

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Eleventh MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: April 8, 2002
Members present: 25 (86%)
Chair: Cllr. Denis Bourke.

SUMMARY

South Tipperary County Development Board formally adopted the South Tipperary County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. The County Strategy has also been democratically endorsed by South Tipperary County Council at its March monthly meeting. Congratulations on achieving the first milestone set by the Government were communicated by video from Mr Noel Dempsey, Minister of the Environment and Local Government.

Following its adoption by the County Development Board, the County Strategy was formally launched to an invited audience by Mr Noel Davern, Minister of State with responsibility for Food. Minister Davern congratulated the Board on already implementing 23 of the 62 actions included in the South Tipperary County Strategy and conveyed the Government's continued commitment to supporting the

At the formal launch, the chair of the County Development Board (Cllr Denis Bourke) and the Chairs of four programme management groups (Ned O'Connor, Seamus Moore, Cllr Barry O'Brien and Cllr Brendan Griffin) outlined the basis for the economic, social, cultural and local agenda 21 programmes and also reported on progress regarding the implementation of the Strategy.

At the Board meeting, Seamus Moore, Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, reported that the Working Group had agreed policies in relation to the establishment of RAPID Area Implementation Teams in Carrick on Suir, Clonmel and Tipperary Town.

Future meetings:

South Tipperary County Development Board will meet (at 6.00 pm) on June 10, September 2 and November 4 in Knocklofty House Hotel

Programme Management Groups:

The Economic Group will meet on April 16 at 4.00 pm (County Museum).

The Social Group will meet on April 23 at 2.00 pm

The Local Agenda 21 Group will meet on April 30 at 2.00 pm

The Cultural Group will meet on May 7 at 2.00pm.

1. Speech of Mr Noel Davern TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at the launch of the South Tipperary County Strategy on April 8, 2002.

Cathaoirleach Bourke, members of the Oireachtas, councillors, members of the South Tipperary County Development Board, fellow guests, I'm delighted to be on my home turf today to launch South Tipperary's Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. I had the honour of launching the South Tipperary County Development Board in February 2000 and, on behalf of the Government and the people of South Tipperary, I thank the Board, both present and retired members and the organisations and sectors you represent, and I also thank your executive, for your diligence and for your commitment to consensus in the process of preparing the County Strategy over the past two years.

I think it is fair to say that this is the first time that just about everybody involved in providing public services in South Tipperary has got round the table to plan the way forward for the whole county. And not just State agencies, but also the social partners, the local development agencies and the community at large.

The South Tipperary County Development Board has now brought forward its vision of South Tipperary for the next ten years. Your Strategy for the economic social and cultural development of the county will be the blueprint for the delivery of all services at local level. What should that mean for the people of South Tipperary?

As I see it, it should mean local agencies pulling together for the good of all the community. It should mean agencies thinking about how they can provide their services in a way that ties in with services provided by other bodies. For the local communities, it should mean a common approach by agencies to service delivery and tackling problems. Critically, it should mean less confusion and more coherence for the men and women in the street.

I've had the opportunity to read through your Strategy before today's launch. Even in my first read of the document, it is clear that the Board has managed to capture the strengths and weaknesses of the county; and the challenges and opportunities which face South Tipperary. Fundamentally, however, the Board, through the Strategy, maps the way forward and identifies who needs to do what and by when, in order to implement the Strategy. This is one of the things that sets the Strategy apart from other comparable exercises in the past.

Implementation is the key. If I've heard my colleague Noel Dempsey say this once, I've heard him say it a thousand times. The degree to which the agencies represented here deliver on this Strategy has the potential to make a huge difference for the better, for the people of South Tipperary. A number of things should help implementation.

Firstly, the Government is committed to the CDB process. Secondly, right around the country, in every city and county, CDBs are producing their own Strategies with the support and backing of the same agencies that are represented here. Thirdly, the social partners have signed up to the process. And fourthly, the Inter-Departmental Task Force, chaired by Noel Dempsey continues in existence to oversee the process. I know the Task Force had an all day meeting in January, at which the representatives of front-line agencies also attended. The purpose of the day was to set out a route map of the way forward both for the CDBs and the Task Force itself. As you now move into the implementation phase, there will be challenges for all of you who have signed up to the Strategy, to find ways of sustaining the local coalition you have now forged. While a summary of the stakeholder buy-in is included in the published strategy, I note that detailed responses by all the member bodies represented on the South Tipperary County Development Board is published on your website.

