

# **SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

## **Twenty Third MEETING REPORT**

Meeting held: September 6, 2004  
Members present: 77%  
Chair: Cllr Mattie McGrath

### **SUMMARY**

The main priorities emerging from the social inclusion review include the need to focus in the 2005 action plan on service provision for deprived rural areas, the elderly, migrant workers and other minority groups as well as achieving better services in the 2003 and 2005 priority areas (traveler accommodation, preventing early school leaving, safety and security, addressing employment and unemployment issues and services to the disabled. It was also agreed to establish actions relating to Quality of Life indicators; Access issues: and Equality and Diversity.

In reporting to the County Development Board, Fionuala McGeever Chair, Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIM) highlighted:

- The overall affluence/deprivation scores for South Tipperary based on data collected in the 2002 census highlights pockets of deprivation in the rural areas at the edge of the county while confirming urban deprivation in parts of Clonmel and Carrick on Suir.
- The data from the live register continues to highlight the existing of a hardcore (approximately 1700) of long term unemployed.
- There are more than 2000 migrant workers in the County and the social and economic inclusion of minorities needs to be addressed more comprehensively by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group.
- SIM has reviewed the implementation of the County Social Programme and is satisfied with its progress.
- . services to migrant workers and services to deprived rural areas. It will continue to review progress from the Action Groups advancing priorities set in 2003 and 2004 as well as overseeing tasks given to it by the Government such as RAPID and Local Development cohesion.

A briefing night for social partners in respect of 50 positions on CDB Structures, Co Council Strategic Policy Committees, County Childcare Committee and Clonmel Community Partnership, will be held in County Hall, Clonmel at 7.30 pm on Monday September 20, 2004.

## 1. Social Inclusion Watch

Fionuala McGeever, Chair, Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIM) presented a social inclusion review.

<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>2002 (data)</b>	<b>2003 (data)</b>	<b>2004 (data)</b>	
Unemployed	3686 (June)	3917 (June)	3882 (June)	1700 long term unemployed
Lone Parents	1165	1306	1527	Number in receipt of an allowance
Travellers	101 (families)	100 (families)	115 (families)	Drop from 11 to 4 on roadside
Asylum seekers and refugees	83 (Jan)	52 (Jan)	112	85 in one building in Carrick on Suir
Elderly at risk	1504	826	1050	
Disabled	1421	1353	1024	
Children in care	146	103	106	
Other Welfare allowances	2667	2559	2715	Numbers in the key rent supplement area actually increased from 1001 to 1097.
Smallholder	949	866	845	

The key points in Fionuala McGeever's presentation (detailed copy available by email from [breda.oconnor@southtippcoco.ie](mailto:breda.oconnor@southtippcoco.ie)) were:

- The overall affluence/deprivation scores for South Tipperary based on data collected in the 2002 census highlights pockets of deprivation in the rural areas at the edge of the county while confirming urban deprivation in parts of Clonmel and Carrick on Suir. It should be noted that rural deprivation may be underscored on the basis that the indicators (demographic decline, social class and labour market integration) have an urban disadvantage bias. The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group plans to examine the delivery of public and community services to deprived rural areas as part of its 2005 work programme.
- The data from the live register continues to highlight the existence of a hardcore (approximately 1700) of long term unemployed. FAS is currently leading an employment action in the County Social Strategy and a report from the Action Group will be reviewed in November. A second action led by the South East Regional Authority will be completed later in the week with the publication of the Regional Employment Strategy.

- There are more than 2000 migrant workers in the County and the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group hopes to review issues relating to these workers in its 2005 Work Programme.
- The 2003 priority relating to an Inter-agency Traveller Accommodation action has reached a stage where the agencies are signed up to an integrated and targeted plan. A Directory of Services has already been produced. It is hoped that the Interagency group will have a considerable impact on the statutory 2005-2008 Traveller Accommodation Plan which the local authorities must finalise by mid 2005.
- A second 2003 priority, addressing early school leaving, is being advanced by an Action Group led by the Department of Education and Science. The Department will shortly release a review of its educational disadvantage programmes. These programmes work well but the need for them continues, as new entrants enter school each year. The Action Group has also been requested by SIM to examine services to parents and to young offenders/those at risk of offending in its 2005 work programme.
- The third 2003 priority relating to addressing anti-social behaviour, is being advanced by a Safety and Security Action Group led by the Probation Services. A major concern is that the funding in this area is static while the demand for services, such as those addressing domestic violence against women, has grown. SIM plans to target the Dormant Funds in an effort to address shortfalls.
- During 2004, SIM has endorsed three RAPID Plans, the 2004 plans of the Local Development sector, the 2005 Action plan of the County Childcare Committee, as well as reviewing services to the unemployed and to the disabled. The priorities of SIM for the next twelve months include reviews of services to the elderly, services to migrant workers and services to deprived rural areas. It will continue to review progress from the Action Groups advancing priorities set in 2003 and 2004 as well as overseeing tasks given to it by the Government such as RAPID and Local Development cohesion.

