

# **SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

## **Twenty Fifth MEETING REPORT**

Meeting held: February 7, 2005  
Members present: (66% of members)  
Chair: Cllr Mattie McGrath

### **SUMMARY**

South Tipperary County Development Board has agreed to a new action in the County Strategy: following presentations by Board members on preparing for post 2006 period.

(Local Agenda 21 programme: Action 4.3.7) Prepare a county submission that will influence the allocation of resources in the next NDP and/or its successor. Lead agency: County Development Board.

The County Development Board has also agreed to carry out a review of the County Strategy following a request from the Government and to prepare a 2006-2008 action plan.

Arising from correspondence received from South Tipperary Forum, the Board has agreed to request the Minister of Education to alter the legislation regarding Vocational Education Committees (VECs) with respect to how community and voluntary sector nominees are sought by respective local authorities when VECs are being established in the future.

Borough and Town Council representation to the CDB has been increased by Government directive from one to two. Cllr Patsy Murphy and Cllr Mary Swords are the urban council nominees to South Tipperary County Development Board for 2005 and 2006.

### **1. Preparing for the post 2006 National Development Plan and/or its successor**

Ned O'Connor, Chair, Economic Programme Management Group, in his presentation on preparing for the post 2006 period, highlighted the following issues:

- It is not yet clear if there will be a formally prepared National Development Plan (NDP) for the 2007-2013 period or whether the successor to the current NDP will be based on a different approach such as five year ministerial capital/revenue envelopes.

- Regardless of what kind of approach is adopted by the Government, South Tipperary County Development Board needs to consider co-ordinating a submission to Government based on the likely needs for national funding within the county and taking all of the stakeholders represented at the CDB table into account.
- The current NDP was designed to tackle national and regional priorities through a multi-annual investment programme. It is being implemented through operational programmes on economic infrastructure, human resources and employment, productive sector and regional programmes.
- By and large the NDP has had a positive impact on South Tipperary although public perception may be mixed in that regard due to the varying visibility of the projects supported.
- From a macro perspective, there is still a lot of infrastructural investment required in the county. There is also a need to continue existing NDP programmes. And the final macro issue relates to quality of life – how does the nation and county manage its success so that all benefit.
- Many of the CDB stakeholders already have plans that project into the post 2006 period. A county submission will clearly reflect the needs of stakeholders but in a manner which highlights the synergies and complementarities of agreed priorities. The submission needs to be based on realistic objectives that can be resourced by Government. The significant change that is needed post 2006 is that the submission has flexibility and the capacity to cope with change as new opportunities and threats will inevitably arise over a seven year period.

Sectoral inputs were made by a number of Board members.

From a cultural sector perspective, Cllr Michael Fitzgerald supported the concept of a county submission to influence how post 2006 national resources might be allocated. It is very important in a county with a proud heritage that there is more funding for cultural development funding but this funding be strategically applied in line with other priorities. Cultural investment can have significant economic benefits and is a key element of the tourism resource of any area. An obvious gap in the cultural infrastructure within South Tipperary is the lack of a performing arts center in Clonmel.

John Devane, from a Local Agenda 21 perspective, supported the concept of incorporating the needs of all the stakeholders. The county submission needs to be balanced and seek to address the needs of both rural and urban areas. Achieving balance between what may at times be competing interests, will be a big challenge. Clonmel needs to grow to be regionally significant but not at the expense of overshadowing the rest of the county.

Cllr Sean Nyhan, from a local authority perspective, also raised the issue of balance. With regard to transport, the existing NDP had greatly improved national roads. But significant gaps remain in upgrading the national roads network running through the county. Very little investment was targeted at regional rail. The Rural Transport Initiative was a very successful nationally applied, locally delivered initiative. With regard to housing, social housing lists are increasing. In addressing housing need, the issues of quality of house, design and density, are critical in ensuring that unhealthy societal outcomes are avoided. The voluntary housing sector is helping greatly in this regard but affordable housing has not really delivered to date. With regard to water and waste water infrastructure, there has also been significant progress in the bigger urban centres. But deficits remain, especially in renewing the piping system in rural areas. The flood walls in Carrick on Suir have already made a difference. Similar protection in Clonmel is just commencing.

From a local development perspective, Phil Shanahan stated that support to the sector should be considered a given in the next NDP. But much of the county is not serviced directly by social inclusion support groups. There has been demographic change and the rural areas in particular have an increasing elderly population and increasing numbers of farmers with marginal incomes. The county submission will need to reflect how the county has changed since 1999. Post 2006, it is also uncertain how funding might be channeled, whether by means of a global grant to the county or through the current governmental department system. Regardless of the approach, the local development sector will welcome any opportunities to be consulted on how funds are to be allocated. In that regard, the sector in South Tipperary is already engaged in a process for preparing for post 2006.