Cathaoirleach, it gives me great pleasure to formally launch the South Tipperary County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. I congratulate you once again on rising to the first main challenge of publishing your Strategy. There are many challenges still ahead and I wish you every success in achieving the targets you have set in this Strategy. And I am delighted to hear from the chairs of your Programme Management Groups that twenty-three of the sixty-two agreed actions in the Strategy are already being implemented.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTY STRATEGY BY CLLR DENIS
BOURKE, CHAIR OF THE SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Minister, public representatives, guests, fellow board members: It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the County Development Board to welcome you all here to the County Museum this evening for the formal launch by Minister Davern of the South Tipperary County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development.

I wish to formally acknowledge the contribution of present and former County Development Board members, whose names are listed on page 22, for their work in responding to the Government request to prepare a County Strategy for South Tipperary. I also wish to acknowledge the leadership of my predecessors as chairs of the County Development Board during the past two years, Cllr Pat Norris and Cllr Tom Wood.

In preparing a County Strategy for the period 2002-2011, the County Development Board has paid special attention to areas where co-operation among local agencies would deliver better services to the people of South Tipperary. The Board reached consensus on a shared vision for the future: South Tipperary will have an inclusive economy. It will be a place where all families and individuals can prosper. South Tipperary will balance the demands of a vibrant economy with the demands of a healthy and sustainable environment. Eight themes emerged from an analysis of the current situation of the county and from widespread consultation with all the sectors in the preparation of the County Strategy. These eight themes, listed on Page 1, have been combined into four programmes economic, social, cultural and local agenda 21. Local agenda 21 is about laying foundations for a future sustainable society.

The four programmes include sixty two agreed actions designed to meet the targets set and I am pleased to report Minister that the sectors represented on the County Development Board are already implementing twenty three of these actions. In fact detailed information on the buy-in of sectors represented on the board to the County Strategy is given on our website.

A Programme Management Group has been established to oversee the implementation of each of the four programmes. In a few moments the Chair of each Management Group will brief you on their specific programme. From the Board perspective, these Management Groups are expected to review progress in implementing the actions already agreed and to secure further consensus on new actions over the ten year period of the County Strategy.

Minister, in meeting the challenge laid down by the Government, I am pleased to inform you that South Tipperary County Development Board has designed a strategy, not alone to meet the present needs of the county, but a strategy which is robust enough to accommodate whatever challenges and opportunities the county will encounter over the next decade.

3. PRESENTATION ON THE COUNTY ECONOMIC STRATEGY BY NED O'CONNOR, CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GROUP

The main objectives of the Economic Programme are to build consensus on a realistic economic development policy for the county and to improve the competitiveness of South Tipperary in attracting investment, growing businesses, and increasing employment both in existing and new enterprises.

Within the County Strategy, South Tipperary has been divided into two economic zones:

The centre, south and south east of the county influenced by Clonmel and also including Carrick on Suir, Fethard, Cashel and Cahir has been relatively successful in creating and sustaining jobs. The main measures and actions proposed for this part of the county include:

- ✓ To fill available job opportunities by improving the skills of the South Tipperary workforce. FAS is leading a pilot action seeking to match skills and jobs in the Carrick on Suir area to complement the implementation of the Carrick on Suir Jobs Strategy
- ✓ To support the process of finalizing and implementing the Ballingarrane Master Plan. As most of you are aware, South Tipperary County Council has made a strategic investment in the purchase of lands to the north of Clonmel. A master plan is currently being prepared to ensure that this investment substantially adds to the economic infrastructure of the county.
- ✓ To co-operate in the provision of broadband ducting in the main towns in the county and between the main towns in the South East. The South Eastern Regional Authority has already been successful in sourcing funding from the National Development Plan for phase one of this objective which will roll out broadband ducting to the county town of Clonmel. Phase two envisages a further roll out of broadband infrastructure in Carrick on Suir and Cashel.

