

# **SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

## **TWENTIETH MEETING REPORT**

Meeting held: February 2, 2004  
Members present: 19 (61% of members)  
Chair: Cllr Sean McCarthy

### **SUMMARY**

A review of a national evaluation report on Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Working Groups was carried out at the February CDB meeting. The evaluation report focused on three aspects (progress to date, constraints and impact to date) at two levels (local and national). While the report acknowledged that SIM Working Groups had raised awareness of social inclusion issues among stakeholders, there had only a minimal impact on delivery of local services. The Government Task Force and SIM Working Groups have also not changed the way government departments do business. The evaluation report recommended re-energising the process at national level by streamlining the NDP social inclusion measures and at local level to focus on outcomes for up to three target groups annually in order to deliver better co-ordination and integration of services in this area.

Members of the South Tipperary SIM Working Group responded to the report:

- ✓ At a local level, South Tipperary can be satisfied about value for money/time expended by SIM to date.
- ✓ It is difficult locally to accept criticism of national agencies for lack of buy-in when public stakeholders in the CDB process were given no extra resources to take on that co-ordination aspect.
- ✓ The SIM Working Group also acknowledges the danger that if co-ordination and integration is not properly resourced and supported from the national level then the advantage built up in South Tipperary by co-operating individuals could easily be lost in the years ahead.
- ✓ While the report is particularly critical of the national level, there has been some national movement that is visible in South Tipperary such as the establishment of a regional office by the Department of Education and Science.

The County Development Board acknowledged the local level achievements to date in South Tipperary. But the Board also expressed concern with the pitfalls outlined in the evaluation report concerning not having joined-up social inclusion policy and insufficient urgency in addressing systemic bottlenecks at a central level. The Board's concerns are to be brought to the attention of the Government Task Force.

County Strategy status: 64 of the 74 actions agreed in the County Strategy have commenced.

## 1. Evaluation of Social Inclusion Co-ordination Mechanisms

Seamus Moore, Chair, South Tipperary Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Working Group, presented a summary of an evaluation report prepared by the NDP Unit in the Department of Finance. The focus of the evaluation report is on the SIM Working Groups established under County and City Development Boards (CDBs), for the purpose of co-ordinating, at a local level, the delivery of 38 social inclusion measures contained in the National Development Plan. The role of SIM Working Groups was extended at a later stage by national directive to also co-ordinate the delivery of non-NDP (other national and local) social inclusion measures and to oversee the Area Implementation Teams set up to deliver the RAPID Programme. The evaluation focused on three aspects (progress to date, constraints and impact to date) at two levels (local and national) which are briefly summarized in the following table.

Aspect	Local level	National Level
Progress	<p>Good networking Forum</p> <p>Many County Strategies failed to provide direction</p> <p>Quality of output variable</p>	<p>Minimal progress</p> <p>Guidelines not implemented at national level</p> <p>Little meaningful action on bottlenecks especially lack of co-operation by government departments</p> <p>Task Force had lost its way after initial strong momentum</p>
Constraints	<p>Lack of authority underpinning the co-ordination function</p> <p>Non availability of basic financial or physical indicator data on social inclusion</p>	<p>Absence of incentives to reward agencies who pursue co-ordination</p> <p>Lack of priority attached to SIM working groups</p>
Impact of SIM	<p>Raised awareness of social inclusion issues among stakeholders allowing scope for co-operation which may lead to improved targeting and enhanced impact.</p> <p>Minimal impact on delivery of local services</p>	<p>The Task Force and SIM Working Groups have not changed the way government departments do business</p>

The evaluation report concluded that the policy towards social inclusion is not 'joined-up', with the SIM co-ordination process detached from both the NDP implementation framework and social inclusion policy frameworks such as the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. The evaluation report recommended re-energising the process at national level by streamlining the NDP social inclusion measures (38 measures, 8 government departments and 13 delivery bodies) and at local level to focus on outcomes for up to three target groups annually in order to deliver better co-ordination and integration of services in this area.

