

Progress Report from the Cultural Working Group:-

Conclusion

The Cultural Working Group's perspective on **the value** that a County Cultural Strategy needs to **add to the cultural situation** of South Tipperary is:

- Professional backing at county level for culture
- An agreed facility development strategy (for a generation) which is attracting public resources
- An emphasis on enabling volunteers get real support and more recognition (for the time spent) especially qualifications and skills
- More emphasis on participation and a strategy of outreach in the resourcing of the cultural sector.

Professional backing

The cultural situation of South Tipperary could be described as a jigsaw that needs to be put together. Many of the pieces to make up the jigsaw are in place. These need to be linked to each other by a coherent strategy. Central to that strategy is professional support for the co-ordination of the arts, heritage and sport.

From a national perspective:

- ❖ the heritage sector within South Tipperary is considered particularly strong
- ❖ the arts sector in the county is considered relatively weak
- ❖ the sports/recreation sector is considered relatively weak (participation) in the entire country (except for the GAA).

The county has inherited significant heritage assets. These are being optimized by the public sector (eg. County Council, Duchas) and by the voluntary sector (eg Bru Boru). The Curator of the Museum is helping to link the voluntary sector and individual members of the general public to information, and to training and development opportunities.

In relation to the Arts, the Tipperary (South Riding) County Council has opted for a strategy quite different from that recommended by the Arts Council. The available resources are largely allocated to the South Tipperary Arts Centre and the Arts Sector has the responsibility of the allocation of these resources directly. The Arts Centre, located in Clonmel, is perceived locally (in the consultations carried out) to be doing a good job but is limited in terms of what it can achieve both by resource constraints and by its current building. Tipperary (South Riding) Co Council is carrying out a review of its Arts Strategy in 2001.

In relation to sport, there is significant empirical information of the lack of/very limited participation in sport and recreation and the longer term consequences for the health and

well being of the population. Again, the Irish sports Council is recommending a policy whereby there is effectively a Sports Officer in each county. In 2001, the Irish Sports Council is to resource eight counties (not including South Tipperary) to establish/run Local Sports Partnerships.

During the consultations carried out to date by the Cultural Working Group, a clear consensus has emerged on the value of professional support by means of designated officers. The Working Group is seeking more detailed empirical analysis to support or discount the consensus. (All of the data reviewed to date re heritage, sport and arts is supporting the consensus).

From a County Development Board perspective (and if the empirical evidence clearly supports the consensus), there is a need to ensure a coherent delivery of professional support to culture. The issues facing each of the three main components (arts, culture and sport/leisure) of the cultural sector are largely the same – increasing participation, sourcing and developing volunteers, developing facilities, improving the cultural offer, etc

Some resources are already available from the Arts Council, the Heritage Council, the Irish Sports Council) albeit with tight restrictions (only to the Local Authority, only to specific companies, etc). What is emerging across the country is a vertical approach – with specific officers for Arts, Heritage, Sports, largely located in the Local Authority Structure. The Cultural Working Group is recommending a strategic option that in each county there is a ‘Cultural Team’ led by a Cultural Officer, to whom all members of the cultural team report. The cultural team could be organized on vertical lines – specialist for arts, sports, heritage, etc (funding will come in this way) or in a horizontal approach with specific cross-cutting officers for ‘voluntary sector support’, ‘facility planning and development’ ‘product enhancement’, marketing and promotion of the product’ etc.

An agreed facility development strategy

There is a strong correlation between cultural spend/participation and the availability of facilities. Research carried out by the Cultural Working Group in West Tipperary and Slieve Ardagh highlights the importance of facilities.

Minimum facilities need to be considered at three levels:

- ❖ Community level – focus on multi-usage of facilities (access to a hall that can accommodate arts/crafts and indoor sport and recreation activity; access to a sportsfield that can accommodate play and outdoor recreation facilities; access to heritage aspects)
- ❖ Sub-county facilities – focus on smaller sized specialized facilities (for a main town and the communities in its hinterland): include small specific centers for performing arts, heritage, library and specialized sports facilities (sports hall)

- ❖ County facilities – focus on larger scale specialized facilities (for the population of the county); such as a municipal theatre, arts centre, museum/heritage centre, etc.

The County already has a kaleidoscope of facilities at all three levels. What is needed is a strategy that plans for a generation – 20 to 30 years (plans for the upgrading/renewal of existing facilities and also addresses gaps in the existing provision).

