

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Nineteenth MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: November 3, 2003
Members present: 21(66% of members)
Chair: Cllr Sean McCarthy

SUMMARY

The main priorities emerging from a cultural review presented by Cllr Barry O'Brien include the need to focus in the 2004 action plan on achieving:

- ❑ agreement on levels of facilities and securing funding agency agreement to focus resources based on this agreement;
- ❑ the sustaining of services under threat from public cutbacks/limited resources;
- ❑ and to continue to encourage cross-county co-operation with North Tipperary.

At the core of the County Development Board's vision is the need to improve public and community services by service co-ordination and integration. Considerable progress has been made across all four programmes in the South Tipperary County Strategy. a major contribution of the CDB process to date has been the involvement of South Tipperary Forum as the county community/voluntary pillar. A key challenge for Board members is to delegate authority to CDB sub-group members to make decisions in relation to resourcing and implementing agreed actions in the County Strategy. One particular drawback of social partnership is that it cannot work well if it does not have access to specific budgets. A second drawback is that many decisions are made at national level that are outside CDB control and upon which the CDB has no significant influence.

Decisions: Two new actions have been added to the South Tipperary County Strategy:

- ✓ Economic Programme. Measure 1.4 Sectoral Strategies. Action 1.4.9 Support the planning and implementation of projects in the Slieve Ardagh area. (Lead Stakeholder: Slieve Ardagh Rural Development).
- ✓ Social Programme. Measure 2.3 Implementation of specific strategies. Action 2.3.7 Prepare and oversee the implementation of actions plans in response to local reviews of crime, security and anti-social behaviour issues. (Lead Stakeholder: Garda Siochana).

The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group has endorsed RAPID Plans in Clonmel and Tipperary Town. The Working Group also plans to review the implications of cutbacks in the local development sector.

Ronan Mulhall is the Department of Education and Science representative on the South Tipperary County Development Board.

1. Cultural Watch

Cllr Barry O'Brien, Chair, Cultural Programme Management Group presented a progress report on cultural co-ordination in the county. The key points in the presentation were:

- There has been progress in relation to the four key strategies. The Arts and Craft Strategies are being implemented. The Heritage Plan for the county has been drafted and is about to go on public display. Tipperary SR VEC has co-ordinated a county bid for a local sports partnership. The cultural providers are co-ordinating events to facilitate the cultural inclusion of migrant workers and asylum seekers. The cultural providers are also collaborating with regard to outreach services to ensure better coverage in the county. Countywide networks have been established in specific fields such as historical societies.
- The main issue of concern relates to the sustainability of existing facilities and activities. In relation to activities, the cultural sector is dependent on public sector support, particularly FAS schemes. Budgets are under threat. With regard to facilities, there is considerable support for new build capital investment. There is a need to agree on a reasonable level of facilities and to co-ordinate with funders so that the agreement can be implemented. In an ideal world, there would be a transfer of supports to existing facilities.
- A secondary issue relates to the implementation of the Arts Strategy without a dedicated Arts Officer. The South Tipperary Arts Centre may need a more formal mandate and additional resources to carry out this mandate.

Key points in the discussion arising from the presentation included:

- The cultural sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy. The heritage sector attracts 400,000 visitors to the county. The Fleadh Festival alone generated €24 million. The Fleadh also confirmed Cllr O'Brien's key point that there were sufficient facilities already in Clonmel to host such an important event.
- The key challenge for members of the County Development Board is to create a context in which funding can be channeled to the cultural sector in a different way. This will be difficult given that existing schemes are based on legislation or on measures decided at national level.
- The current approach to arts strategy implementation is based on the proven experience of allocating limited resources to the South Tipperary Arts Centre, which has been able to lever three fold additional resources in both voluntary effort and other finance to deliver on the arts strategy. While South Tipperary Co Council would like to have a dedicated Arts Officer, its resources are constrained by a previous Co Council decision based on the county's key cultural asset, its heritage, to deliver a quality museum service in the county. Unless resources are made available from other stakeholders at the CDB table, the current approach in the Arts area, which has been successful, will be maintained.
- Culture makes a huge contribution to quality of life. The inclusion of minority cultures is welcomed by the Board.

- New activities such as the Farmer’s markets and craft fairs are welcomed. The following areas may create a basis for a County Cultural Festival – cider making or equine pursuits. There is also a need for directories of facilities and activities. The MyParish initiative might address this shortcoming. It was also noted that training in relation to festival co-ordination is available through AOIFE. It is important to ensure that festivals deliver cultural objectives other than creating a context for the drinking culture.
- Co-operation with North Tipperary varies. The Historical societies are co-operating. There is also good co-operation in the tourism sector. However, it proved impossible to co-operate in relation to a local sports partnership. The Board recommended that cultural interests continually seek co-operation with North Tipperary.

