

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Twenty Sixth MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: April 4, 2005
Members present: 65%
Chair: Cllr Mattie McGrath

SUMMARY

At its April 2005 meeting, South Tipperary County Development Board carried out a review of the County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. The Board also agreed the following key result areas for its 2005-2008 action plan.

Economic:

- ❖ Increase the competitiveness of South Tipperary for investment and for income generation.
- ❖ Increase the size and skill capacity of the South Tipperary workforce (includes entrepreneurs, self employed, employed, underemployed, unemployed).
- ❖ Increase participation in economic activity.

Social:

- ❖ Social inclusion of target groups
- ❖ Supporting the capacity and development of key services and facilities

Cultural:

- ❖ Opportunity to participate in an inclusive cultural sector.
- ❖ Investment in the development of cultural services, products and facilities.

Local Agenda 21:

- ❖ To increase public and community participation in decision making
- ❖ Ensure that sustainable services and facilities are delivered in South Tipperary.

South Tipperary County Development Board has also agreed that two new actions be added to the County Strategy following recommendations from the Economic Programme Management Group.

- ❑ New Action. Broadband would be available to every rural community in South Tipperary (Lead stakeholder: South Tipperary Co Council).
- ❑ New action: Creating and developing an entrepreneurial region (Lead stakeholder: Enterprise Ireland).

The Board also accepted a recommendation from the Local agenda 21 Programme Management Group that CDB members resource community participation in the process of preparing a county submission to influence post 2006 national funding.

The outcomes required from CDB members are:

- ❑ Commitments from all CDB members to provide facilitation resources to support community participation in the action. All CDB members are being requested to make available staff resources (@ 55 hours per staff member) to support the process. For those CDB members who do not have staff working in the county, a financial contribution of €1,000 is being sought (per staff member equivalent).
- ❑ Commitment from CDB member senior managers to engage in a one afternoon-evening clinic with representatives of communities (October 13, 2005).

1. Review of the County Strategy and preparation of the 2006-2008 action plan

The Director of Services outlined the results based accountability approach which formed the basis of recommendations emerging from the CDB sub-groups with regard to the classification of actions going forward.

Results (new/different developments) depend on three types of investment:

- ✓ Investment in infrastructure (services, facilities) –needs financial capital
- ✓ Investment in upskilling people (needs human capital)
- ✓ Investment of time (participation) to work together for a common objective (needs social capital).

Investment depends on factors such as image confidence, reputation, trust, perception etc. These factors can be positive or negative. In the case of the implementation of aspects of the South Tipperary County Strategy, these factors are generally positive. There has been a relatively good experience in implementing actions on a joint basis and the partners at the CDB table have built up a strong competency in service co-ordination and service integration initiatives. This competency has been aided by good visioning of what was achievable when preparing the county strategy. There was a good match of available resources and advocacy of CDB members in agreeing priorities to be delivered in the 2002-2004 period.

1.1 Deputising for the Chair of the Economic Programme Management Group, John Quinn outlined the key results which form the core of the County Economic Strategy and the basis in which a review of the economic strategy was carried out and on which the draft 2006-2008 County Economic Action Plan was prepared:

- ❖ Secure the investment that will implement the County Spatial Strategy.

- ❖ Increase the size and skill capacity of the South Tipperary workforce (includes entrepreneurs, self employed, employed, underemployed, unemployed).
- ❖ Increase participation in economic activity – especially priority sectors.

Economic result 1 - Increase the competitiveness of South Tipperary for investment and for income generation.

The performance in terms of attracting investment has been excellent. It is estimated that almost €2 billion of potential projects are being considered for the 2005-2008 period.

Data is available on disposable income only up to 2002. However the county looks well on its way to achieving the 2006 target of reaching 92% of the national average. By 2002, it had reached 91.6% of the national average.

Priority actions agreed for the 2005-2008 period included:

- ❑ Growing the competitiveness of the County town with a particular focus on completing the Ballingarrane project.
- ❑ Targeting investment to specific locations – Tipperary town/Limerick Junction, Carrick on Suir, Cashel, Cahir and Slieve Ardagh.
- ❑ Targeting investment to specific infrastructure – broadband, roads, water/waste water, rail and alternative energy.

Economic Result 2. Increase the size and skill capacity of the South Tipperary workforce (includes entrepreneurs, self employed, employed, underemployed, unemployed).

The performance on the key indicator – reducing the unemployment rate - has been good. Waterford Institute of Technology is currently completing research to create a baseline of businesses (quantity/type) for the county.

A major issue to be addressed in the 2006-2008 period is the tightening labour market and the need to attract migrant/returning labour. The size of the labour force will be added as an indicator for the 2005-2008 period.