Alan Price, from a state agency perspective, welcomed the concept of a county submission to influence the next NDP. A county submission may more effectively justify expenditure proposals and should also reflect more achievable goals. There are increasing opportunities for agencies to work together, such as co-locating services, shared posts in the social inclusion area and in addressing themes such as emergency planning. One of the weaknesses of the current NDP is that while there are excellent capital supports for projects, there is little by way of support for the people who will deliver the services that arise from some capital investment. Among the challenges facing the preparation of the submission is whether the national level has the capacity to accept an integrated submission. There is little doubt that the objective of achieving an integrated South Tipperary submission by mid-2006 will be achieved. If such a submission could be accommodated at national level, another challenge arises in how to manage integrated funding and monitoring and accounting for how the funding is spent. But these are challenges that this county has the capacity to meet.

From a social partner perspective, Bridget O’Keeffe highlighted the gains in South Tipperary where the various stakeholders work together for the common good and to help to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in society. There is an excellent capacity within Ireland as witnessed in the response to the tsunami disaster to be active in tackling problems. Among the issues that needs to be addressed in the next NDP is the supply of social housing for economic and political migrants as part of a wider objective based on all the population having access to proper accommodation. The childcare elements of the current NDP also need to be extended post 2006. At a local level, there is an opportunity to link developers and childcare providers so that quality facilities are built. The Rural Transport Initiative has also made a big difference to the lives of people in rural areas. People need local services and the issue of resourcing them will be a major challenge. It is also important that sight is not lost of global issues such as environment and poverty issues. This country needs to make a positive contribution to reducing trade inequalities with the third world.

Following the presentations, the County Development Board agreed to include a new action in the County Strategy (Local Agenda 21 programme: Action 4.3.7) Prepare a county submission that will influence the allocation of resources in the next NDP and/or its successor. Lead agency: County Development Board.

The following process was agreed:

- February 2005: Agreement by the CDB to a priority action for 2005 – Begin to prepare a South Tipperary submission to the post 2006 NDP and/or its successor.
- April 2005: Presentation to the CDB on the existing (that take in post 2006) plans that exist (infrastructure needs audits, agency services, RAPID, local development company services, individual community plans, etc. Commitment by individual CDB members to provide facilitation resources to the South Tipperary Forum to extend the process of community planning.
- May to December 2005: All CDB members prepare their post 2006 requirements and negotiate as required with other CDB members and individual community umbrella groups
- January to March 2006: Integration of submissions into programmes/measures and consultation on drafts with the Programme Management Groups and SIM.
- April 2006: CDB reviews draft submission.
- May 2006-June 2006. Local authority members begin the process of political lobbying for the inclusion of the types of programme/measure required in South Tipperary. Other CDB members begin the process of influencing key officials in Government Departments.



What works (what would it take to turn the curve, best practice, best hunches)

Action Plan and Budget (What we propose to do/budgets for the 2006-2008 period)

A Performance Measures is a measure of how well a programme, agency or service system is doing. It is aimed at the well being of client populations (target groups). How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off? The answers to these questions centred on effort and effect are brought into the section on 'what works' above and influence the action plan arising.

The process recommended by the Director of Services in carrying out the review was accepted.:

- Results based accountability analysis of each of the existing four programmes presented to the Programme Management Groups and SIM in March/April 2005. Specific Development officers will support the programme management group chairs and 'action lead stakeholders' in carrying out this task.
- Review of the recommendations arising from the Programme Management Groups and SIM at the April County Development Board meeting.
- Launch of the review and the 2006-2008 action plan at the July Board meeting.

### **3. Other Information**

The Chair had received correspondence from the South Tipperary Forum noting the Forum's disappointment that its nominee was not successful in being elected to the new Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The Forum does not accept that the chosen representatives can be said to be representative of the community and voluntary sector as a whole and have a county wide remit. The Forum wished to have a formal complaint noted in that the Forum regarded the outcome as a breach of partnership and as a slight to the work of the Forum to date. The Forum also requested that the situation be rectified at the first available opportunity as education is key to the future development of the county and the VEC is a most important body in that regard.

The Director Of Services clarified for the CDB members that the outcome referred to by the Forum Officers had arisen out of an anomaly in legislation and could not be altered until the next VEC was being established in 2009. There was a variance in how community nominees could be selected in the legislation setting up VECs and that implied in the regulations in the Local Government Act concerning County Development Boards. The Director recommended that the Board write to the Minister of Education to clear up this anomaly as the Board has continually recognized and acknowledged in its Annual Reports the most valuable contribution being made by the South Tipperary Forum.

In response to CDB member concerns about the need to facilitate county wide community input to the VEC and also ensure county wide community responses to VEC led initiatives and especially those in the County Strategy, the Chief Executive Officer of Tipperary South Riding VEC, Fionuala McGeever, stated that the VEC had already discussed these concerns and intended to address the concerns when it is establishing its Adult Education Board.

The CDB agreed that the chair should write formally to the Minister of Education requesting that the legislation regarding the establishment of VECs be amended to ensure that community fora which have met the criteria laid down in the CDB regulations be the sole nominating body to their respective county/city councils for community and voluntary representation on future VECs.

Borough and Town Council representation to the CDB has been increased by Government directive from one to two. Cllr Patsy Murphy and Cllr Mary Swords are the urban council nominees to South Tipperary County Development Board for 2005 and 2006.