Currently, the provision of cultural infrastructure is highly dependent on voluntary fund raising. Given the pressure on volunteerism generally as life and work styles change, a development strategy based on voluntary fund raising is not sustainable. From a cultural perspective, raising matching funding for infrastructure is also not an efficient use of volunteer time.

The public purse is partly resourcing cultural infrastructure but in an uncoordinated manner. Often, as in the case of FAS schemes, the improved community facility is a byproduct of the main aim to upskill people who are seeking work. Also, the community promoter must often apply to a range of agencies, involving considerable administrative hardship, in order to get a project completed.

What is needed is a more coordinated and direct approach to the provision of cultural infrastructure, ideally tied into a ‘Generation facility development plan for South Tipperary’.

Volunteer Recognition

A major issue for South Tipperary and for the country generally is the profile of volunteers at a time of rapid life/work style changes and an acknowledged decline in social capital. A worrying feature of the consultations with volunteers is the age profile – more than 90% of volunteers consulted have at least 20 years voluntary experience. During the consultations, the view of volunteers was that younger people will volunteer but for a specific job and for a limited period of time. There is a perception that these volunteers want more than just the good will of the community. Volunteers want ‘real support’ – structured, integrated transparent and agreed resourcing. Volunteers also want more recognition especially of the specific skills they bring to/develop in their voluntary roles and to opportunity to get formal qualifications through their voluntary work. Tipperary Institute will have much to offer in this regard and additional qualifications should help make volunteers more competitive from a career development perspective.

The cultural development of the county cannot be met without continuing substantive voluntary effort. There is an imperative to ensure a continuous flow of volunteers and that volunteer time is productively spent on delivering cultural services. There is no doubt that this delivery is enhanced by a co-ordinated back up (such as that delivered with resources via the FAS CE schemes).

The decline in volunteerism has been disguised to some extent by the delivery of cultural services with the support of FAS CE schemes (such as sports development officers; heritage centre officers; etc). The FAS resources have been of major benefit to the delivery of cultural services in the county. There are drawbacks and voluntary groups are very concerned about sustainability issues. Volunteers are requesting 'real support' in that public resources are provided directly to support cultural service delivery rather than being dependant on the good will of public bodies who have their own objectives to achieve (for example in the case of FAS – the upskilling of the participant so that he/she is competitive for available paid employment has to be the prime objective).

The volunteer enhancement aspect of the County Cultural Strategy also needs to focus on upskilling and qualifications so that structured pathways are available for new volunteers that will assist their general career prospects. New legislation (geared to protecting children, Education Welfare Bill) will also create an impetus for volunteer qualifications. There may also be an impetus towards further public expenditure on the provision of cultural services in partnership with the voluntary sector.

More emphasis participation and outreach services

Participation is at the heart of a cultural vision for South Tipperary. An outreach strategy can complement the facility development strategy in ensuring that the entire South Tipperary population has opportunities to engage in cultural activities. The Cultural Working Group has a firm view that the onus is on cultural product providers to reach out to the general population in proven ways and in new innovative ways to enable its customers improve and enhance their quality of life. A number of cultural providers are availing of the FAS resources to do just that.

Analysis (see SWOT overleaf)

The Working Group recommends that if the County Cultural Strategy is to make any difference, it must:

- build on the strengths (pieces of the jigsaw),
- address the weaknesses (jigsaw pieces are disjointed),
- optimise the opportunities (there is increasing empirical evidence that culture impacts on quality of life, there is more funding available and this funding needs to be directed strategically to professional backing/co-ordination, to facilities that are accessible and sustainable (appropriate level); to volunteer support and to outreach activities that will increase participation in culture)
- minimise the threats by finding the right balance in communicating with the stakeholders (consensus on the way forward with all key stakeholders agreed and clear on strategies including volunteer enhancement; and in communicating with the general population (activities that enhance critical faculties, visual awareness, appreciation of excellence and participation in culture.