Key points in the discussion arising from the presentation and other inputs from Tracy Costello, Mick Cummins, Michael Dee, Cllr Michael Fitzgerald, Ciaran Lynch, Bridget O’Keeffe and Cllr Phil Prendergast, included:

- Rural deprivation and rural services: Board members expressed concern in relation to indicators being used to measure rural deprivation. Existing Electoral Districts are large and can mask pockets of deprivation. Meaningful townland data is not made available because of confidentiality issues. In relation to demographic decline, it might be more appropriate to look at household change numbers rather than population change. The impact of both the changing nature of agricultural supports and the globalisation of food distribution and sales (blamed for the recent Dairygold announcements in relating to exiting pig processing) was also discussed by the Board. The new payments system for farmers could lead to individual decisions to reduce output, which will in time impact on income and create a vicious cycle of decline. It is very difficult to identify

those whose income will drop and even more difficult to provide services to them. There is an ever-increasing challenge faced by TEAGASC and the LEADER Groups to help farmers create added-value and increase their farm incomes. The Tipperary Institute led Remote Rural Enterprise project highlighted the importance of cultural factors and recommended a mixed cultural-business support framework to rural regeneration which is currently being tested in Slieve Ardagh. Distance from good employment centres is another factor which can impact on accessibility to off-farm employment. The infrastructure objectives in the County Spatial Strategy are very important to facilitate more access by farmers to off-farm employment. But the quality of life needs to be good in rural areas in order to sustain a commuting to work population over a long time. The good work of CDPs (Community Development Projects) and Family Resources Centres was noted. However there are gaps in these services in both the Fethard, South West County and North West County areas.

- Unemployment: The FAS led Employment Action group will report to SIM in November. While the residual long term unemployed numbers (circa 1700) remains static, considerable creativity is needed to make a difference. There is also volatility in the Live Register Figures. A FAS/Department of Social and Family Affairs initiative, called the High Support Process, set up to target 450 eighteen year olds on the Regional Live Register, highlighted that two thirds had found work as the initiative was starting, during which time almost as many more but different eighteen year olds had joined the Live Register.
- Education and upskilling: Just over 80% of second level entrants in the county completed their Leaving Certificate, whilst 95.3% completed the Junior Cert Cycle. The 4.7% who have left before Junior Certificate level are those most at risk of becoming long term unemployed. Is it possible to track these people? The new Education Welfare Officer Service has addressed the problem of children failing to transfer from primary to second level education. In the adult population, there is a continual need for upskilling. Stale skills can soon become redundant skills. The promotion of education and Stay in Education initiatives is critical. A concern is the limited number of VTOS (vocational training opportunities scheme) and PLC (post leaving certificate) courses that are resourced in the county.
- Employment: There are 4881 industrial jobs in manufacturing in the county in businesses which employ more than 10 people. The manufacturing sector is in decline, but South Tipperary's drop of less than 2% of jobs over the past ten years is a very good result compared with a 14% drop nationally. The expanding sectors nationally have been construction (13,000 jobs), logistics (10,000 jobs) and healthcare/education (20,000 jobs). A challenge for South Tipperary is to

transform from a traditional agricultural and industrial economy. The Enterprise Centres are good catalysts to help in this transformation. The investment in Ballingarrane should also prove significant now that Clonmel has been accepted as a de-facto hub in the regional planning guidelines. A concern which the Economic Programme Management Group will target is the relatively small number of entrepreneurs coming forward. Other challenges relate to increasing the County's capacity to track and retain its third level graduates; increasing public and private sector investment in research and development; the development of the services sector; and the delivery of infrastructure and childcare targets.

- Equality and social inclusion: The proportion of the County's population represented in minority groups is growing. These groups are now more diverse than in the past. There is a major challenge in achieving community inclusion of minorities. Yet there is much to be gained by the increasing diversity in the county. Communities have very important resources in terms of sport and cultural facilities. The CDB needs to send a clear message to its members that including minorities in play and sport activities as well as celebrating difference in cultural activities such as art, drama, is a very good way forward for society. Minority integration should become a priority for the CDB. The County Childcare Committee is proposing to establish an Equality and Diversity Group and this group should be encouraged to lead an action that will deliver results for the County. The CDB noted the success of the four year Primary Health Training Programme for Traveller Women which was resourced by the SEHB, VEC, FAS and DSFA. The Health Services also face a major challenge in dealing with other minority groups given language problems, different dietary needs, different customs and beliefs, etc. Asylum seekers are a particular concern, given their lack of access to work, their high level of need and the lack of professional supports. It was also noted that the families of Migrant workers will follow and there is a need to plan for their economic and social inclusion.
  
- Access issues. The first access issue is that of power. What power and influence do the marginalized in South Tipperary have? How are they included in decision making? Is there any capacity building of the marginalized to participate in processes that shape community and county development? Employment is a second key access issue in that it has a huge bearing on the resources available to the marginalized person or family. The third issue is the targeting of opportunities to the marginalized. The health warning given in relation to available data is a major concern in targeting resources. There are other than Census resources available to the County Development Board. All children go to primary school and school principals and teachers have a vast knowledge in relation to the areas in which they work. Also community groups have often proved to excellent at regularly collecting data. Tipperary Institute,

in the context of an action led by Tipperary LEADER on community integrated planning, offered to lead a Sub-group identifying critical data indicators for quality of life that could be collected annually by community sources. This offer will be followed up by the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group. The fourth issue that needs to be considered is the support structure that is available once 'access' is achieved. Other life circumstances can create barriers to successfully participating in further education. A joint agency approach to access issues should be considered by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group. A fifth access issue is childcare and it needs to be full day childcare. But there is a major challenge in enabling deprived people access good quality childcare. The County Childcare Committee has prioritized proposals from RAPID and deprived rural areas.

- Elderly. The growth of Active Retirement Groups was noted. The SIM priority in relation reviewing services to the Elderly was welcomed.

## **2. Other Information**

New members of the County Development Board include: Tracy Costelloe (Chair County Childcare Committee), Alan Price (Acting General Manager Community Care - South Eastern Health Board), and Phil Shanahan (Co-ordinator Clonmel Community partnership).

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Cllr Michael Fitzgerald, chair of the Cultural and Corporate Affairs Strategic Policy Committee requested CDB members to input into the preparation of the new Co Council Corporate Plan over the next two months.