The second economic zone in South Tipperary includes areas more distant from Clonmel such as West Tipperary and the Slieve Ardagh region. These areas have been experiencing a shortage of employment opportunities due to difficulties in creating and sustaining jobs. For these areas, the main focus of the

County Economic Strategy is on developing indigenous businesses; on attracting larger industries by improving the infrastructure and also on maximizing these areas proximity of place to economic centres outside the county. The measures and actions proposed for these parts of the county include:

- ✓ A local development company network is co-ordinating an interagency approach to supporting micro enterprises which includes significant public and local community investment in enterprise centres. In the greater Slieve Ardagh area, enterprise centres have been built in Drangan and Ballingarry and provision is currently being made for a childcare facility within the enterprise area in Ballingarry.
- ✓ TEAGASC has initiated a pilot action in the West Tipperary area targeting the under employed rural population in terms of generating alternative sources of income and accessing off-farm employment.
- ✓ The County Information and Communications Technology Strategy is being implemented with the support of the Tipperary Business. Phase II of the Broadband Infrastructure roll out will also impact on Tipperary Town.

In total 19 actions will be implemented in the first years of the County Economic Strategy. Seven of the actions have already commenced reflecting the commitment and buy in of the stakeholders to the Strategy.

The Economic Programme Management Group meets later this month to begin the process of overseeing the implementation of the County Economic Strategy. The Management Group will assess the South Tipperary economy on an annual basis and this assessment will be carried in future County Development Board annual reports.

On a final note I wish to thank my predecessor Toss Hayes and his colleagues on the Economic Working Group for their contribution in helping the County Development reach consensus on a County Economic Strategy.

4. PRESENTATION ON THE COUNTY SOCIAL STRATEGY BY SEAMUS MOORE, CHAIR OF THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GROUP

In preparing the County Social Strategy, there was significant consultation and analyses of the social situation of the county undertaken by eight sectoral groups which looked at community development, housing, education and youth development, health issues, income adequacy, unemployment, childcare, and transport. There was consistency in the recommendations of the sectoral groups which have not alone impacted on the Social Programme but also influenced actions in the other three programmes.

As presented in the County Strategy, the Social Programme aims to enable people who feel excluded from society to participate more in community life. The main focus of the programme is on areas with high numbers of socially excluded individuals and also on specific target groups who have particular needs such as early school leavers, people with disabilities, members of the Travelling Community, the elderly, and refugees and asylum seekers.

Where children, young people and their families deal with multiple disadvantage, the evidence shows that there is a need for multi-dimensional solutions to these complex situations. Alliances among various organizations offer the most effective way of solving these problems.

A main objective within the Social Programme is to encourage organizations to change from a singular to a holistic approach in correcting social exclusion, particularly in the priority target areas and groups. The Social Programme is also supportive of all children, their families and communities and in encouraging an improvement in the work environment to support a better family lifestyle. Some key actions already being implemented include:

- ✓ Implementation of a strategic plan to provide better educational opportunities led by Clonmel Community Partnership
- ✓ Planning for an integrated family resource centre in Carrick on Suir

- ✓ Networking (for example): of community development projects focusing on local policy issues facilitated by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs; of the Local Action Network on violence against women facilitated by the South Eastern Health Board.
- ✓ Agreement on a County Childcare Strategy and implementation of an action plan arising from it.
- ✓ Preparing the ground for the implementation of the RAPID programme led by the Social Inclusion Measures Group.

In total 16 actions will be implemented in the first years of the County Social Strategy. Seven of the actions have already commenced reflecting the commitment and buy in of the stakeholders to the Strategy.

The Social Programme Management Group meets later this month to begin the process of overseeing the implementation of the County Social Strategy. The Management Group will carry out annual reviews on the effectiveness of the Social Programme and seek to correct impediments to the participation of socially excluded individuals and groups in economic, social and cultural activity in the County. The Management Group along with its counterparts will also assess the impact of the measures and actions especially on improving equality and alleviating poverty.

Finally on behalf of the Board I also wish to thank my predecessor Oliver Clancy, and all our colleagues on the various Social Inclusion Working Groups and sub-groups, many of whom are with us this evening, for their enormous contribution to the preparation of the Social Programme.

5. PRESENTATION ON THE COUNTY CULTURAL STRATEGY BY CLLR BARRY O'BRIEN,
CHAIR OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GROUP

Exposure to a culture that supports creative development is an important indicator of the well-being of a local community and of a county. For all of us, whether we are participants or spectators, access to arts, crafts heritage, sport and recreation gives us a better quality of life.

