviewed the topic of 'benefits traps', the CDB agreed to endorse a policy recommendation to the Government seeking a social guarantee for people who are in fear of losing benefits if they take steps towards employment. The guarantee would ensure that people who are unemployed, disabled, etc would not lose benefits if the transition to full employment failed and they had to return to unemployment (disability too severe, illness, etc).

### **3. Other Information**

Cllr Derry Foley was elected chair of South Tipperary County Development Board.