Priority actions agreed for the 2005-2008 period included:

- ❑ Service co-ordination group to focus on economic result area 2 (led by FAS) with scope for linking with localized area groups in each of the five electoral areas and with SEEDS (regional employment strategy group).
- ❑ Competency development programme
- ❑ One step up programme
- ❑ Opportunities for farmers programme (TEAGASC)
- ❑ Creating and developing an entrepreneurial region (Enterprise Ireland)
- ❑ Celebrating entrepreneurship (Business Pillar).

Economic Result 3. Increase participation in economic activity.

A key indicator is the economic participation rate which has increased in the 1996-2002 period.

Priority actions agreed for the 2005-2008 period included:

- ❑ Tourism (South East Regional Tourism Authority)
- ❑ Food (Tipperary LEADER Group)
- ❑ Equine (TEAGASC).

1.2 Deputising for the Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, Alan Price outlined the key results which form the core of the County Social Strategy and the basis in which a review of the social strategy was carried out and on which the draft 2006-2008 County Social Action Plan is being prepared:

- ❖ Social inclusion of target groups
- ❖ Supporting the capacity and development of key services and facilities

One of the main challenges facing SIM is how to monitor and measure if a co-ordinated approach to addressing the needs of specific target groups is delivering better results. Many of the quantitative results can only be measured years later, an example being of preventing early school leaving where we now can measure the performance of actions carried out in/pre 1994.

From a qualitative perspective, it is clear that many of the social exclusion targets being addressed are symptoms of family problems and there is little doubt but that a co-ordinated and holistic approach to these issues is likely to be a more successful strategy. Co-ordinated approaches create their own challenges. There is a significant learning curve for members of SIM to meet these challenges which will probably end in agreed protocols that can enable relevant and appropriate data to be shared in inter-agency settings.

Social result area 1: Social Inclusion of target groups

Inter-agency priorities agreed for the 2005-2008 period include:

- ❑ Education – specifically school completion
- ❑ Travelling Community – accommodation and Traveller/Settled Community relations
- ❑ Strategic reviews of issues relating to migrant workers, asylum seekers, elderly and rural isolation.

Social result area 2: Supporting the capacity and development of key services/facilities.

Inter-agency priorities agreed for the 2005-2008 period include:

- ❑ Youth and children – inclusion of youth and responding to recommendations in the National Children’s strategy
- ❑ Safety and Security and addressing anti-social behaviour
- ❑ Supporting RAPID, local development company networks, etc.

1.3 Cllr Michael Fitzgerald, Chair of the Cultural Programme Management Group outlined the key results which form the core of the County Cultural Strategy and the basis in which a review of the cultural strategy was carried out and on which the draft 2006-2008 County Cultural Action Plan was prepared:

- ❖ Opportunity to participate in an inclusive cultural sector.
- ❖ Investment in the development of cultural services, products and facilities.

Cultural result area 1: Opportunity to participate in an inclusive cultural sector

This result area is focused on the development of opportunity for people to participate and to increase their commitment to a more inclusive society. It seeks to show the many aspects of culture and to encourage each area to develop a wide following. Increasing the size and capacity of the cultural community to service the increased participation is also key to this result area. Achieving the result will also impact positively on the social inclusion issues in the county.

Inter-agency priorities agreed for the 2005-2008 period include:

- ❑ Building a local sports partnership
- ❑ Inclusion of the Travelling Community culture
- ❑ Inclusion of cultures of migrant workers/refugees – accommodation and Traveller/Settled Community relations
- ❑ Strategic reviews of issues relating to migrant workers, asylum seekers, elderly and rural isolation.

Cultural result area 2: Investment in the development of cultural services, products and facilities.

This result area is focused on the development of culture in South Tipperary. Three aspects are targeted – investment in facilities, training and upskilling and increase in the county’s cultural product offering.

Inter-agency priorities agreed for the 2005-2008 period include:

- ❑ More cost-benefit analyses to highlight the contribution of culture both to the South Tipperary economy and the well being of its society.
- ❑ More outreach services from the main cultural providers
- ❑ Implementation of the Arts Strategy
- ❑ Implementation of the Heritage Plan
- ❑ Implementation of the Crafts Strategy
- ❑ Planning development and consolidation of quality cultural activities

1.4 Ciaran Lynch, Chair of the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group outlined the key results which form the core of the County Local Agenda 21 Strategy and the basis in which a review of the local agenda 21 strategy was carried out and on which the draft 2006-2008 County Local Agenda 21 Action Plan is being prepared:

- ❖ To increase public and community participation in decision making.
- ❖ To ensure that sustainable services and facilities are delivered in South Tipperary.

Local Agenda 21 result area 1: Increase public and community participation in decision making

There are significant challenges in targeting this result:

- The capacity and willingness of the general public to engage in the opportunity presented in decision making.
- The capacity of the social partners to engage in the opportunity presented by engagement in decision making
- Extent to which the decision taking bodies consciously commit to public participation in decision making.