Cultural interests representing the arts sector, the crafts sector, the heritage sector and the sport and recreation sector volunteered considerable time and effort into helping the County Development Board prepare the County Cultural Strategy. All four sectors agreed that there is a need for co-ordination, describing the cultural situation of South Tipperary as a jigsaw that needs to be put together. Other objectives in the strategy include the celebration of cultural difference and the inclusion of minority groups in the cultural provision of South Tipperary as well as increasing participation and attendances across all four cultural sectors.

The measures highlighted on page 12 reflect the consensus among cultural interests on the way forward.

Considerable progress has been made on Measure 3.2. Professional support is already available to the crafts sector from the Regional Crafts Centre and to the heritage sectors from South Tipperary County Council. The County Arts Strategy is currently being reviewed and a new Arts Strategy is likely to be adopted later this year by South Tipperary County Council. Tipperary South Riding Vocational Education Committee is leading the bid for Local Sports Partnership resources and a Sports Officer for South Tipperary.

The County Development Board is also grateful for the support of South Tipperary Arts Centre, the Clonmel Travellers Action Group and the Tipperary Town Rural Travellers Project for agreeing to lead actions on celebrating minority cultures.

In all, twelve actions have been agreed as part of the County Cultural Strategy. Two of these actions are already being implemented and the others are at the planning stage. The Cultural Programme Management Group will oversee the linkage between the County Cultural Strategy and the Local Agenda 21 strategy within Measure 3.4. Already, many of the main cultural providers within the County have outreach services.

The Cultural Programme Management Group meets next month to begin the process of overseeing the implementation of the County Cultural Strategy. The Management Group will conduct annual reviews on the costs and benefits of cultural provision and also seek to promote joint cultural initiatives with the North Tipperary County Development Board.

Again on behalf the Board I wish to thank my predecessor John Dalton and his colleagues on the Cultural Working Group for their contribution in helping the County Development reach consensus on a County Cultural Strategy.

6. PRESENTATION ON THE COUNTY LOCAL AGENDA 21 STRATEGY BY CLLR BRENDAN GRIFFIN, CHAIR OF THE LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GROUP

As Cathaoirleach Bourke has already mentioned, Agenda 21 is a long term programme geared at laying foundations for a future sustainable society. Sustainable development has been defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. In preparing a County Strategy that would be consistent with the above sentiment, South Tipperary County Development Board integrated the themes of protection of the environment, provision of services, improvement of facilities, and community development.

A major objective is to reach consensus on the standard of facilities and services at the different levels of household, village, small town, county town and region. A draft set of services and facilities is listed in the Local Agenda 21 wheel on the inside of the back cover of the County Strategy. A key goal of the South Tipperary Local agenda 21 programme is to plan a strategy that links facility development and service infrastructure at the five levels highlighted in the Local Agenda 21 wheel.

There are a number of crosscutting issues relating to a Local Agenda 21 strategy including: access to information and referral services; local area planning; transport provision and local community involvement in decision making processes.

In regard to the latter issue, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the South Tipperary Platform to the preparation of the County Strategy and in ensuring local community representation on both County Development Board and other public body structures in South Tipperary. The South Tipperary Platform along with the Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development Group and the South East Regional Authority have been at the forefront of initiatives with regard to providing viable transport choices for the people of South Tipperary. Another network, also containing voluntary bodies, the County Tipperary Citizens Information Services Steering Group, has prepared a plan to facilitate access to information and referral services, while the Tipperary LEADER Group is leading an action to develop templates for integrated local area plans.

In all, fifteen actions have been agreed as part of the County Local Agenda 21 Strategy. Seven of these actions are already being implemented.

The Local Agenda 21 Programme Management Group will conduct an annual review of the requisite services and facilities at the various spatial levels identified in the Local Agenda 21 wheel. It will also oversee the implementation of agreed actions in relation to information services, transport, waste reduction, accident prevention, community inclusion and local area planning.

On a final note I wish to thank my predecessor Michael Hanly and his colleagues on the Rural Development Advisory Group for their contribution in helping the County Development reach consensus on a range on local agenda 21 issues.