

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

FOURTEENTH MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: November 4, 2002
 Members present: 20 (69% attendance)
 Chair: Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald.

SUMMARY

The Board carried out a cultural review of the county at its November 2002 meeting following a presentation by Cllr Barry O'Brien, Chair, Cultural Programme Management Group

Objective in County Cultural strategy	Status
Professional Support Officers	Crafts and Heritage Officer in place. Arts Officer currently dependent on 2003 estimates. Sports Officer unlikely in short term.
Enhance cultural provision	Sustainability of existing facilities a major concern. Cultural providers group becoming an important network of the key players in the cultural sector
Inclusion of minority groups	Consultation with the Traveller Support Groups indicating that it is too early to commence formalised actions as the Social Programme actions are in a pre-development phase. Consultations with interests associated with non-national minority groups suggest that English language classes a priority.
Optimise the Tipperary name	There is consensus among the Cultural providers that the way to achieve this objective is that the quality of the cultural product – enhanced cultural provision in South Tipperary will add to the good name of Tipperary.

Outputs of the discussion arising from the presentation included:

- Re-clarifying who culture is for with the main focus on enriching the South Tipperary population

- ❑ Giving practical advice in relation to addressing inclusion issues and emphasis will be placed on an action to include minorities around a County Cultural Week piggybacking on Fleadh 2003.
- ❑ Tipperary SR VEC reaffirming its commitment to press the Irish Sports Council for resources to support a Local Sports Partnership and the development of a County Sports and Recreation Plan.
- ❑ The CDB Chair engaging with Minister Parlon (responsible for heritage) to provide guidance on how a balance can be achieved between making heritage accessible without creating sizeable sterile zones for landowners.

The County Development Board adopted amendments to the County Strategy as follows

- ❑ New Action 1.1.4 Develop and implement an imaging strategy for South Tipperary and co-ordinate the marketing campaigns of individual sectors and address gaps in the economic promotion of the county.
- ❑ New Action 1.2.4 Promotion campaign to regional emigrants with a particular focus on graduates and on the US and Britain.
- ❑ New Action 1.4.7 Research project on best practice in economic development of areas distant from good employment centres and how this might be applied to the Slieve Felim CLAR Area.
- ❑ New Action 1.5.5 Creation of a regional network of IT enterprise centres to promote an increase in technology based jobs in these centres.
- ❑ Amendment to Action 2.2.1 – Develop school completion plans and implement the school completion plans in Clonmel and Tipperary Town.
- ❑ New Action 4.2.6. Establish think tank on actions/policies to promote volunteering.

Under Agenda Item 5 the Board will carry out a Cultural Watch and review the implementation of the Cultural Programme in the County Strategy.

Further CLAR funds (€87,830.92) have been approved under this initiative to support a Town and Village Renewal Project in Hollyford, improvement works to the Clonoulty Public Water Supply Scheme and the upgrading of two Class III (Cul de sac) roads.

Interim RAPID Plans for Carrick on Suir, Clonmel and Tipperary Town have been adopted and forwarded by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group to the national authority.

A €2.4 million valued community led and inter-agency supported Information Technology Centre project is now open for business in Tipperary Town.

1. Cultural Review

Cllr Barry O'Brien Chair, Cultural Programme Management Group presented a cultural review. The key points in the presentation were:

- ❖ Working definition of culture being used by the County Development includes the following sectors – arts, crafts, heritage, sport and recreation. Excluding sport and recreation, there were over 500,000 attendees/visitors to cultural events/sites in 2001.
- ❖ The arts sector is perceived to be relatively strong but uncoordinated. There are 40 dedicated groups working in the arts, most of which are located in the main towns. There is a good foundation of facilities, over 37 venues, but there are gaps in relation to performance space in Clonmel and Carrick on Suir. There has been considerable investment in the sector by the County Council, FAS, Tipperary LEADER Group and Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development. An Arts Strategy has recently been adopted by South Tipperary Co Council. There is unanimity among the Cultural Providers, not just the Arts constituency, that a dedicated Arts Officer will be required to ensure that the Arts Strategy is successfully implemented.
- ❖ The Crafts Sector is well organised. A County Craft Strategy has been agreed and the Manager of the Regional Crafts Centre in Cahir is guiding the implementation of the Crafts Strategy.
- ❖ South Tipperary has been blessed with considerable heritage assets. The Duchas managed Rock of Cashel and Cahir Castle draw huge numbers of visitors. A Heritage Officer has been recruited by the County Council and the action to prepare the County Heritage Plan is underway with the setting up of a Heritage Forum.
- ❖ The Sports and Recreation Sectors have considerable activity and are growing. A major disappointment to the Programme Management Group is that efforts to link up with North Tipperary in relation to developing a County Wide Sports Partnership have not been successful.