SWOT Review of the Cultural Situation of the County

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>More experience among key players in culture of outreach (especially supported by FAS schemes)</p> <p>Range of cultural excellence – sport, music, theatre, heritage, crafts, etc</p> <p>There are some good facilities already in the county</p> <p>Local community radio which can reflect the culture of its franchise area</p> <p>More evidence that culture enhances quality of life</p>	<p>Previous efforts to co-ordinate Arts Sector in 1996 led to disillusionment</p> <p>No co-ordinated vision regarding culture</p> <p>The sector is fragmented with individual groups operating largely in darkness – not aware that others face same issues and that unity could be strength in dealing with public bodies. The survival of many new cultural groups contingent on luck.</p> <p>The quality of facilities varies throughout the county. Some facilities such as the Regal under threat. Others cannot be easily accessed (especially by children).</p> <p>Lack of dedicated professionals whose job is to co-ordinate arts, heritage, sport, etc in the county</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>The CDB can put the jigsaw together</p> <p>Agreement on a Facility Typology Strategy for county, sub county and community areas</p> <p>Get CDB consensus on the development of acceptable access strategies when public funding is given to any cultural facility</p> <p>Funding opportunities – Arts Council, Heritage Council, Irish Sports Council, etc</p> <p>Promote, export and import excellence in culture</p>	<p>Local government and the public sector in South Tipperary may not take up the new opportunities to promote/advance culture in the county</p> <p>Decline in volunteers</p> <p>Focus of funding will remain on bricks and mortar rather than on the use of facilities</p> <p>Changes in lifestyles and the impact of mass media if the critical faculties of the South Tipperary population do not continue to be developed</p> <p>Danger of intervening too strongly and to find the balance between communication via the culture and communication about the culture.</p>

Progress Report from the Economic Working Group:-

Summary

Job creation needs to remain a priority. If people have jobs, almost everything else falls into place. The Economic Working Group's perspective on **the value** that a County Economic Strategy needs to **add to the economic situation** of South Tipperary is:

- Build on the Tipperary Brand name to promote quality goods and services from the County
- Shorten access times within the County and from the county to the main cities, ports and airports in Ireland
- Take on the role of 'matchmaker' by facilitating better matches: between the skills base/qualifications of the population and available jobs; between education supply and industry development; within and between sectors in the economy to optimise value added potential; between entrepreneurs (especially farmers and small retailers) and new opportunity areas; between micro businesses and external markets; between growing Clonmel as a nationally significant economic location and balanced development in the county; etc

Branding and promotion

The Tipperary name has significant penetration in international markets because of the song. This presents County Tipperary with a significant competitive advantage provided the recognition of the name can also be associated with quality.

The food/drinks, tourism, craft, and health sectors provide obvious opportunity areas on which to build a strong 'Tipperary' brand. Private companies (water, crystal) have successfully exploited the 'brand'. The former Tipperary County Strategy Group has initiated a County Food Strategy development process, which has been co-ordinated by the Tipperary Leader Group and will be published shortly.

A major threat in relation to developing the Tipperary brand is the additional co-ordination and integration required for stakeholder consensus and action arising from the placement of the two administrative counties (North and South Tipperary) in two separate regions. Consultations on tourism in particular have flagged county integration in the promotion of tourism as a key objective for the County Economic Strategy.

Tipperary Institute represents an excellent example of how the threat of administrative difficulty can be overcome.

Access times within the county and to key destinations (Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon, Rosslare, Waterford)

A quality job within 30 minutes commuting time is the main output desired from economic strategy by each adult member of the South Tipperary population. Consequently, access times and availability of access modes within the county and to neighbouring urban centres are important indicators of economic progress.

South Tipperary has a locational advantage in being at the cross roads of the N8 and N24. The National Development Plan's focus on upgrading National Roads provides an opportunity to shorten access time to external markets. The challenge in upgrading the infrastructure in County Tipperary is to ensure that there are sufficient access points to the new main roads in the county, so that the smaller towns and villages are not further disadvantaged.

Access time to airports which are substantive international hubs is a critical indicator for future competitiveness. The decisions likely to emerge from the work on the National Spatial Strategy in relation to airport development will be critical. In the absence of an international airport serving the centre of the country and following consultations with a variety of economic interests, there are many in South Tipperary who favour the strategic option of growing international services at Cork Airport.

Facilitating better matches

Between the skills base/qualifications of the population and available jobs

- ❑ Upskilling of those at work to encourage mobility
- ❑ Confidence building measures for those not at work
- ❑ Target education supply at new job opportunity areas and new industry initiatives

Within and between sectors in the economy to optimise value added potential

- ❑ Cluster based approach to economic development
- ❑ Clustering of tourism amenities (packaging and promotion)
- ❑ Extending the tourism season (linking to health and education)
- ❑ Create links between food and health, crafts and health, etc

Between entrepreneurs (especially farmers and small retailers) and new opportunity areas

- ❑ Transfer of existing skills to new opportunities
- ❑ Identification of new opportunities which suit sub-supply to a marketing body
- ❑ Training in new skills

