

TIPPERARY SOUTH RIDING COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

FIFTH MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: November 20, 2000
Members present: 23 (82% attendance)
Chair: Cllr. Tom Wood.

SUMMARY

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board focused on the evolvement of a County Cultural Strategy at its November meeting. The key challenges to be met include:

- ❑ Culture is constantly evolving. The vision needs to focus on developing culture so that it can embrace new fields and on aspects that can make a difference
- ❑ Culture needs to start with local people, with local communities.
- ❑ The cultural area is quite fragmented. There is a need for co-ordination.
Consideration could be given for a major promotion theme in each main town.

In reviewing Local Development Group submissions for funding the following comments were noted:

- ❖ The breadth of activity of the LEADER programme was commended.
- ❖ The diversity of actions creates a challenge to ensure that initiatives are complementary and not duplicatory. The principle of holding meetings with all relevant interests prior to the introduction of new initiatives was endorsed
- ❖ The process of creating common boundaries that fit into the 15 sub county/clusters for planning and service delivery already agreed by Tipperary (South Riding) Co Development Board needs to commence.

Mr Pat Moroney is the new Tipperary (South Riding) Vocational Education Committee nominee on the County Development Board.

Tipperary Business Advisers Network (TBAN) has become a de facto sub-group of the County Development Board. Its delegated tasks are to ensure co-ordination and clarity in the strategic development of e business in South Tipperary and to recommend via the Economic Working Group an e business strategy for the county.

The Board noted consensus within the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group

- ✓ On the need for a shared information base to include existing social inclusion programmes.
- ✓ On the need for consultation with all relevant interests before a new social inclusion programme is introduced to the county.

The Rural Development Review Group reviewed energy, waste management, food and rural transport strategy at its November meeting (A full report is available).

1. Board input into a Cultural Review of the County

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board focused on the evolution of a County Cultural Strategy at its November meeting. The County Cultural Strategy needs to address the following questions:

- Where are we now? What is the cultural situation of the County?
- Where do we want to be? How should the cultural situation of the county be changed by the year 2010?
- How do we get from where we are to where we want to be? (County Cultural Strategy).

The Board had formally established a Cultural Working Group to carry out the preparatory work needed to address the strategic questions raised above. The Cultural Working Group had circulated a consultative document on culture to more than 400 stakeholders. Initial responses to the consultation document indicated a divergence of focus:

- ✓ Culture is about preserving the past
- ✓ Culture is about facilitating the future.

The cultural consultative document also formed the basis for the Board input into the cultural review of South Tipperary.

- ❖ The working definition of culture - ‘culture is the personality of the county’ - was noted as being broad.
- ❖ The **UN definition of culture** is as follows: “The whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group includes not only the arts and letters but also modes of life fundamental rights of the human being value system, traditional and beliefs”.
- ❖ While a broad view of culture is worthy the County Cultural Strategy will need to ultimately focus aspects that can make a difference and add to the cultural situation of the county. Hopefully, the strategy will specify a list of cultural activities that should be revived or strengthened.
- ❖ All of County Tipperary shares a great sporting tradition. South Tipperary has a particular strength in its built heritage, which reflects almost the entire history of Ireland. South Tipperary also has a strong association with the equine industry. It has a rural image with a dominant town (Clonmel).
- ❖ Tipperary people have a strong tradition of cohesion and co-operation. Culture is about developing tolerance. Awareness of the value of different cultures reminds us of the cosmopolitan nature of Irish culture.