❖ Progress in relation to the key actions in the County Strategy

Objective	Status
Professional Support Officers	Crafts and Heritage Officer in place. Arts Officer currently dependent on 2003 estimates. Sports Officer unlikely in short term.
Enhance cultural provision	Sustainability of existing facilities a major concern Cultural providers group becoming an important network of the key players in the cultural sector
Inclusion of minority groups	Consultation with the Traveller Support Groups indicating that it is too early to commence formalised actions as the Social Programme actions are in a pre-development phase. Consultations with interests associated with non-national minority groups suggest that English language classes a priority. Cultural sector seeks guidance as it is not able to progress this objective at present
Optimise the Tipperary name	There is consensus among the Cultural providers that the way to achieve this objective is that the quality of the cultural product – enhanced cultural provision in South Tipperary will add to the good name of Tipperary. The concept of a Cultural week is currently being considered.

Key points in the discussion arising from the presentation included:

- It is necessary to re-clarify who culture is primarily for – the enrichment of the South Tipperary population or as an entertainment package which attracts visitors to the county. The enrichment of the South Tipperary population is clearly the focus of the County Cultural Strategy and if the cultural product improves the quality of the life of the local population, it will almost certainly be attractive to visitors, whether they be tourists or those coming to invest in or work in the county.
- An agreed definition of culture is important in that many associate culture with solely arts. A particular challenge for all involved in the Cultural Sectors is how it communicates an agreed definition of culture to the almost 80,000 residents of South Tipperary.
- While culture can enhance quality of life, parents play a very important role in determining if children access activities or not. In some cases, parents options

may be restricted by financial constraints. Social inclusion policies by cultural providers are important in that regard. But in other cases, parents may have had negative or no valuable experience of culture previously and there is a challenge to meaningfully promote the benefits of engagement with culture to these parents. Another constraint in relation to access to culture are the unmet transport needs, especially those articulated for one-eighth of the South Tipperary population in the recent County Rural Transport audit. Disability access is also an issue in relation to engagement with culture, not alone for physically disabled residents but also for many senior citizens.

- Culture is the cinderella of almost all of the activities associated with the County Strategy. Some cultural products are very strong and are commercially viable. But many products, for example heritage centres, can never have a stand alone quality to be commercially viable. The Cultural Sectors are largely run by volunteers, many of whose groups are struggling. There are clear economic benefits but the sector has fundamental structural weaknesses. The Cultural Programme Management Group clearly recognise that when they state in their wider paper that events are more important than facilities, but that many cultural providers are under considerable pressure to maintain facilities. A particular challenge for the public sector and local development sector interests around the table is how can significant funding to the cultural sector be mainstreamed and delivered in a way to primarily support events rather than facility development.
- The selection of Clonmel for Fleadh 2003 gives the Cultural Programme Management Group a good opportunity to build a cultural week around it, especially if events are scheduled in other towns as well as Clonmel.
- The economic benefit of a good cultural product base in the county arising from tourism markets is severely restricted by the lack of accommodation. By contrast, Kilkenny has been able to build a strong tourism package on its arts and heritage assets. This has brought significant economic benefits but has also created a major challenge for rural tourism interests in Kilkenny because the city is the magnet in relation to staying overnight. The rail link has also been important to the growth of Kilkenny City's tourism.
- Even if the first efforts have been rebuffed, the Cultural Sector has still an important role to play in relation to the Boards objectives centering on inclusion of minorities. This action should not solely be the prerogative of the members of Social Programme Management Group. In responding to the need for English language classes, the VEC is about to resource classes for 30 asylum seekers in Carrick on Suir. The Irish Vocational Education Association has also produced a booklet on the integration of asylum seekers. The South Eastern Health Board is currently assessing the impact of a Traveller Cultural Awareness Course for service providers. If the review is positive this course could also be directed at cultural service providers in the future. In respect of migrant workers, even though their primary objective is making money, sight should not be lost of the

