

# TIPPERARY SOUTH RIDING COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

## SIXTH MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: February 5, 2001  
Members present: 22 (79% attendance)  
Chair: Cllr. Tom Wood.

### SUMMARY

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board focused on the development of a vision for South Tipperary at its February 2001 meeting. Presentations were made on the political, social partner, territorial and integration dimensions of the vision. The main points arising included:

- ✓ Sustainable employment and a focus on centers of excellence in creating wealth
- ✓ Retention of the community and voluntary spirit and a focus on getting the perspectives of young people (who will deliver much of the vision)
- ✓ A more tolerant society accepting of diversity
- ✓ Each organisation/sector takes ownership of the process of preparing and implementing the County Strategy.

Cllr Patrick Downey, Cashel Urban District Council, is the Urban nominee onto the County Development Board for 2001. Cllr Downey replaces Cllr Denis Leahy, Tipperary Urban District Council.

A media campaign is being prepared for mid February to publicise the work carried out by the County Development Board to date and to seek an input from the general public into the development of the County Strategy. The promotion campaign is timed to coincide with and support a wider consultation process by the Board's working groups.

The audit of services arising from the protocols agreed by the Social Inclusion Measures Group is being completed. This information is to be placed on a website before April 30, 2001. Tipperary (South Riding) Co Council has sought tenders from a limited number of consultants for the development of a CDB website which will include information on social inclusion measures and where they apply in the County.

The Rural Development Group met on December 13, 2000 to review the National Roads Proposals as they applied to South Tipperary.

The new information system to support the development of the County Strategy (database integrated with mapping software) has been installed in County Hall and the 'manipulated data' will be made available to Working Groups as required.

## **1. Board input into a Vision for the future of South Tipperary**

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board focused on the development of a vision for South Tipperary at its February 2001 meeting. Four members of the Board gave specific perspectives on their vision for the future, prior to the Board addressing two strategic questions -

- What kind of place would we like the county to be in 2010 to live and work in
- How should it differ from now?

**Cllr Brendan Griffin presented urban and political perspectives** on the vision for the future. His key points included:

The key difference in approaching the future is the acceptance both by urban authorities and by politicians generally of a partnership and holistic approach to the way business is done. For example, in preparing the Tipperary Town Development Plan in the 2000 and 2001 period, the Urban District Council consulted widely and have been influenced by the socio-economic strategy prepared by Tipperary Integrated Resource Development and its partners, the work of the West Tipperary Enterprise Group, the development plans of adjoining local authorities (Tipperary SR Co Council and Limerick Co Council), national policy statements such as the White Paper on Rural Development, and European and international policy statements such as those on sustainable development.

A key difficulty for both urban authorities and for politicians generally is that we operate in an environment where resources are limited and where we have to make hard choices. Initially the partnership approach was rejected by politicians who felt aggrieved that local development companies could deal with development which had broad public acceptance at a time when the local authorities had to work on very difficult issues such as waste management and traveler accommodation. However, the councilors have responded positively to the entire 'Better Local Government' process and are now fully committed to partnership and holistic approaches aimed at improving South Tipperary and, from an urban perspective, the towns of the county.

A vision for urban areas would include sustainable employment. Employment is the key factor that governs the stability of the population. With population comes services and access to facilities such as cultural facilities which enhance the quality of life.

A second part of the urban vision is to ensure that there is adequate housing for the population and that there is a good mix of public-private housing. An improved housing mix will be a challenge over the next ten years as family breakdowns increase, both spouses will need access to housing.

Other aspects of the vision that are important include: retention of the great community spirit in urban areas; improvement of traffic congestion as the main towns are by-passed; good social and cultural infrastructure in each town.

**Seamus Moore (South Eastern Health Board) presented co-ordination and state agency perspectives** on the vision for the future. His key points included:

From a co-ordination perspective, there is a major challenge to be addressed in moving from the design of the County Strategy to implementation of the County Strategy. In terms of achieving any vision for the future, three groups need to be convinced that the County Development Board can make a difference.

The first group is ourselves as Board members and it is fair to say that the process of designing the county strategy is working well to date.

