

DRAFT

Meeting Report from the Economic Programme Management Group (EPMG) Tuesday 21 February 2006

Chair: John Quinn for Ned O'Connor

Attended: Moya Breen, Isabel Cambie, Claire Cashman, Oliver Clancy, Tommy Cooke, Michael Dee, Billy Doyle, Toss Hayes, Walter Heneghan, Eileen Horgan, Bernard Lennon, Celine McHugh, Donal Mullane, Bill O'Gorman, Peter O'Keeffe, John Quinn, Phil Shanahan, Billy Shoer, Sheevaun Thompson.

Apologies: John Condon, Ned O'Connor, Tom Ryan and Phil Shanahan

Meeting

Agenda Item 1: John Quinn chaired for Ned O'Connor. There was no matter arising from the last meeting report.

Agenda Item 2: Delivery of Broadband in South Tipperary and the South East
Sheevaun Thompson (SERA) and Peter O'Keeffe (Premier Broadband) gave an update on the roll out of broadband to date. Sheevaun has taken over from Mary Wixted as the coordinator of broadband projects in the SE.

- Premier Broadband received funding through the group broadband scheme to deliver wireless broadband to communities who participated in the application. The company is now rolling out the broadband to these communities. It is expected that all these communities will have roll out by the end of 2006. See www.premierbroadband.net for coverage area and to see if your community participated in the last round. Peter gave an update of roll out so far which included 7 communities live, 5 online and being tested and over 60 customers connected to date which is great progress. Premier Broadband is also looking for some sites to place ariels, so any community, or agency assistance would be appreciated.
- It is anticipated that the Department will announce another call for community broadband soon. Sheevaun Thompson sheevaun.thompson@southtippcoco.ie 052 26200 will coordinate the application once it is announced. If there are communities that you know of who would be interested in participating, please let Sheevaun know.
- The roll out of broadband to Cashel, Cahir, Carrick on Suir and Tipperary Town has been delayed by the Department. It is expected that any remaining issues will be sorted out within the next couple of weeks. However it is likely to be Spring 2007 before the towns receive fibre optic broadband.

Agenda Item 3: Draft Influencing Document from South Tipperary County Development Board re the 2007-2013 National Development Plan

John Quinn circulated the draft document which is a five-page summary of an underlying thirty-five-page document. The document will go out to all CDB members this week for comment, which will be welcome at any time before the end of the month. Relevant Board members and Agencies are requested to meet and identify any missing priorities. A twin pronged approach will be used to influence the NDP in relation to the South Tipperary submission. The document will be submitted and C&E staff will work with responsible board members and agencies on influencing relevant Minister.

Agenda Item 4: Entrepreneurial Region

Bill O’Gorman, Centre of Entrepreneurship, WIT, outlined the notion of developing the SE as an entrepreneurial region. There are a number of agencies, research and educational institutions working on individual projects. The concept of these projects working under an overall ‘umbrella’ of the ‘SE entrepreneurial region’ was discussed. An example of the benefit of working under an umbrella was outlined: - SERA and the Centre of Entrepreneurship are both engaged in separate European initiatives. Rather than each project calling separate meetings, it would be more beneficial to hold one meeting where the two projects are discussed as they would have mostly the same participants at each meeting. More projects can be added to the meeting agenda as projects arise. Bill announced that there would be a meeting with key stakeholders with a view to preparing an implementable strategic plan. The meeting will be at the new WIT campus in Waterford on 28 February. Bill is contactable at 051 302947 wogorman@wit.ie if you are interested in participating.

Discussion revolved around a number of points:

- What would the model look like? Possibly a booklet with a set of procedures and criteria for the region to assess itself by. It would identify stages of development.
- Need to do something for ourselves on the low levels of entrepreneurship in the region
- Need to have an autonomous funded group to drive entrepreneurship in the SE
- Possibility of having a ‘common file’ between agencies to simplify entrepreneurial and community paperwork
- Need to look at the way we do things in the SE
- Need to ensure that the model would examine the effect of the dominant position of Dublin and other issues/barriers and would identify ways to overcome them.
- Need to connect international companies in Ireland with local entrepreneurs.
- WIT, SERA, EI and South Tipperary Co Co have bought into the concept.

Action: Community forum asked to bring the concept of ‘common file’ to the SPC and LEADER boards that they participate on.

Action: Agencies, groups involved in entrepreneurship to consider attending the WIT workshop.

Agenda Item 5: Update on Renewable Energies

Tommy Cooke circulated an eye-opening document updating the group on the renewable energy situation in the county and in the country. Ireland has high exposure on imported energy. Other countries are making great strides to lessen their dependence on fossil fuels. Ireland seems to have a blinkered approach. South Tipperary has a poor record and a lack of clarity around wind energy. Wind energy provision needs to be prioritised. At the end of the presentation, Tommy identified a number of recommendations which the meeting agreed needed to be prioritised immediately (see document). There was discussion around the measures other countries have taken; possibilities for Irish entrepreneurs to get involved in production of wind mills – there is a 4 year wait for windmills – but there is a component shortage too; the effect of excise relief on biofuels in other countries; government supports to grid connection and guaranteed prices.

Action: Chair and Director of Planning to bring the relevant recommendations through the SPCs to the Council.

Action: Community Forum to look at supporting renewable energies

Action: Bill O’Gorman will look at sub-component supply issues.

Agenda Item 6: Update on Equine action

The equine action has been on hold for a number of years, but it is now in a position to proceed. There was a recent meeting facilitated by Teagasc. The meeting looked at the existing data on the equine industry and decided that it was necessary to commission a study of the industry in the county, with a view to establishing a baseline study and making recommendations. An independent consultant would need to be engaged. Funding is to be sought through LEADER companies, although there is now a waiting list on both LEADER company books waiting for additional funding from the Minister. There would be no certainty on funding from there at this stage. North and South Tipperary County Council would be able to contribute to the project, but other funds would be necessary.

Action: Teagasc will submit an application to LEADER as soon as possible.

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

1. John Quinn outlined the steps that had been taken by the CDB officials group in the wake of the SRAM closure announcement in Carrick on Suir. The CDB officials group that was set up to deal with job losses after the closure of PALL in Tipperary Town functioned immediately on the SRAM announcement. The IDA, FÁS, EI and the Town Council worked together to keep all parties fully up to date with events. An Enterprise Ireland client has expressed interest in buying the factory building. FÁS is set to meet employees to look at retraining options and will work in collaboration with the Enterprise Ireland client and SRAM/SRAM employees.
2. In response to a concern from the business pillar about a perceived lack of County Council economic input into Carrick on Suir, John Quinn outlined the current economic situation in Carrick.
 - Three hundred acres have been rezoned industrial on a Ronan /Treasury Holdings site. The developer has indicated a four-year timeframe to develop the site and create jobs.
 - Work is ongoing to secure the most advantageous outcome for jobs and development following the loss of SRAM.
 - The Tourism and Economic Development Group has full support of the Council
 - The town manager is working to set up a think tank group similar to that in Tipperary Town.
 - Overall, the economic scene in Carrick is very positive.
 - The economic strategy of the county is to focus on Clonmel, as the county needs a driving force to hold its own with larger cities and towns. The second tier of towns, Carrick, Tipperary Town and Cashel are also part of the economic strategy, decentralisation being part of the plan for Carrick and Tipperary Town. Unfortunately as yet Carrick has not been allocated a decentralised department. However there is significant economic activity being developed on an ongoing basis.

Next meeting: Tuesday 19 September 2006 @ 2.15 pm in Ballingarrane or the Museum (to be confirmed), Clonmel.