Between businesses and external markets

- ❑ Linkage to quality brands
- ❑ Capacity building in design skills
- ❑ Capacity building in marketing
- ❑ Matching sub-suppliers with larger companies
- ❑ Development of management skills to focus on becoming nationally/internationally competitive

Between growing Clonmel as a nationally significant economic location and balanced development in the county

- ❑ A spatial economic strategy for the county that facilitates job location by size of settlement (larger industry nearer the larger settlements; micro industry in rural areas)
- ❑ Clarification of roles of key towns in the overall county context in attracting much more investment to the county

SWOT Review of the Economic Situation of the County

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Central location with significant roads and information technology infrastructure passing through the county</p> <p>The name ‘Tipperary’ has a relatively strong recognition factor outside of Ireland</p> <p>High numbers of self employed</p> <p>Cluster of medicare, food/drink industries, stud farms</p> <p>Balanced urban infrastructure</p>	<p>Administrative split in Ireland places the county of the periphery of the sub-region</p> <p>Existing airports poorly positioned</p> <p>Only 7 industries employing 100 +</p> <p>Skills profile of unemployed labour mismatched with job opportunities</p> <p>Limited diversity in agriculture and food</p> <p>Size of biggest town is small in international terms</p> <p>Internationally traded services sector weak</p> <p>Lack of a university in the South East Region</p> <p>Poor public transport infrastructure</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Tipperary Institute – focus for targeted research and development</p> <p>Upgrading of National roads</p> <p>Concentration on added value by pursuing clustering and linkage strategies</p> <p>County Development Board – provide basis for trust that will lead to strong co-ordinated direction to sectors (especially regarding marketing)</p> <p>Alternative energy creation</p> <p>Integrated transport system</p>	<p>National Spatial Strategy may select a strategic option for airport development that will not suit South Tipperary</p> <p>Not being pragmatic about a strategy for industry location in the county</p> <p>Limited and ageing labour pool</p> <p>More land required to maintain farm viability and other sectors also vulnerable to increased competition</p> <p>Medium term shortages in waste handling facilities in the County</p>

Progress Report from the Social Inclusion Working Group

Summary

The purpose of the County Social Strategy is to add value to the relation between the citizen and service provision (public, local development, community, etc). Four critical areas of intervention that can make a difference to the social situation of the county have been identified in the work of the Social Inclusion Working Group and its Segment Sub-Groups to date:

- Integrated, holistic, humane and targeted approach to service provision for the socially excluded
- Pro-active strategies for the provision of information, consultation, brokerage, measurement of performance, etc., among service providers so that the services delivered are based on a deeper knowledge and a better understanding of the needs of clients
- Focused support for the evolvement of the community and voluntary sector in targeting social inclusion
- (For the Economic Strategy) Role of ‘matchmaker’ by facilitating better matches: between the skills base/qualifications of the population and available jobs.

Integrated, holistic, humane and targeted approach to service provision for the socially excluded

Creating a more inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is one of the major challenges facing Irish society nationally and locally.

A citizen may suffer from a diverse range of social exclusion and marginalisation experiences (from production, consumption, social networks, decision making and an adequate quality of life). But service provision is largely structured to meet the needs of the service provider rather than the citizen who is socially excluded.

Both the public and local community response to dealing with the citizen is largely based on addressing individual components of the social exclusion experience. In some cases, when addressing a single component of the social exclusion experience, the citizen is faced with dealing with more than one agency. Occasionally the sub-county boundaries of the service provider vary, so that the citizen is faced with trips to different towns. Quite often, the personnel in the respective agencies do not even know each other, much less than having a system of liaison in dealing with ‘shared’ clients.

There are significant resources available to address social exclusion but these resources are finite. Not every social exclusion issue can be addressed in the short term.

Addressing social exclusion at county and sub-county level begs for:

- ✓ an integrated approach from service providers
- ✓ a holistic approach that ensures that specific components of the provision delivered by individual agencies complement an agreed approach to resolving the diverse nature of the social exclusion experienced by the citizen
- ✓ a humane and customized approach where the citizen is treated with respect and plays a significant role in the decisions on the approach to resolving his/her (family) experience of social exclusion.
- ✓ A targeted approach in addressing specific groups (and individuals within those target groups) reflected in common policies across service providers and in the delivery of a holistic and humane approach with customized resolutions for those most in need. (The CDB has specifically identified elderly, disabled, travelers and refugees/asylum seekers as priority target groups).