There is also a challenge in measuring the result and a need to gather data around agreed indicators.

Inter-agency priorities agreed for the 2005-2008 period will address the four challenges in co-operation with South Tipperary Forum. Discussions will take place with the Chair of SIM in relation to increasing youth participation in decision making.

Local Agenda 21 result area 2: Ensure that sustainable services and facilities are delivered in South Tipperary.

A task for the Local agenda 21 Programme Management Group is to clarify which services and facilities are appropriate for local agenda 21 and not to drift into those service/facility provision areas that are being targeted by SIM and the other Programme Management Groups.

The Inter-agency priorities likely to be agreed for the 2005-2008 period include:

- ❑ Environmental services/facilities
- ❑ General community services/facilities
- ❑ Citizens Information centers
- ❑ Transport services
- ❑ Local Development company network
- ❑ Supporting South Tipperary Forum services

1.5 Inputs were made by a number of Board members to the presentations from the CDB Sub- Groups.

From a national perspective, Ronan Mulhall highlighted criticism of the center in the NDP SIM evaluation. Judging by developments in the Department of Education, Government Departments are paying a lot more attention to the CDB process and are engaging more directly with CDB strategies. The DCRAGA Cohesion funding is another initiative designed to bring greater coherence and more effective ways of working in addressing significant problems. The review of CDB strategies is also signaling a need to focus on a limited set of priorities which can realistically be delivered by the CDB process. There is no evidence that post 2006 there will be an increase in funding from the center, rather the appropriate catchphrase is to work smarter with existing funds. There will also be a requirement to measure things and quantify what has been achieved. However, as outlined by Alan Price, there must also be a focus on qualitative measures. There is still a lot which processes such as networking and joined up interagency thinking can achieve in South Tipperary.

Michael Dee, from a regional perspective, highlighted the challenge for the South East Region to improve its economic performance. As evidenced by the drop in unemployment figures, South Tipperary is performing best in the region. There are positives for South Tipperary in its cluster of medicare/pharmaceutical enterprises. However, a worry for South Tipperary is the small number of entrepreneurs coming forward for key entrepreneur development programmes. There are major challenges ahead to maintain the impetus especially in changing the mix of industry in the region to more knowledge based industries and generating more start ups. There are also infrastructural challenges in providing quality road and telecommunications access to/within the region. There are also quality of life challenges as more and more people commute to work. In moving forward from a regional perspective, there is the challenge of meshing regional strategies with county/city plans.

From a county perspective, Maureen McNamara, agreed with Michael Dee that cognizance must be taken of regional strategies. The results based approach in targeting investment for infrastructure, upskilling and participation is a useful model. It is clear that while some progress has been made, major access deficits remain such as: upgrading of the N8 and N 24 creating an opportunity for a major logistics hub in the Cahir are; upgrading of Limerick Junction to enable West Tipperary benefit from the main Dublin-Cork line and its proximity to Limerick city; internal access in towns, convenient parking

is essential to the continued well being of towns; and access to broadband which has now been agreed as a priority for the years ahead. Progress is also slower than residents in this county would like in the case of decentralization for Tipperary Town and Carrick on Suir. Tourism is a very important industry to South Tipperary. Significant progress is being made to address the hotels deficit but the threat to and closure of tourist information points is a concern. The business park strategy has also been effective and needs to be maintained as 82% of businesses in the county employ less than 10 people. In targeting town centre development, consultation needs to take place with the business sector before signing off on initiatives such as farmers markets. There are difficult access issues already to the town centre in Clonmel. A second initiative which is doing the county no favours is the density guidelines for residential development. These have significant quality of life issues as well as exacerbating traffic difficulties. The Local agenda 21 group needs to examine this issue as provision of more green space must ultimately impact of enabling people to live better lives.

Bridget O’Keeffe highlighted the challenges facing the CDB in its 2005-2008 action plans from a community perspective. These included: addressing pollution and other environmental issues; achieving parity with the state in relation to disposable income; the tightening labour market and the need to integrate migrant workers and their families to ensure social continuity as well as achieving economic objectives; other labour market integration initiatives such as women returning to work, the rural social scheme; and increasing computer literacy in the county. The objective to increase community participation in decision making is welcome but achieving it will not be easy. Consultation processes that do not reflect the outcomes of consultation in the final decision are not helpful. Participation can also be enabled by continuity in agency staff dealing with specific matters and timing of events. The issue of measuring progress is very important but also difficult to achieve. One indicator, the South Tipperary Forum, will be keeping a particular eye on, is what influence the sector will have on the allocation of budgets for the 2006-2008 period.