The second group includes the organizations and sectors we represent. We have a challenge to ensure that the work of the County Development Board the work is kept on the agenda of the policy making meetings of our organizations/sectors. The County Strategy needs to enhance the individual work of all the bodies represented. It will give us an opportunity to address our own core work but in a more holistic way by being linked in terms of overall strategy and knowledge of what other agencies are doing. It is the responsibility of board members to ensure that their organisations' plans dovetail with the County Strategy and vice versa. We need to be **thinking now** how we will get the County Strategy endorsed by all our organizations and that resources will be dedicated to its implementation. As well as carrying out each of our individual core tasks, our organizations need to be commit resources to holistic and co-ordinated approaches.

The third group we need to convince are our organizations/sectors clients. The County Strategy must add value to their lives.

My vision of the future includes the following. Each organisation/sector takes ownership of the process of preparing and implementing the County Strategy. The decision makers in our organizations are briefed and have brought into the CDB process. All of us board members have a mandate from our organizations/sectors to deliver not just good will but proofs of the commitment. Finally, that there are stronger links between the organizations represented on the CDB and especially between the state agencies represented.

**Tim Shanahan (South Tipperary Voluntary Community Group Platform) presented sub-county and social partner perspectives** on the vision for the future. His key points included:

The future has already arrived. The community sector, along with the other social partners) is recognized as an equal and valued partner on the County Development Board and other public sector initiatives.

The community pillar, along with the other social partner pillars, is still in its infancy in South Tipperary. It has engaged in sub-county consultation and the following issues of concern have been identified – lack of volunteers; lack of facilities for youth; need to

attract external investment into communities; and the importance of basic infrastructure in influencing where development takes place.

For the community pillar (and the other social partners) to play a full role, information and support are as important as funding. Early briefing on proposed plans and regular meetings with individual communities have already started. My vision is that a lot more information provisions/meetings will be held. This has resource implications for the future. A good start has been made with the delivery of resources to the Community Sector as outlined in the White Paper on Voluntary Activity. The South Tipperary Voluntary Community Group Platform proposes to use these resources to provide information/support to the community sector in responding to the opportunities that have arisen from the partnership approach to the development of the county.

**John Devane (Tipperary LEADER Group) presented rural and local development perspectives** on the vision for the future (full presentation available on request). His key points included:

Rural community members have a desire to live in harmony without tension and fear. Each community member would have a desire to be adequately included and respected as an equal. Communities also wish to be meaningfully included in the decision making process which impacts on their daily lives.

Community capacity (including the lack of community capacity) is a critical factor in local development. Community capacity includes:

- ❑ Ability to play a partnership role
- ❑ Holistic approach to planning, implementation (also delegation/consultation, transparency)
- ❑ Representative and inclusive ethos
- ❑ Develop a tolerant attitude
- ❑ Practice equality
- ❑ Seek local solutions (think globally, act locally)
- ❑ Accepts/embraces diversity (many do not like change but as part of an open economy, political, social and economic change is inevitable)
- ❑ Community needs to renew itself (many communities practice 'sameness')
- ❑ Community identity.

A second aspect of the 'local development' vision is working toward 'self-sufficiency'. This requires optimum approaches to aspects such as: utilizing the capabilities of the population (area's human resource base); generating energy from green sources; a structured approach using planning and sanctions to promoting a clean environment; reducing and re-using the waste we generate; adding value to the food sector; local solutions to achieving local housing needs; connecting the primary education curriculum to the surrounding community environment; focus education more on the practical than the academic in a more inclusive approach; parish based health template, especially for children; design-in rather than design-out our culture, crafts and traditions; a sustainable

rural transport system; enhance our capacity for enterprise and for being enterprising; and ensure good communications (access to new technologies and good roads).

In terms of achieving an enhanced 'self sufficiency' vision, five issues hold the key to the quality of the community environment:

- Changes in mindset in relation to overemphasizing competition at all levels – education, sport, culture, morals
- Meaningful occupation of children/youth needs attention
- Voluntary time needs a critical examination
- Clear statement of intent in relation to mainstreaming the rights and responsibilities of the disadvantaged and meaningful partnerships
- The way we do things – getting the right balance between getting the job done (the task) and the way it is done (process).