Pro-active strategies for the provision of data, information, consultation, brokerage, measurement of performance, etc among service providers so that the services delivered are based on a deeper knowledge and a better understanding of the needs of clients

The integrated, holistic, humane and targeted approach is proposed to ensure that ‘things are done right’. The service providers will be providing services based on national policies, on regional policies and, in some cases on local policies.

Another dimension is to ensure that the right things are being done. There is an obligation on the county to be pro-active in ensuring that policies are meeting the needs of the socially excluded in the county. Strategies are required for:

- ✓ The provision of baseline data and ongoing measurement of data sets that accurately reflect the social inclusion situation of the county
- ✓ The provision of information using more effective communication systems (eg. via the citizens information centres). Information needs to be accessed by citizens experiencing social exclusion so that they can more fully participate in providing feedback on the quality of policies/services designed to improve their quality of life.
- ✓ Clarifying the meaning of the term ‘consultation’ and getting consensus from service providers on getting direct feedback/opinion from citizens directly affected when carrying out reviews or proposing new developments of policies and strategies.
- ✓ Where there are gaps in clarity among service providers, brokerage and negotiation may be needed to ‘tweak’ existing service provision and find ‘informal solutions’ until policies/strategies can be formally reviewed.
- ✓ Measurement of the performance of social inclusion initiatives so that the county can influence the retention of policies/strategies that are working and the amendment/dropping of those policies/strategies that are not meeting expectations.

Focused support for the evolution of the community and voluntary sector in targeting social inclusion

A major issue for South Tipperary and for the country generally is the profile of volunteers at a time of rapid life/work style changes and an acknowledged decline in social capital. This decline is coinciding with increasing demands on the community and voluntary sector to:

- ❖ Engage in social partnership at levels above the community (policy and strategy design)
- ❖ Deliver more services locally (in partnership with public and local development agencies; having to create new legal companies and spending significant additional time on administration)
- ❖ Influence citizens locally in building a more socially inclusive society.

This conundrum between supply (voluntary resources) and demand (from locals for existing cultural, social, environmental and economic groups; from locals to represent them in their engagement with the state; from the state to engage beyond the community door; and from the state to deliver more services locally) must be addressed in the County Social Strategy. (The Cultural Working Group has also raised this issue).

Given its limited resource (number of volunteers and hours available), the community and voluntary sector is not going to engage for very long in 'beyond the community door' activities with the state unless there are clear commitments to facilitating their involvement. A key indicator for the community and voluntary sector is acceptance as 'an equal partner' and access to training and other resources to enable it to perform as 'an equal partner'.

The engagement between the community and voluntary sector and the arms of the state (public and local development service providers) has to be negotiated as part of the County Social Strategy.

(For the Economic Strategy) Role of 'matchmaker' by facilitating better matches: between the skills base/qualifications of the population and available jobs.

Employment is seen as the key tool in tackling social exclusion and marginalisation. The recommendation of the Economic Working Group on matching the social and economic needs of the county is endorsed by the Social Inclusion Working Group. (Economic) resources need to be targeted at growing the 'social capital' of the county. This involves building the self-esteem and confidence of those who cannot currently engage with work because of cumulative negative experience with the institutions of the state and, in some cases, the structures and culture of local communities.

SWOT Review of the Social Situation of the County

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Tradition of co-operation and voluntary endeavor</p> <p>All stakeholders engaging in CDB process</p>	<p>Insufficient integration among service providers in the county on most key social exclusion issues</p> <p>Poor social and community infrastructure, community/youth centres, childcare, sports facilities etc.</p> <p>Inadequate rural transport provision</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Additional resource provision targeted at addressing blockages in the national Development Plan</p> <p>Available labour force/Tipperary Institute may help address match with new jobs</p> <p>Willingness of stakeholders to engage in integrated/holistic responses</p> <p>Engage with more young people in the design/delivery of strategies</p> <p>Continued growth of the voluntary and community group platform</p>	<p>Insufficient consensus to target resources (both locally and nationally)</p> <p>Insufficient acceptance of key socially excluded target groups among the wider community</p> <p>Insufficient community acceptance of the social costs of alcohol abuse and accidents in order to change the culture of Irish society</p> <p>Inability to resolve the volunteer supply and demand conundrum</p> <p>Decline of services to rural areas (if replacement jobs for losses in agriculture not found within short commuting time)</p> <p>Lack of resources (addressing waste water and serviced land deficits) to attract private housing into town and village centres and help sustain services</p>