Cllr Patsy Murphy, on behalf of the urban authorities highlighted how sub-county towns need to maximize their potential and piggyback on the gateway cities of Waterford and Limerick and the de-facto hub of Clonmel. The completion of the N8 and N24 projects with their town by-passes create opportunities and lessen threats such as traffic overflows/throughflows. Decentralisation needs to be delivered to both designated towns. The towns have also the capacity to develop business parks which attract not alone small businesses but also industries in the 100-200 range. Broadband also needs to be delivered to all the towns. There are some common areas in which the towns could co-operate such as: standardizing signposting and approach roads to towns; targeting the enhancement of streetscapes and the visual improvement of towns; increasing affordable housing schemes and addressing quality of life issues.

1.6 The Director of Services outlined the process that would now take place in terms of completing the review of the County Strategy and the Action Plans for 2006-2008.

- April 4-May 10: Executive along with the chairs of the CDB sub-groups will integrate the input from the Board and the outstanding information from action leaders into a draft report on the review of the County strategy and the 2005-2008 action plan.
- May 10-May 24: Draft report will be posted/ e mailed to CDB members for written/telephone comment.
- May 25- May 31: Draft report will be revised by the Executive and agreed with the CDB chair and sub-group chairs.
- June 1-June 14: Report will be translated into Irish.
- June 15- June 30: Report printed
- July 4 – Report launched at CDB meeting.

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

The Meetings Administrator circulated a list of plans/strategies notified to the Executive which may influence the county submission.

John Devane, Chair of the Community Framework Working Group, outlined the recommendation of the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group on increasing community participation in the preparation of the county submission.

The outcomes required from CDB members are:

- Commitments from all CDB members to provide facilitation resources to support community participation in the action. All CDB members are being requested to make available staff resources (@ 55 hours per staff member) to support the process. For those CDB members who do not have staff working in the county, a financial contribution of €1,000 is being sought (per staff member equivalent).
- Commitment from CDB member senior managers to engage in a one afternoon-evening clinic with representatives of communities (October 13, 2005).

The following process is proposed:

- ❑ Following agreement of the CDB, Tipperary LEADER Group will advertise for expressions of interest from communities (geographical, special interest, districts) to engage in the process.
- ❑ South Tipperary Forum will promote the opportunity at a set of area meetings in May.
- ❑ CDB members will notify their 'facilitation' commitments to Tipperary LEADER Group
- ❑ The Local Agenda Programme Management Group will meet in late May to plan the Autumn events and match facilitators with interested communities.
- ❑ The facilitators will be trained by Tipperary Institute in early September.(Tipperary LEADER Group will part fund the training).
- ❑ The facilitators will deliver the process to communities in September-October.
- ❑ Senior managers are request to be present at a community-agency clinic on a specific afternoon and evening in October.

On behalf of the County Council, Cllr Mattie McGrath welcomed the initiative of the Programme Management Group and stated that the management of South Tipperary County Council had agreed to commit 10 staff to the initiative.

The process recommended by the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group was agreed.

3. Other Information

Joe Brennan is the new South Tipperary Forum nominated representative onto the South Tipperary County Development Board. Pat Murphy is the new Waterford LEADER Partnership representative on the Board.

The Tipperary Think Tank Group submitted an action plan with three /thirteen actions for 2005.

Jim Power (Friends First, Chief Economist) is completing his voluntary assignment with Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd., to prepare an economic action plan for Carrick on Suir. The Tourism Development Committee will be launching the Committee's annual programme of events in April. The official opening of the Carrick on Suir Marina is scheduled for June 3. The Nagle Family Resource Centre has opened for business.

Broadband: The Government is currently rolling out its investment programme for Phase 2 (towns between 1500 and 10,000 population) and Phase 3 (Community and Group) broadband. Phase 1 related to the cities and bigger towns (a metropolitan area network has been developed in Clonmel at a cost of €2.64 million. The South East Regional Authority is co-ordinating bids for both Phase 2 (Cahir, Carrick on Suir, Cashel and Tipperary Town eligible) and phase 3. A CDB broadband group has come together to influence the achievements of best outcomes for the county. It consists of: Isabel Cambie (Tipperary LEADER), Michael Cox (Tipperary Institute), Toss Hayes (County Enterprise Board), Eileen Horgan, Marion O'Neill (South Tipperary County Council), Anthony O'Reilly (Tipperary Institute), John Quinn and Declan Rice (Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development).

Comhairle na nOg: Alan Price highlighted the two key issues emerging from the recent Comhairle na Nog meeting – need for more No-name clubs and commitment and funding for youth consultation.

RAPID: An allocation of €129,000 has been made by the Dormants Accounts fund to provision of disability access to the Tipperary Town swimming pool. An allocation of €467,000 has been awarded to the county application led by the Local development company Network under the Equality for Women measures.