- fact that as in the case of previous generations of Irish emigrants, some of the migrant workers just drink because there are no other free time opportunities for them. The cultural sector might consider building on local initiative such as that of the Lions Club in Cahir in facilitating literacy tuition. The proposed County Cultural Week, especially if linked with Fleadh 2003 is an excellent opportunity to showcase the traditional music heritage of the minority groups located in South Tipperary.
- Rightly or wrongly, the arts sector is perceived by some as exclusive. One of the challenges for the arts sector is to increase the number of adults engaging with it, such as taking appreciation classes. Given the arts sector's make up of largely small and under-resourced groups as well as priority objectives such as improving the quality of arts provision/engagement of their own members, it is difficult to see how this challenge can be met without the support of an Arts Officer.
 - The absence of an Arts Officer is clearly seen as a critical weakness by regional bodies who are in a position to compare the arts sectors in different counties in the south east. Where in place, the Arts Officer has been the essential piece on infrastructure and the catalyst for bringing people together to meet both quality and participation challenges. The Arts Officer also provides credibility in linking the arts sector with other interests, particular state agencies and local development companies. Members of the County Development Board need to work closely with the lead agency, South Tipperary Co Council, to ensure that the Arts Officer deficit is overcome in 2003.
 - South Tipperary has significant heritage assets but many of them are inaccessible because of lack of information and signposting and site presentation. From a landowner's perspective there are concerns about insurance and also a fear that if a site is enhanced, it will create a sterile zone and block agricultural development.
 - The County Cultural Strategy objective relating to the appointment of professional support officers is really proving itself in the heritage sector. The Heritage Officer is providing key information and support services which should result in Tipperary rising from 22nd place in the county league of heritage grant beneficiaries.
 - There are opportunities in the heritage sector in terms of increasing awareness and achieving economic benefits. The County Museum is to be complemented on hosting the Derrynaflan exhibition. Summer colleges could be considered to encourage the use of our native language. People and how they behave are also a source of county heritage. Can the county proactively maintain aspects of heritage that are in danger of being lost by national decisions? For instance, can South Tipperary County Council maintain the existing traditional means of counting votes rather than transferring over to computer voting and counting?

- Traditional skills also need to formally included under the crafts dimension when defining culture.
- Tipperary SR VEC has been formally informed that the North Tipperary Local Sports Partnership is not in a position to work towards a County Sports partnership at present. The reason for this is perceived to be lack of resources. Members expressed the view that action is needed in South Tipperary as there is a huge task in implementing a Sports and Recreation for all strategy.

In summarising the discussion, Cllr Barry O’Brien thanked the members for their contribution to the Cultural Watch and in particular:

- ❑ Re-clarifying who culture is for with the main focus on enriching the South Tipperary population
- ❑ Giving practical advice in relation to addressing inclusion issues – the notes of the Cultural Watch will be circulated to cultural sector and emphasis will be placed on an action to include minorities around a County Cultural Week piggybacking on Fleadh 2003.
- ❑ Tipperary SR VEC reaffirming its commitment to press the Irish Sports Council for resources to support a Local Sports Partnership and the development of a County Sports and Recreation Plan.
- ❑ The CDB Chair engaging with Minister Parlon (responsible for heritage) to provide guidance on how a balance can be achieved between making heritage accessible without creating sizeable sterile zones for landowners.

2. Implementation and amendments to the County Strategy

Economic Programme

The following additions to the County Strategy presented by Mr Toss Hayes on behalf of the Economic Programme Management Group were adopted by the County Development Board.

- ✓ Measure 1.1 Management of the Economic Programme - Action 1.1.4 Develop and implement an imaging strategy for South Tipperary and co-ordinate the marketing campaigns of individual sectors and address gaps in the economic promotion of the county.

Co-ordinating partner: Economic Programme Management Group

- ✓ Measure 1.2 Matching Skills with Jobs – Action 1.2.4 Promotion campaign to regional emigrants with a particular focus on graduates and on the US and Britain

Co-ordinating partner: Enterprise Ireland (Regional Action).

- ✓ Measure 1.4 Matching locations with opportunities - Action 1.4.7 Research project on best practice in development of areas distant from good employment centres and how this might be applied to the Slieve Felim CLAR Area

Co-ordinating Partner: Tipperary Institute.

- ✓ Measure 1.5 Sectoral Strategies – Action 1.5.5 Creation of a regional network of IT enterprise centres to promote an increase in technology based jobs in these centres

Co-ordinating Partner: Enterprise Ireland (Regional action).