In **opening the Board member's debate** on 'a vision for the county ten years from now' the Chair questioned the type of vision that might have been developed in 1991 for the ten year period up to 2001. Clearly 'jobs for all' would have been part of the 1991 vision, an aspect that has been largely delivered. The approach to planning over the last ten years has help create and sustain pleasant places in which to live. The Board also needs to focus on things that can be lost. Could we have envisaged how difficult it has got to attract volunteers to the community sector? There can also be negative aspects to be countered. (The massive increase in traffic was cited as an example and what will traffic be like in the year 2011).

The following comments were noted:

**On the overall vision:**

The vision statement needs to include a focus on 'economic wealth'. In what sectors will the 'economic wealth' of South Tipperary be sustained and enhanced? In what sectors should South Tipperary be aiming to develop 'centres of excellence'? The National perspective is on Information and Communications Technology and languages– should we be the same, be different or find our own niche.

The Tipperary Institute is going to be a key player in developing a 'centre of excellence' in South Tipperary. A key part of achieving 'economic wealth' is to get more second level students into third level courses, especially IT and language learning programmes.

South Tipperary will be dissected by two motorways in ten years time. Access to these motorways is likely to have a major influence on what parts of the county prosper and what parts decline. There is an opportunity to maximize the benefits to South Tipperary if we can ensure proper access to the motorways from rural parts of the county as well as from the main towns.

### **On the ‘co-ordination perspective:**

Clear need for members to articulate their own vision and strategy and to ensure that this is communicated to the other members around the table (two examples at the CDB meeting included the Labour Party vision regarding the National Spatial Strategy and the Enterprise Ireland strategy on ‘Driving Growth in Regional Enterprise’).

The need to keep abreast of national policies and strategies (National Spatial Strategy briefing circulated at the meeting).

There is potential when state agencies are setting up working groups to link with other members sitting at the CDB table and to help in the development of that aspect of the vision and strategy for the County Development Board (FAS Social Economy County Working Group cited as an example).

In searching for solutions to difficult issues, support systems will be needed from different partners around the table. The key will be to think strategically and act in a co-ordinated manner. There have been major advances in this ‘partnership’ approach in the last decade.

### **On the social partner perspective:**

While there has been a decline in volunteerism, there has also been a change in the kind of things for which people are prepared to volunteer. Traditionally people were motivated when they perceived gaps and wanted to get things done in their local areas. Now more people are motivated by what they are trying to prevent, what they do not want in their local areas.

This new type of motivation challenges us to find more sustainable and better solutions. We must ensure that ‘development proposals’ can be dealt with in ways that cause less headaches for the developer and less angst for the citizens.

The traditional structure of groups does not suit the modern volunteer (in a reference to a statement of Fr. Pat Cogan of Respond). The modern volunteer prefers an unorganized and loosely structured arrangement that focuses on getting things done; and once the task is done, shutting down.

Many young people are in well paid employment and are busy enjoying both working and social life. This group will shape the future yet the group is significantly absent from the County Development Board table. How do we make ourselves more appealing to the younger generation? The County Development Board and its member bodies need to get young people’s perspectives.

Our vision needs to focus on that challenge of creating the motivation to participate. A start could be made in the education sector by switching from a competitive environment

to one where civics and more locally-connected subjects form a more substantial part of the curriculum.

People are 'running faster to stay still'. Jobs often require long hours and people are tired in the evening. People are also afraid to volunteer – coaching/guiding young people on one's own is no longer an option and insurance (and the lack of information around insurance) is also a concern.

Women in the home are being targeted for employment. This also has an impact on volunteerism, as the spouse who stayed at home was a hidden volunteer. Childcare has become a major issue and in some cases elderly family members are available. There is a case to offer women (and the spouse) a real choice and give recognition to the role of homemaker and community maker by some form of payment.

The rich-poor gap seems to be getting wider. Though lots of money is spent on social inclusion, a lot of people, including many social welfare recipients still experience of poverty and disadvantage. While the increases in allowances seem large, it is still difficult to make ends meet with an extra £8 per week. In some cases teenagers have more money than parents.

The community capacity around tolerance is a significant issue. Minority groups such as travelers experience discrimination almost every day. A vision for the future needs to incorporate tolerance and respect for diversity.

### **On the rural area perspective:**

A vision of a garda based in every key village and a post office open in these villages.

