

# TIPPERARY SOUTH RIDING COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

## THIRD MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: 6.00pm., 12-06-2000  
Members present: 21 (75% attendance)  
Chair: Cllr. Brendan Griffin.

### SUMMARY

**Decision:** Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board agreed to establish three Topic Working Groups to assist the Board in developing the County Strategy:

- ✓ An Economic Working Group
- ✓ A Social Inclusion working Group
- ✓ A Cultural Working Group.

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board has set a target of completing an integrated review of the economic, social and cultural situation in the County by February 2001. The Board (supported by its working groups) will then focus on achieving consensus and a 'shared vision' - an agreed framework within which all parties can work and move forward together.

The Board focused on economic strategy at the June Board meeting. Key points to be considered by the Economic Working Group include:

- Need to access up-to date economic data to inform the strategy
- A regional dimension can enhance the County Economic Strategy
- South Tipperary needs to be benchmarked against the best international regions
- A major challenge will be to achieve balance in the County's economic development
- Economic strategy needs to be poverty and rural proofed.
- A key strategic objective is a focus on life long learning to maintain the competitiveness of the County's workforce.

A Social Inclusion Advisory Group made the following recommendations with regard to the development of a County Social Strategy:

- ✓ Inclusion of the socially excluded in the process of developing County Social Strategy
- ✓ Focus on vision and a strategy to achieve the vision not on detailed operational issues.
- ✓ County Development Board develops a statement on social inclusion
- ✓ Social inclusion area is subdivided into manageable segments which are addressed by separate sub-groupings.
- ✓ Integration of segments to ensure that no significant target group is omitted from the process and also integration with the Economic and Cultural Working Groups to ensure that their development strategies will also reduce social exclusion.

## **1. Three Topic Working Groups established to help advance the County Strategy**

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board reviewed how it will tackle the development of County Strategy at its June 2000 meeting, following publication of the Task Force Guidelines on developing County Development Board Strategies.

CDB member Len Bell presented a micro example of how Enterprise Ireland carries out a strategic planning exercise in a typical manufacturing company. The key steps are:

- ✓ Positioning (securing the commitment of all the management in the company to engaging fully in the strategic planning task)
- ✓ Agreeing the company statement and key objectives (priorities) for the strategic plan
- ✓ Analysing the five key functions of the company - innovation, finance, human resources, marketing and production - detailed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis
- ✓ Formulating the strategic plan with detailed actions, delegated responsibilities and an agreed monitoring and review procedure.

In contrasting the Enterprise Ireland micro example to the macro situation of developing a County Strategy, the following points were noted:

- Although positioning is a more complex process for the County Development Board than in a company situation, the first two meetings of the County Development Board has already achieved consensus on the operating procedures and commitment to engaging fully in the processes leading to the County Strategy
- Prioritisation and agreement of a vision and strategic objectives will be more difficult for the County Development Board. Priorities are more likely to be set after the detailed analysis rather than before it. Access to the same relevant information and participation in analysing the information should help the process of achieving consensus on a vision, priorities and strategic objectives.
- Functional analysis is a method which the County Development Board can use in developing strategy - there are three clear elements to the strategy (economic, social and cultural).
- The County Strategy should specify how its objectives will be achieved, the members that will achieve each objective and how the actions/achievements will be monitored.

The County Development Board members also reviewed the pitfalls outlined in the Task Force Guidelines. The following concerns were raised:

- ❖ 10 years is a long time for a strategy that needs to be flexible. The County Strategy should include hard targets that can be realised in 3-4 years.
- ❖ The Social Inclusion agenda is very broad. The Task Force has identified 40 major programmes aimed at over thirty eight specific target groups of socially excluded. It is essential that the process in addressing the social inclusion agenda is focused and well managed.
- ❖ There is also a need for integration. Economic, social and cultural strategy cannot be developed in isolation. In particular, social inclusion needs to be an important facet of economic and cultural strategies.

**Decision:** Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board agreed to establish three Topic Working Groups to assist the Board in developing the County Strategy. The County Development Board also agreed to delegate the right to all Working Groups to co-opt additional members as required.

The following were nominated onto the Topic Working Groups:

### **Economic Working Group**

- ✓ Len Bell, Enterprise Ireland
- ✓ Martin Collier, Business Pillar
- ✓ Cllr Niall Dennehy, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council
- ✓ Michael Hanly, Farming Pillar
- ✓ Toss Hayes, Tipperary (South Riding) County Enterprise Board
- ✓ Donal Mullane, TEAGASC
- ✓ Tim Shanahan, Voluntary and Community Pillar
- A TRBDI nominee
- A nominee of the socially excluded (to be facilitated by Clonmel Community Partnership)

