

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Eighteenth MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: September 1, 2003
Members present: 21(70% of members)
Chair: Cllr Sean McCarthy

SUMMARY

Cllr Sean McCarthy was elected as the new chair of South Tipperary County Development Board.

The main priorities emerging from the social inclusion review include the need to focus in the 2004 action plan on service provision for the unemployed; disabled and elderly; the sustaining of services under threat from public cutbacks; to determine a method of accurately measuring homelessness in the county; and to continue the implementation of the actions in the County Social Strategy.

In reporting to the County Development Board, Seamus Moore, Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group highlighted:

- There have been increases in the size of critical target groups in the past year. Unemployment has risen by 6.3%, while those on rent supplements have increased by 5.3%.
- Progress has been made in a number of areas included in the County Social Strategy such as in the provision of childcare facilities, in traveler accommodation and in community participation in the designated RAPID areas.
- Three issues had been prioritized in 2003 (traveler accommodation, early school leaving and anti-social behaviour) and inter-agency working groups are advancing agreed actions.

The County Development Board agreed its submissions to the regional planning guidelines Issues Paper and to the Garda Siochana annual policing plan.

A submission from Slieve Ardagh Rural Development in relation the development of that part of the county was referred to the Economic Programme Management Group.

Annual operation plans for 2003 have been received from South Tipperary County Council and from many of the local development companies. From 2004 these plans will be proofed to ensure compliance with the County Strategy.

1. Social Inclusion Watch

Seamus Moore, Chair, Social Inclusion Measures Working Group presented a social inclusion review. The key points in the presentation were:

- There have been increases in the size of critical target groups in the past year. Unemployment has risen by 6.3%, while those on rent supplements have increased by 5.3%.
- Progress has been made in a number of areas included in the County Social Strategy such as in the provision of childcare facilities, in traveler accommodation and in community participation in the designated RAPID areas.
- Three issues had been prioritized in 2003 (traveler accommodation, early school leaving and anti-social behaviour) and inter-agency working groups are advancing agreed actions. For 2004, there will be a focus on unemployment and disability.
- With tighter resources, and increasing demands on the public purse if unemployment continues to rise, the work of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group and the various action committees that report to it will remain central to the County Development Board's work. There is increasing confidence at Working Group level that co-ordination approaches between public and community service providers will deliver real value in time.
- Some progress had also been made in relation to data sets presented in 2002. More detailed information was available on elderly at risk and on housing lists. But more remains to be done particular in relation to statistics on homelessness. Those groups potentially at risk of social exclusion include:

Target Groups	2002 (data)	2003 (data)	Significant features
Unemployed	3686 (June)	3917 (June)	6.3% increase as against a regional increase of 11%.
Lone Parents	1165	1306	More childcare facilities in place
Travellers	101 (families)	100 (families)	Drop in families living at the side of the road from 15 to 11.
Asylum seekers and refugees	83 (Jan)	52 (Jan)	Numbers in south east relatively low. Migrant worker numbers rising.
Elderly at risk	1504	826	A more detailed risk assessment was carried out since September 2002
Disabled	1421	1353	65 disabled person grants approved in 2003, 418 on the waiting list for approval
Children in care	146	103	111 in foster care
Other Welfare allowances	2667	2559	Numbers in the key rent supplement area actually increased from 950 to 1001.
Smallholder	949	866	

Key points in the discussion arising from the presentation included:

- Addressing social exclusion needs to remain a priority area for the County Development Board. Families on low income are faced with very hard choices in providing for their family needs at a time of price inflation. The scale of the low-income/poverty problem in South Tipperary is large. The longer term solution is education, education and education. But in the short term there is a considerable onus on the Social Inclusion Measure Working Group and its associated committees to deliver real value. The actions agreed in the County Social Strategy must be implemented.
- There has been progress in implementation. The scale and importance of issues being addressed by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group has increased as members trust the process more. The process will take time but all members of the Working Group feel that it is going in the right direction. There is one advantage in limited resources in that it focuses people to be strategic. A lot of implementation in the County Social Strategy can be done without additional money as members utilize the advantage of working together.
- The increase in life expectancy will raise the numbers of elderly considerably in future years. The numbers of elderly requiring care will also increase. It was recommended that the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group also review Elderly Care Service provision during 2004.
- The cutbacks in Community Employment Schemes and in the Social Economy programme are disappointing. There is considerable evidence that those who came off the live register to enter schemes, stayed off the live register. The schemes had also wider social impacts. The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group might also review the fall out of downsizing the schemes and advise if initiatives can be sustained without the state supports.
- There is a need for the Economic Programme Management Group to advise on opportunities for employment in South Tipperary when the Working Group addresses the unemployment issue in 2004. Matching unemployed with opportunities is one of the actions in the County Economic strategy.
- It is critical to determine a method of measuring homelessness if the county is to secure the resources needed to address homelessness.

2. Regional Planning Guidelines

The County Development Board agreed its submission to the regional planning guidelines Issues Paper. The issue of population distribution is perhaps the most critical issue to be addressed in the guidelines. The population targets for gateways and hubs would take all the national population increase over the next twenty years. If investment decisions follow population targets, then South Tipperary could be at risk of losing its current comparative advantage. Another threat posed in the population targets is that

Waterford City has a very small population relative to the population target of 100,000 for a gateway.

It was agreed that the submission from the County Development Board would be strengthened to reflect:

- ✓ Identified areas of comparative advantage and the implications of this advantage in relation to what the regional planning guidelines will ultimately contain
- ✓ The importance of rail as an interregional linkage with other gateways and how the rail service from west to east and east to west can be strengthened
- ✓ Access to Shannon and Cork airports as well as to Waterford airport.
- ✓ Strengthen the role and research capacity in the non-university third level education sector.
- ✓ Articulate all of the County Spatial Strategy in the form of the key demands that South Tipperary wants in the Regional Planning Guidelines. These include proposing that Ballingarrane becomes a strategic development zone; that decentralization is targeted at the second tier of towns; connectivity of both Carrick-on-Suir and Tipperary Town to adjacent gateways; and others elements of the County Economic Strategy seeking to deliver increased economic activity in Cashel and Cahir and in the remoter rural areas as well as upskilling the workforce and growing entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Support the emphasis on water recycling and sequestration credits in the IFA submission.

3. Other Information

Cllr Sean McCarthy is the new Chair of the County Development Board having replaced Cllr Michael Fitzgerald. New members of the County Development Board include: Cllr Tom Ambrose, Deirdre Cowen (Clonmel Community Partnership), Cllr Christy Kinahan and Cllr Pat O'Meara.

The County Development Board also agreed a submission to the Policing Plan requested by the Garda Síochána. The submission reflects the work of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group and the RAPID Area Implementation Teams in reviewing crime and security issues. The submission highlights the unmet needs and gaps in services in the county and proposes a model based on the Local Agenda 21 wheel as to the appropriate level of service at village, town, county town and regional level. It also recommends how the delivery of services can be improved by interagency actions and proposes South Tipperary as a pilot area for a Crime Prevention Partnership.

A submission from Slieve Ardagh Rural Development in relation to the development of that part of the county was referred to the Economic Programme Management Group.

Annual operation plans for 2003 have been received from South Tipperary County Council and from many of the local development companies. From 2004 these plans will be proofed to ensure compliance with the County Strategy.