

COMMENTS OF THE CDB CHAIRS AT THE MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE  
REVIEW OF THE SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY STRATEGY AND THE CDB  
STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES UP TO 2008

County Development Boards were established by the Government in the year 2000 to bring greater coherence to the delivery of public and community services through an agreed ten year County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. The Government asked County Development Boards (CDBs) to review their performance during 2005 and to agree priorities for the years up to 2008.

The South Tipperary CDB published its review and statement of priorities in June 2005.

At the media briefing, outgoing Chair of South Tipperary County Development Board, Cllr Mattie McGrath, introduced the review of performance covering the 2000-2004 period. Cllr McGrath stated that there were significant achievements across all four areas of activity – economic development, social inclusion, cultural development and local agenda 21. He stated that “overall, we have ranked our performance, as you will note on page 4 of the review, as a B grade. A good base has been established and there is consensus on what is to be achieved by 2008”.

Edmond O'Connor, Chair of the CDB group overseeing the implementation of the County Economic Strategy highlighted "how South Tipperary had turned a threat – the non-inclusion of Clonmel as a hub in the National Spatial Strategy – into an opportunity. We got local consensus on a County Spatial Strategy and targeted specific results. Looking at key indicators highlights how well the county is doing. Our wealth and income generation target for 2006 was achieved in 2002. There are more than 4000 extra jobs in the South Tipperary economy. And large numbers of people are upskilling supported by VEC and FAS programmes. When I think of the concerns we had three years ago relating to the image of the county, the competitiveness of the county and the infrastructural deficits, huge progress has been made in a short space in time. Both myself and members of the CDB Economic Group look forward with confidence to achieving the economic targets set for 2008, the delivery of a further €1 billion investment in South Tipperary and the filling of 2000 jobs".

Fionuala McGeever, Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIM), reviewed the progress in the delivery of the County Social Strategy. "SIM is concerned with the co-ordination of services at the point of delivery to the citizen. People experiencing disadvantage can experience exclusion from opportunity at a wide range of levels. The SIM group in South Tipperary has focused on five target groups – the Travelling Community, the Disabled, those at risk of early school leaving, those at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and those who are unemployed. SIM carried out service reviews and identified gaps in the delivery of services. Workplans were created which are being implemented by sub-groups. A major initial challenge was for diverse groups to learn to work together and develop

effective protocols for inter-agency work. A key indicator has been the decline in the numbers on the live register by more than 16% in the period under review. The provision of additional services such as tenant liaison and of additional resources to designated RAPID areas has also had a positive impact in building confidence in the SIM process. A major goal of SIM is that local development social inclusion services are extended to the whole county. Service reviews are also planned with regard to the elderly, the rural isolated, migrant workers and refugees/asylum seekers”.

Cllr Michael Fitzgerald, Chair of the CDB Cultural Group, highlighted the huge contribution of the community and voluntary sector in the delivery of the County Cultural Strategy. “Cultural spend generated by voluntary groups has doubled in five years from €4.75 million to just over €10 million. The cultural providers are marvellous people. They have recognised that there are many cultures in the county. An exhibition featuring the culture and way of life of the Travelling community was an initiative in that regard. There are major challenges for cultural providers but the evolution of funding mechanisms such as the capital grants under the Development Contributions Schemes are a great help to people, often working unnoticed in the community. Going forward, the EU recognition of Irish as an official language presents a great opportunity to South Tipperary given the strength of one of the main cultural providers – Bru Boru”.

Ciaran Lynch, Chair of the CDB local agenda 21 group, highlighted the two elements to local agenda 21 in South Tipperary “participation in decision making and sustainable development. The former is attained through the democratic process of the elections of political representatives and also through the involvement of the

community and voluntary sector in decision making. The South Tipperary Forum has built a very effective structure in representing the voluntary sector and is engaged in building the capacity of its representatives. The Local Agenda 21 Group is also focusing on building the capacity of other CDB members to respond positively to the inclusion of social partners on decision taking structures. Going forward, the community and voluntary sector is fully involved in the preparation of the county submission seeking to influence the next National Development Plan. On the sustainable development side, there have been very worthwhile services development such as rural transport and community engagement in recycling initiatives. The challenge going forward is to focus on other key aspects that will sustain socially viable communities without impacting detrimentally on the environment”.