- ❖ An objective of cultural strategy is to facilitate a ‘greater sense of ownership’ of the place. There is room for improvement in our ‘pride of place’ as reflected in visual pollution such as litter and the poor appearance of some houses and parts of town/villages.
- ❖ Creating culture to satisfy a tourist market is not a sustainable strategy. Any aspect of culture that is good instills pride in local people. Culture needs to start with local people, with local communities. It cannot start without facilities or activities, without volunteers or teachers. When it starts, it needs to be acknowledged.
- ❖ One weakness within the provision for culture is the lack of facilities for families to participate in culture together. Most provision is focused on target groups – the young, adults or the elderly. Given that the family is a strong aspect of Irish culture, facilities that encourage families to interact needs to be considered in the County Cultural Strategy.
- ❖ The lack of facilities for children also needs to be addressed. There are good facilities in the county (including the built heritage) but there is little that is innovative in the presentation of facilities that make them children and family friendly. Amenities need to stretch our imaginations.
- ❖ There are economic and quality of life benefits to culture which justify the resources provided to it by the local communities and the public purse. Quality of life is critical to attracting both people and industry into an area.
- ❖ The cultural area is quite fragmented. Much of it is driven by individuals and voluntary groups. There is a need for co-ordination. Is there merit in having specific officers, for example an Arts Officer, to support the co-ordination process for the different sectors in culture – arts, heritage, sports and recreation? Co-ordination is also required in the promoting and selling of aspects of culture – craft products, art, etc. The Rock of Cashel/Bru Boru center, the Craft Granary, the Mainguard project might all provide opportunities to address this co-ordination deficit. Consideration could be given for a major promotion theme in each of the main towns in South Tipperary.
- ❖ Our greatest strength can also be a weakness. Tipperary has a proud and strong hurling tradition. But the cultural strategy also needs to embrace minority sports.
- ❖ The level of participation and performance in the arts needs to be compared with other counties to assess the strength of the arts in South Tipperary.
- ❖ There is also a darker side to our culture. In some parts of the county, the pub may be the only social facility. While the pub culture reflects part of our friendliness and conviviality, alcoholism can affect the quality of life not just for the alcoholic but also for the family of the alcoholic.

- ❖ Culture is constantly evolving. What can be done to promote the culture of the present? Do the people of South Tipperary know the current greatest artists/performers? Yes in sport and music but what about literature, drama, painting culture, minority sports and recreation fields, etc. Also new cultures need to be acknowledged and accommodated, especially those being influenced by new technologies. The vision (to be adopted by the board in April) needs to focus on developing culture so that it can embrace new fields.
- ❖ Although culture is evolving, many aspects of culture can easily be lost. The culture associated with coalmining is disappearing. Snapnet fishing on the river Suir could be lost within ten years. Is our friendliness as a people in danger of being lost? Are social and community networks in danger of being lost because of the increasing requirements on all family members to work outside the home?

2. Review of Local Development Group Submissions

Tommy Cooke and Darragh Murphy (BNS) presented summaries of the Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development submissions under the LEADER + programme and the National Mainstream LEADER-Rural Development Programme. (Summaries of the submissions under LEADER and the Local Development Programme from Tipperary LEADER Group, Clonmel Community Partnership and Waterford LEADER Partnership will be available in the near future).

Innovative actions included in the BNS submissions are on:

- ✓ Rural transport – holistic approach based on demand responsive systems
- ✓ Complementary Primary Education initiative with a focus on rural education
- ✓ Renewable energy – wind energy, anaerobic digestion and short rotation coppicing
- ✓ Mobile ICT unit – training at local community level
- ✓ Rural ICT Post Office initiative – turning post offices into e commerce drop-off centres.

In reviewing Local Development Group submissions for funding the following comments were noted:

- ❖ The Board welcomed the sharing by the Local Development companies of their specific plans for the future. In particular, the breadth of activity of the LEADER programme was commended as was the willingness of local development companies to engage in partnerships and joint initiatives with enterprise agencies.
- ❖ The diversity of actions creates a challenge for local development companies and other agencies to ensure that initiatives are complementary and not duplicating each other. An advantage of a good track record of co-operation in South Tipperary between the agencies/groups is a flexible approach to achieving client centred solutions. A disadvantage is that clients become confused about who is

doing what. Complementarity requires good animation and information giving so that clients do not waste time. While all the relevant bodies expressed satisfaction with the present arrangements, once funding becomes available to local development companies, meetings should be held with all relevant interests prior to the introduction of new initiatives.

- ❖ Varying geographical borders between local development companies can also cause confusion. The existing borders have arisen for logical reasons largely based on maximizing the resources into the county. It was noted that only Clonmel and Carrick on Suir benefit from the ADM resourced local development programme. It was also noted that many of the disadvantaged areas in South Tipperary (Health Board Material Deprivation Index) are on the periphery of the county. Local development boundaries need to be reviewed as soon as practicable by the local development groups and to create, at the least, common boundaries that fit into the 15 sub county/clusters for planning and service delivery already agreed by Tipperary (South Riding) Co Development Board.
- ❖ Political and social partners on the Board can play an important role in encouraging the Government to approve the resources necessary to enable the new LEADER programmes commence early in 2001. Other funding opportunities available at present to community interests in South Tipperary include the new FAS Social Economy Programme and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Childcare Initiatives.

3. Board and Staff appointments

Mr Pat Moroney has replaced outgoing Chief Executive John Slattery as the Tipperary (South Riding) Vocational Education Committee nominee on the County Development Board.