In commenting on the report, Seamus Moore stated that the recommendation for a local focus on outcomes on specific target groups was based on the good practice of the South Tipperary and other SIM Working Groups. In 2003, the South Tipperary SIM had targeted travelers, early school leavers and anti-social behaviour. Action groups had been established to deliver outcomes in these three areas. The delivery of services to two additional target groups (unemployed, disabled) would also be examined by South Tipperary SIM in 2004. A big issue for the South Tipperary SIM is whether the re-energising of co-ordination and integration will be implemented at national level.

Ronan Mulhall, Oliver Clancy, John Devane and Mick Cummins presented the following issues raised in relation to the report by the South Tipperary SIM Working Group.

- The findings of the evaluation report are acknowledged by SIM. There is a question of value for money/time in relation to the entire social inclusion co-ordination process at both national and local level. The expectations set at national level may have been set too high.
- At a local level, South Tipperary can be satisfied about value for money/time expended by SIM to date. The South Tipperary County Strategy had a limited number of actions in which local agencies/regional and local representatives of national agencies had already committed to producing co-ordination and integration, addressing agency overlapping and reducing duplication. The main strategic decision taken in South Tipperary in the 2000-2002 period was that the CDB would only address issues for which there was a need for co-ordination and integration and for which the co-ordination aspect could be resourced by a lead stakeholder.
- This was a huge advantage to the South Tipperary SIM Working Group which moved on quite quickly to targeting priority areas in 2003. A concern, shared by all members of the South Tipperary SIM Working Group, is that by targeting specific groups, opportunities to address the needs of other groups at risk of social exclusion might be missed. However, there is excellent local level networking and at a minimum, each member of SIM is mindful of what other bodies around the table is doing before embarking on a new action.
- The South Tipperary SIM Working Group acknowledges that the co-ordination aspect is resource intensive and quite onerous. It is difficult locally to accept criticism of national agencies for lack of buy in when public stakeholders in the CDB process were given no extra resources to

take on that co-ordination aspect. It was tagged on to existing work. Luckily, in South Tipperary, the individuals representing agencies had the 'will' if not always the authority to make co-ordination happen. The question that the evaluation report raises is whether the local; success of SIM groups such as South Tipperary had anything at all to do with the TaskForce.

- But the SIM Working Group acknowledges the danger that if co-ordination and integration is not properly resourced and supported from the national level then the advantage built up in South Tipperary by co-operating individuals could easily be lost in the years ahead. The role of the Task Force needs to be delivered. One suggestion from the South Tipperary SIM Working Group is that the membership of the Task Force be reviewed and that social partner (including target group) representatives be added to the Task Force.
- While the report is very critical of the national level, there has been some national movement that is visible in South Tipperary. The Department of Education and Science has set up regional offices. The south-eastern regional office of the Department of Education and Science has already proofed the Department's statement of strategy against the South Tipperary County Strategy. More specifically, the regional office is now leading the South Tipperary County Strategy action to prevent early school leaving.
- There is also an opportunity recommendation in the evaluation report relating to 1% of the NDP social inclusion budgets be made available for locally agreed priorities.

The County Development Board agreed the analysis presented by the chair and members of the South Tipperary Social Inclusion Measures Working group. The Board acknowledged the local level achievements to date in South Tipperary. But the Board expressed deep concern with the pitfalls outlined in the evaluation report: that social inclusion policy was not joined-up; that the Task Force was detached from social inclusion policy forums; and that there was a lack of sufficient urgency in addressing the task assigned to the Task Force of resolving systemic bottlenecks at a central level.

The Chair of SIM, Seamus Moore, was requested to bring the CDB and SIM reviews of the evaluation report to the attention of the Task Force.

## 2. Review of the implementation of the County Strategy and priorities for 2004

The Director of Services presented a brief update on the implementation of the County Strategy, the 2003 priorities and the likely focus emerging in 2004.

The South Tipperary County Strategy, when launched in April 2002, has four programmes (economic, social, cultural and local agenda 21) with 62 actions. The implementation of each programme was overseen by a Programme Management Group and arising from the recommendations of these Groups a further five actions were added to the County Strategy by the end of 2002 and an additional seven actions in 2003.