## **2. Board appointment**

Cllr Patrick Downey, Cashel Urban District Council, is the Urban nominee onto the County Development Board for 2001. Cllr Downey replaces Cllr Denis Leahy, Tipperary Urban District Council.

## **3. Communication and Consultation**

A media campaign is being prepared for mid February to publicise the work carried out by the County Development Board to date and to seek an input from the general public into the development of the County Strategy. The promotion campaign is timed to coincide with and support a wider consultation process by the Board's working groups. Public meetings are scheduled in relation to the following topics:

- ❖ Performing Arts (Tipperary Town – February 19)
- ❖ Heritage (Cahir – February 20)
- ❖ Sport (Fethard – February 21)
- ❖ Visual Arts (Clonmel – February 22)
- ❖ Agriculture and forestry (Farming Pillar - Rockwell – February 22)
- ❖ The Crisis in Volunteerism (Cahir – February 26)
- ❖ Youth Services and Facilities (Carrick on Suir – March 1)
- ❖ Does the competitive model of Education serve our communities well (Killenaule – March 6)

A supplement will be circulated with local newspapers on Thursday February 15 and radio advertisements will be placed to encourage the general public read the supplement and to communicate their views on aspects of the County Strategy.

Clonmel Community Partnership has been co-ordinating the consultation process with regard to the Strategic Plan to counter educational disadvantage for Clonmel which will feed into the education/youth social segment group.

Members of the local authorities were consulted in January 2001 on the work done to date by the County Development Board – a report is available on the outcomes of these five consultative meetings.

#### **4. Progress Report from the Working Groups**

The Economic Working Group met in November and has planned specific consultations prior to engaging in a SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis of the County). The SWOT analysis will be carried out once the data-base is made available in Mid February.

The Social Inclusion Working Group is scheduled to meet again on March 5. By then all segment groups will have completed reviews of the key issues identified in the Social Review of the County. Meeting reports are available on the following segment reviews (in some cases further consultative meetings and focus group discussions are being held):

- ✓ Adequate family income
- ✓ Community Development
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Rural Transport
- ✓ Unemployment and Social Cohesion.

A childcare report for South Tipperary has been presented by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to the County Childcare Committee. The County Childcare Committee is being serviced by the South Eastern Health Board and held its first meeting in December 2000. Meetings of the remaining social strategy segments (Education and Youth, Housing) will be held before mid-February.

The audit of services arising from the protocols agreed by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group is being completed. This information is to be placed on a website before the end of April 2001. Tipperary (South Riding) Co Council has sought tenders from a limited number of consultants for the development of a CDB website which will include information on social inclusion measures and where they apply in the County.

The Cultural Working Group also met in November and will meet again on February 26, 2001 following the cultural consultative meetings and the training workshop during the previous week.

The Rural Development Group met on December 13, 2000 to review the National Roads Proposals as they applied to South Tipperary. Mr Michael O'Malley, Senior Executive Engineer, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council outlined the National Roads Authority proposals under the National Development Plan. The following **consensus** emerged at the Rural Development Group meeting in relation to the National Roads Strategy as it applies to South Tipperary.

- ✓ The primary focus is to encourage people to go to the consultation meetings at an early stage so that they can be properly informed about the process and also given adequate opportunity to express their fears and concerns. Experience has indicated that, where the Community and Farming Pillars have encouraged local people to attend, fears are generally allayed and the number of problems and objections in relation to routes are considerably reduced.
- ✓ Safety issues and access issues to Communities are fundamental principles that need to be taken into account in relation to design of the linkages of the National Motorway roads in South Tipperary. It is important that local Communities be given opportunities to look at the design of these linkages so that their fears and concerns are addressed.
- ✓ In the design of the National Roads Strategy for South Tipperary, cognizance needs to be taken in the constraints analysis of community impact and a key goal of route selection/prioritization should be to lessen the disturbance from a community perspective.

## **5. Data sets and indicators**

IRIS (Irish Regional Information Systems) will shortly complete their contract with Waterford Co Council (on behalf of the Local Authorities in the South East) in relation to collation, manipulation and mapping of data required for the preparation of County Strategies. The new system (database integrated with mapping software) has been installed in County Hall and the 'manipulated data' will be made available to Working Groups as required.