## **Social Inclusion Working Group**

- ✓ Pat Callanan, Tipperary (South Riding) County Vocational Education Committee
- ✓ Oliver Clancy, FAS
- ✓ Darina Crosse, Family Resource Centre, Tipperary
- ✓ Mick Cummins, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- ✓ P J Dooley, Clonmel Community Partnership
- ✓ Michael Hanly, Farming Pillar
- ✓ Mary Fitzgerald, Garda Siochana
- ✓ Bob Keating, Tipperary (South Riding) County Vocational Education Committee
- ✓ Bridget Kirwan, TRBDI
- ✓ Cllr Denis Landy, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council
- ✓ Jimmy Lynch, ADM
- ✓ Gerry Maher, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- ✓ Jimmy McCarthy, TACTIC
- ✓ Andrew McMahan, South Eastern Health Board
- ✓ Sean McSweeney, Knockanrawley CDP
- ✓ Cllr Susan Meagher, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council
- ✓ Pat Moroney, Tipperary (South Riding) County Vocational Education Committee
- ✓ Darragh Murphy, Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development Ltd
- ✓ Bridget O'Keeffe, Voluntary and Community Pillar
- ✓ Pierce O'Loughlin, Waterford LEADER Partnership
- ✓ John O' Mahoney, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council
- ✓ Niall O'Neill, Tipperary (South Riding) County Vocational Education Committee
- ✓ Carmel Rainsford, Tipperary Regional Youth Service
- ✓ Mark Ryan, Suir CDP
- ✓ Tim Shanahan, Voluntary and Community Pillar
- ✓ John Slattery, Tipperary (South Riding) County Vocational Education Committee
- ❑ Nominees of the socially excluded (to be facilitated by Clonmel Community partnership)

## **Cultural Working Group**

- ✓ Toss Hayes, Tipperary (South Riding) County Enterprise Board
- ✓ Darragh Murphy, Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development Group
- ❑ A Voluntary and Community Sector nominee
- ❑ A TRBDI nominee
- ❑ A nominee of the socially excluded (to be facilitated by Clonmel Community Partnership)
- ❑ A nominee of the Local Authorities

The **initial tasks** (necessary to address the strategic question - where are we? - and assist the Board in formulating a 'shared vision') of the **Economic Working Group** include:

- Benchmarking - audit of the economic service providers in the County, audit of existing strategies, categorisation of clients, establishment of baseline data by sector on the economy of the county, comparisons with the best counties/regions in Europe, US and Asia.
- SWOT analysis - assessment of the baseline data, defining the strengths and weaknesses of the economic situation in South Tipperary, identifying opportunities for economic growth in the county (where is the growth potential and can the potential be realised in South Tipperary), identifying threats to the retention of current industries/services in the county
- Prioritising of key issues to be presented to the Board in the Integrated Review
- Consultation with clients on the benchmarking, analysis and priority issues
- Recommendations on the key indicators that can measure economic performance and change.

The **initial tasks of the Social Inclusion Working Group** are:

- Bringing 'focus' to the 'social inclusion agenda' and addressing it in manageable segments
- Consulting widely with socially excluded target groups and involve the socially excluded directly in benchmarking, analysis and prioritisation tasks
- Linking effectively with the Economic and Social Working Groups (provide input and optimise synergy in developing priorities)
- Benchmarking - use the Task Force 'social inclusion audit structure' to carry out an audit of the service providers in the County, audit of existing strategies, categorisation of clients, establishment of baseline data, identification of service gaps
- SWOT analysis - assessment of the baseline data, defining the strengths and weaknesses of the social situation in South Tipperary, identifying opportunities for social inclusion in the county (co-ordination and targeting of resources), identifying threats to the retention of current services in the county
- Prioritising of key issues to be presented to the Board in the Integrated Review

A broad definition of **culture encompasses the arts, sport and recreation**. These huge sectors can have an enormous impact of the social well being of individuals and the economic well being of an area. In terms of progressing cultural strategy, a variation on the model proposed for economic strategy is recommended. The **initial tasks** (necessary to address the strategic question - where are we? - and assist the Board in formulating a 'shared vision') of the **Cultural Working Group** include:

- Benchmarking - audit of the cultural service providers in the County, audit of existing cultural strategies, establishment of baseline data on each cultural sector
- SWOT analysis - assessment of the baseline data, defining the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural situation in South Tipperary, identifying opportunities for cultural development in the county (where is the growth potential and can the potential be realised in South Tipperary), identifying threats to the retention of current cultural activities in the county
- Prioritising of key issues to be presented to the Board in the Integrated Review
- Consultation with cultural sector clients on the benchmarking, analysis and priority issues.

Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board has set a **target of completing an integrated review** of the economic, social and cultural situation in the County by February 2001. The Board (supported on its working groups) will then focus on achieving consensus and a 'shared vision' - an agreed framework within which all parties can work and move forward together.

## 2. Board input into an Economic Review of the County

Members of the Tipperary (South Riding) County Development Board brainstormed economic issues and opportunities for consideration by the Economic Working Group. The key points raised included the following.