Ms Breda O'Connor has replaced Ms Anne Marie O'Flynn as Clerical Officer in the Community and Enterprise Section. Ms Eileen Horgan and Mr Aidan Fitzpatrick have been appointed Community and Enterprise Development Officers with Tipperary (South Riding) County Council. Both Development Officers will be based in the new Cashel Civic Offices. Their main roles will include:

- ✓ Provision of technical support to the County Development Board via a specific Working Group in the preparation of the County Strategy
- ✓ Supporting co-ordination/integration initiatives in their technical area (economic or social or cultural)
- ✓ Supervising the delivery of the consultation process for the County Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy
- ✓ Liaising with South Tipperary Voluntary Community Group Platform and its associated area networks
- ✓ Providing technical support to expanded Area Committees for County Development Board tasks.

4. Tipperary Business Advisers Network

The Tipperary Business Advisers Network has agreed to address the strategic deficits relevant to the County Development Board - to create a common understanding of the bigger e commerce picture and agree co-ordination mechanisms to ensure that agreed objectives and desired outcomes were achieved.

Decision Item:

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board accepts Tipperary Business Advisers Network as a de facto sub-group and delegates the task of ensuring co-ordination and clarity in the strategic development of e business in South Tipperary and to recommend via the Economic Working Group an e business strategy for the county.

5. Social Inclusion Measures Working Group

The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group had agreed two recommendations.

- ✓ There was consensus on the need for a shared information base to include existing social inclusion programmes. Ideally this information would be presented on a website so that it could be regularly updated. The website could be linked with the websites of group member organisations. **Decision:** A protocol was agreed whereby each working group member will liaise with the Community and Enterprise Section to provide the information on existing programmes for the CDB website.
- ✓ There was consensus on the need for consultation with all relevant interests before a new social inclusion programme is introduced to the county. A matrix is to be developed which will highlight the target groups of interest to each member organisation. **Decision:** A protocol was agreed whereby each working group member will proactively consult with other members indicated for the specific target group (in the matrix) prior to introducing a new social inclusion programme (for that specific target group). The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group will meet on October 23 to begin the process of local co-ordination of the social inclusion measures in the National Development Plan.

6. Consultation actions

The Strategic Planning Group to counter educational disadvantage in Clonmel (chaired by John Slattery and serviced by Clonmel Community Partnership) is currently addressing the segment needs on education and youth development. A consultative draft of a strategic plan was distributed in June to key actors in Clonmel, its environs and throughout South Tipperary. It is proposed to carry out a detailed consultative process with regard to the plan. This process which will be co-ordinated by Clonmel Community

Partnership will be resourced by the Community and Enterprise Section because it will act as a pilot test for later consultation processes on the County Social Strategy.

7. Rural Development Review Group

The Rural Development Review Group reviewed energy, waste management, food and rural transport strategy at its November meeting (A full report is available).

The following consensus had emerged in relation to a County Energy Strategy:

- The primary focus is to increase the price paid to alternative energy suppliers
- There needs to be a community payback dimension
- Small can be beautiful, and the access issues preventing small scale developments must be targeted (including the use of net-metering technology)
- Farmers cannot realistically be expected to reduce stock numbers by 10% unless the alternatives (which support energy creation and decrease greenhouse emissions) are adequately resourced.

The following consensus had emerged in relation to a County Waste Management Strategy:

- The primary focus should be on not mixing waste
- Resources need to be targeted at promotion of non-mixing solutions and children may provide the means of access of the message to most homes
- There needs to be a community participation and that this may best be achieved by smaller rather than larger solutions and the proximity principle (reed beds, community composting, etc)

The review group will consider roads strategy at its next meeting.

8. Data sets and indicators

IRIS (Irish Regional Information Systems) have been engaged by the six local authorities in the South East to gather, manipulate and map the data requirements specified in Appendix 2 of 'A Shared Vision' (Task Force strategy document).

9. National Convention of County Development Boards

A National Convention of County Development Boards was held in Dublin on November 1. Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board was represented by Cllr Tom Wood (Chair), Mr Edmond Gleeson (County Manager), Mr Tim Shanahan (Community and Voluntary Pillar), Mr Michael Cummins (State Agency Sector), Mr Michael Hanly (Farming Pillar), Mr John Devane (Local Development Sector) and John Quinn (Director of Community and Enterprise). Reporting on the convention, Cllr Tom Wood (Chair) stated that he was impressed by the level of political and agency support for the County Development Board process at a national level.