2. Service integration and co-ordination – Chairs’ input into the performance to date

At the core of the County Development Board’s vision is the need to improve public and community services by service co-ordination and integration.

Four consecutive phases of collaboration can be identified:

Phase 1	Networking	<i>Meet, Talk and Tell</i> (each other what they are doing)
Phase 2	Co-ordination	Meet, Talk and Tell (each other what they are doing) <i>and consider others before they plan/act</i> i.e be aware of mutual complementarity . This phase needs agencies to share in decisions re changes.
Phase 3	Co-operation	Meet, Talk and Tell and Consider Others <i>and jointly plan and see potential for partnership approach</i>
Phase 4	Collaboration	Meet, Talk and Tell, Consider Others, jointly plan and see potential for partnership approach <i>and develop partnership projects with shared vision, risks, responsibilities and structures</i>

Any of the four phases may be appropriate depending on the action. The 62 actions in the county strategy, which have already commenced, are classified as follows:

Programme	Commenced actions	Networking	Co-ordination	Co-operation	Collaboration
Economic	22 of 26	5	2	7-	8
Social	15 of 18	2	2	4	7
Cultural	10 of 12	2	1	5	2
Local Agenda 21	15 of 16	4	5	2	6
Total Actions	62 of 72	11	10	18	23

The chairs of the four CDB implementation groups made brief presentations in advance of a forthcoming NDP evaluation of service co-ordination performance of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Groups

Cllr Brendan Griffin, Chair of the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group, highlighted how he like many other local political representatives had become a convert to the CDB process over the past four years. Initially skeptical, Cllr Griffin now perceived the CDB to be complementary to rather than infringing on the work of the County Council. The CDB operating as a network is able to bring a holistic focus to the development of the county. This is due to the wide level of expertise and skill of Board members and the various bodies they represent. The distilled wisdom of their contributions and the background wealth of research they bring to the table is available in annual reports and meeting reports to all member organizations of the Board.

Seamus Moore, Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, rated the performance of the CDB Social Inclusion structures as being excellent with regard to networking and co-ordination. A major contribution of the process to date has been the involvement of South Tipperary Forum as the county community and voluntary pillar. While the community and voluntary sector have reservations about the process, the CDB process is deemed to be empowering. A continuous challenge remains for the community sector to drill down and get more involvement or at least greater endorsement for the advocacy work of the South Tipperary Forum. While there are some good examples of co-operation and collaboration actions, CDB Board members need to delegate the authority to their CDB sub-group members to enable them to state, depending on the issue being addressed, that their agency/group can make a contribution, that they can make a commitment and that they are prepared to engage in the implementation. The Sub-groups must easily get to the ‘collaboration stage’ if that is the appropriate level with regard to service delivery. At Board level, one weakness is that there has been too much change over of local political representatives.

Cllr Barry O’Brien, Chair of the Cultural Programme Management Group, rated the performance to date of the CDB process in the cultural field as beneficial, particularly in raising awareness and networking. One particular drawback of social partnership is that it cannot work well if it does not have access to specific budgets.

Ned O'Connor, Chair of the Economic Programme Management Group, highlighted the key economic deliverable from the CDB process to date. There is a clear statement of economic strategy and objectives and both the Board and its sub-groups can react quickly to problems and opportunities and also be innovative in terms of planning future actions. However, there are many decisions that will be made, particularly, at national level that are outside CDB control and upon which the CDB has no significant influence. Another challenge is to keep all the stakeholders on board while dealing with a very wide agenda, the specifics of which are often relevant to a smaller group of members. In terms of 2004, the focus at Board meetings should be on the implementation of the County Strategy with reports on how the sub-groups are delivering in relation to each specific action agreed.

3. Other Information

Two new actions were approved by the Board and are now part of the South County Strategy:

Economic Programme. Measure 1.4 Sectoral Strategies. Action 1.4.9 Support the planning and implementation of projects in the Slieve Ardagh area. (Lead Stakeholder: Slieve Ardagh Rural Development).

Social Programme. Measure 2.3 Implementation of specific strategies. Action 2.3.7 Prepare and oversee the implementation of actions plans in response to local reviews of crime, security and anti-social behaviour issues. (Lead Stakeholder: Garda Siochana).

The Department of Education and Science has established a regional office in Waterford. Further to a Government Task Force decision, Ronan Mulhall is the Department of Education and Science representative on the South Tipperary County Development Board.

The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group has endorsed RAPID Plans in Clonmel and Tipperary Town. The Working Group also plans to review the implications of cutbacks in the local development sector.

The Regional Authority response to the CDB submission on the regional planning guidelines was circulated. Concern was expressed that the County Spatial Strategy particularly in regard to decentralization has not yet been accepted by the Regional Authority.