The status of the 74 actions is as follows:

Programme	Number of actions	Actions completed	Actions ongoing from 2002/2003	Actions that will start in 2004	Actions deferred
Economic	27	1	22	1	3
Social	19	1	15	2	1
Cultural	12	1	9	0	2
Local agenda 21	16	1	14	0	1
(Total)	74	4	60	3	7

The priority actions for 2003 (those emerging in 2004):

Economic Programme – Advancement of Ballingarrane Project, Decentralisation, economic strategies for the other main towns and resolving the hotel bedroom deficit in the county (2004 – Ballingarrane, Limerick Junction, business parks in the other towns, workforce upskilling)

Social Programme – Implementation of RAPID plans, addressing the traveller accommodation issue; preventing early school leaving and setting up a shadow crime prevention partnership (2004 – unemployment/workforce upskilling, disability inclusion)

Cultural Programme – No formal priorities set in 2003 (2004 – implementation of the arts strategy, creation of a shadow sports partnership, implementation of the heritage plan and of the crafts strategy).

Local agenda 21 – Volunteer development and integrated planning (2004 – implementation of integrated planning pilots).

The unemployment/workforce upskilling priority is a concern of two implementing structure. FAS has agreed to lead this action and members of the Economic Programme Management Group will be invited to attend the next SIM meeting on March 29, 2004 to discuss the topic jointly. The Director also stated that he proposed to recommend implementation structure adjustments which would be considered by the Cultural Programme Management Group and the Local Agenda Programme Management at their next respective meetings.

### 3. Report of the CDB Working Group on Tipperary Town

The Working Group had been set up to co-ordinate the response to a projected 145 redundancies in PALL and to make/oversee the implementation of recommendations to enhance economic development in West Tipperary.

Oliver Clancy presented a status report in relation to the PALL redundancies:

Total made redundant to date	145
Total interviewed by FAS (Status broken down as follows)	118
Already placed in alternative employment	72
On FAS training programmes	13
Have indicated that they are not available at present for work	10
Signing on the live register (and job seeking)	23

Arrangements are currently being made to interview 21 workers being made redundant in Continental Promotions.

The Director of Services outlined the other key developments since the Working Group was established:

- ✓ FAS, Enterprise Ireland, County Enterprise Board and Tipperary Institute have delivered a range of services (clinics, start your own business courses, computer courses) which will continue for the remainder of 2004.
- ✓ IDA Ireland continues to work with PALL management to grow the industrial products size of the business. PALL is not interested at present in sub-letting part of its facility.
- ✓ Construction of the 13,000 square foot IDA approved advance factory had commenced
- ✓ Tipperary Town Decentralisation Committee's campaign had been successful with a project 200 Department of Justice jobs ear marked for Tipperary Town
- ✓ A sub-group of the Working Group which included the Tipperary Town Manager, Chief Executive of the County Enterprise Board and the Director of Services as well as local business pillar interests had prepared a timeline of potential projects to be advanced in the West Tipperary/East Limerick area. The key project is to maximize the economic potential of Limerick Junction on a Trans-European Rail Network. Promoters and investors have been identified for post graduate education projects. A third key project relates to securing tax designation to drive investment in RAPID area.
- ✓ This sub-group (known as the Think Tank Group) has agreed to take on the lead role in identifying and attracting investors to the West Tipperary area.
- ✓ The CDB Working Group will review developments from both the public agency and locally driven actions prior to each CDB meeting in 2004.

On behalf of the Board, Cllr Brendan Griffin congratulated the Working Group and those associated with it on the achievements to date. He also welcomed the recent commitment of Iarnroid Eireann to have the Cahir viaduct rebuilt in 2004, a very important commitment in respect of Limerick Junction's connectivity with the Europort Rosslare.

#### **4. Rapid Programme (Provincial Towns Strand), CLAR**

The Director of Services reported that the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group has endorsed the RAPID Plans for Clonmel and Tipperary Town as well as an Interim Plan for Carrick on Suir.

Submissions from project promoters in all three towns are also being made to the Dormant Accounts Fund (40% of which is directly allocated to RAPID, CLAR and Local Drugs Task Force Areas).

The Department of Social and Family Affairs had resourced South Tipperary SIM to run a seminar on results and outputs accountability decision making and budgeting. The seminar will be held on Wednesday February 25, 2004 in Clonmel.