**Need to access up to date economic data:** The 1996 census data on the workforce in South Tipperary is too old to be useful in developing a County Economic Strategy for 2000-2010 period.

No county or sub-county data is possible from the Labour Force Survey. However, it does show that the South East is performing poorly when compared with other regions in Ireland in terms of employment growth and the fall in unemployment.

Sub-county data can be obtained from the Live Register. However, the Live Register includes sectors of the population who are not available for work. The labour force participation rate is not picked up in the Live Register.

It is possible to quantify specific social welfare benefits paid to sub-county areas. Tracking that data over time and comparing it against other counties and the rest of South Tipperary may be useful in addressing strategic questions such as: why are relatively high social welfare benefits going to a specific area or part of a town in the county?

**Need to review current strategies:** There is a need to review current economic development strategies being pursued by the various interests within the county. It is also important to focus on population trends and to carry out projections on changes to the population structure and also to the occupational structure in the county.

**A regional dimension can enhance the County Economic Strategy:** South Tipperary is a relatively small area in European terms on which to base economic strategy. There is an advantage in having synergy with neighbouring counties. Two examples were provided at the County Development Board meeting:

- A 'centre of excellence' strategy - the Greenhouse Plan - developed by the County/City Enterprise Boards in the South East which identified nine economic activities where the region had strengths that had not been fully capitalised upon - equine, crafts, engineering, food, information technology, tourism, telecommunications, arts and culture and the Environment.
- A second example was the TRBDI - Tipp Net - aimed at optimising the potential of information technology in Co Tipperary.

**International dimension:** South Tipperary (or the South East Region or Co Tipperary if relevant) needs to be benchmarked against the best international regions. There is a wealth of experience in economic development and the Economic Working Group should ensure that it accesses relevant international experience.

**Need for balance in economic development:** Some areas in the county are doing better than others. The aim of balanced development is difficult to attain. Larger inward enterprises are attracted to larger population centres and this will be difficult to change. Indigenous industry is more likely to stay in the smaller centres as it grows. The strategy of micro-enterprise development in the smaller towns and the rural areas needs to be maintained and further supported. These enterprises may well become the larger enterprises of the future.

**Tourism:** The two major issues facing tourism development in south Tipperary are the expansion of the tourism accommodation base in the county and the decrease in commuting time to the main air-entry points at Dublin, Cork and Shannon. There is a noticeable trend in tourists accessing Ireland by air rather than by sea.

**Social Inclusion Perspective:** There is a link between economic development and social inclusion. Economic strategy needs to be poverty proofed and to avoid promoting economic development that increases inequalities. Those who are long term unemployed often lack the confidence to move out of their home area. The socially excluded also have the potential to be entrepreneurs and partners at the County Development board table have combined well to enable unemployed people establish micro enterprises. There is also a link between educational disadvantage and social exclusion. It is important that a quality primary education infrastructure is maintained in rural areas.

**Lifelong learning:** Training, retraining, access to further education are important dimensions in enabling the South Tipperary workforce to remain competitive for employment. It is also important to demystify information and communications technology in order to avoid creating further social and economic exclusion.

**Other Opportunities:** Cluster of pharmaceutical industries; renewable energy; Co Tipperary food strategy; mushroom industry; building further enterprise centres in rural areas.

### **3. Report of the Social Inclusion Advisory Group**

An advisory group on social inclusion had met to inform the debate on advancing social strategy. Issues arising from the debate were:

- Early involvement of socially excluded is needed in the design of the County Social Strategy
- An education deficit has a substantive negative impact for the rest of a persons life
- Access to services and opportunities is a critical issue, especially in rural areas where there are no public transport systems
- Information technology threatens to increase disparity and create new forms of exclusion
- Gaps in family income are widening - the indicator of relative poverty (less than 50% of average income) needs to targeted in the County Strategy.
- There are blackspot areas in the County. Sub-county strategies are needed to increase participation in education, employment and community development opportunities.

The main recommendations with regard to developing the County Social Strategy included:

- ✓ Inclusion of the socially excluded in the process of developing County Social Strategy
- ✓ Focus on vision and a strategy to achieve the vision not on detailed operational issues.
- ✓ County Development Board develops a statement on social inclusion
- ✓ Social inclusion area is subdivided into manageable segments which are addressed by separate sub-groupings.
- ✓ Integration of segments to ensure that no significant target group is omitted from the process and also integration with the Economic and Cultural Working Groups to ensure that their development strategies will also reduce social exclusion.

#### **4. Rural Development Forum**

A joint meeting of the Farming Pillar and Rural Development Development Review Group was held on May 9 to review the Draft Environs Plan for Clonmel. Pat Slattery, Executive Planner, Tipperary (South Riding) County Council attended the meeting. There was consensus among the Farming Pillar representatives with the underlying principles and planning policy in the Clonmel Environs Plan. The next meeting on June 20 will focus on rural transport.