The Economic Programme Management Group is also preparing a competitiveness review of South Tipperary for the County Development Board at its April 2003 meeting. The focus is to be on selecting indicators which impact significantly on the disposable income for South Tipperary families. It was accepted that some national and regional indicators are needed but that the emphasis on local indicators should be on creating baseline figures for key elements – number of public sector jobs, image being promoted of (South) Tipperary, attractiveness of urban centres within the county.

The Management Group is satisfied with the general level of progress in relation to actions in the Economic Programme and proposes to maintain twice annual review meetings on actions.

Social Programme

The following amendment to the County Strategy presented by Mr Seamus Moore on behalf of the Social Programme Management Group were adopted by the County Development Board.

- ✓ Measure 2.2 – Amendment to Action 2.2.1 – Develop school completion plans and implement the school completion plans in Clonmel and Tipperary Town

Co-ordinating partners: Clonmel Technical Institute and St Ailbe's School.

There has been a delay in the implementation of some actions because of budgetary issues but the Management Group is satisfied with general progress in relation to the programme. The group agreed that the major actions should not commence until co-ordinators are physically in place. Resources for the co-ordinator of the disability action in Cashel had been approved by the South Eastern Health Board and that action will commence early next year.

The Social Programme Management Group also identified opportunities for linkage with actions on other programmes – rural travelers project with the rural transport initiative; and the comhairle na Oig action with getting a youth perspective on the review of facilities and services actions in Local agenda 21.

It was agreed that all lead agencies should forward at least a month prior to the next meeting the action updates. The updates could be circulated prior (as well as being on the web site) to the meeting. The action updates should flag issues or blockages to ways forward so that members could reflect on solutions prior to the meeting. This would allow for extra time to discuss/brainstorm on new ideas or gaps in the Social Programme

Local Agenda 21 Programme

The following addition to the County Strategy presented by Cllr Brendan Griffin on behalf of the Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group were adopted by the County Development Board.

- ✓ Measure 4.2 – Key Support services: Action 4.2.6. Establish think tank on actions/policies to promote volunteering.

Coordinating Partner: Tipperary Institute.

Responses of the Management Group to the question ‘*What does LA 21 mean to you?*’ included:

- sustainability;
- integration of resources;
- partnership;
- consultation;
- educational opportunity;
- access to services;
- social inclusion;
- community development;
- environment.

The Management Group also identified additional areas to be considered for future inclusion in the Local agenda 21 programme:

- Need for a resource (handbook/leaflet/web site) giving details of all training resources available to county.
 - Possible Action owner: forthcoming Local Adult Education Board
- Need for Adult Education Guidance Officer
 - VEC requested to look at this issue again. VEC has indicated that it will shortly be appointing a Community Education Facilitator but that the role of the Facilitator is quite different from the one-to-one service provided by a Guidance Officer.

- Need for A Women's Council in the County:
 - South Tipperary Platform requested to look at this issue
- Need for a structure of community representation at local level for the county.
 - County Development Board sub group will formally report on this issue
- Adoption of an Oxfam Fair Trade protocol

3. Other Information

New members of the County Development Board include: Alan Curtis (Clonmel Community Partnership) and Fionnuala McGeever (Tipperary SR Vocational Education Committee).

Further funds (€107,830.92) have been approved under this initiative:

- ✓ Town and Village Renewal Project in Hollyford (Supported also by the local community, Tipperary LEADER Group and South Tipperary Co Council) (CLÁR funding of €10,000)
- ✓ Clonoulty Public Water Supply Scheme (CLÁR funding of €47,830.92)
- ✓ Three Class III (Cul de sac) Roads (CLÁR funding of €50,000).

To date a total of €225,478.30 CLÁR funding has been allocated to projects in South Tipperary. Two of the road projects involving €60,000 CLÁR funding have been completed. All the remaining projects are scheduled for completion by the end of November 2002.

The Social Inclusion Committee met on October 11 and November 4 and has approved the three RAPID Interim Plans in Carrick on Suir, Clonmel and Tipperary Town.

A second Rural transport service provided via 'Ring a Link' has been launched in South West Tipperary.

A €2.4 million valued community led and inter-agency supported project is now in operation in Tipperary Town. More than 5000 square feet of the Tipperary Information Technology Centre's 13,350 square feet has already been leased. This project initiated by the West Tipperary Enterprise Group received support from Enterprise Ireland, Tipperary SR County Enterprise Board, FAS, South Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Credit Union, South East Regional authority and also significant private sector support.