

DRAFT

Meeting Report from the Economic Programme Management Group (EPMG) Tuesday 15 November 2005

Chair: Ned O'Connor

Attended: Moya Breen, Isabel Cambie, Gabrielle Carroll, Oliver Clancy, Terry Cunningham, Michael Dee, Toss Hayes, Walter Heneghan, Eileen Horgan, Bernard Lennon, Ned O'Connor, John Quinn, Tom Ryan, Billy Shoer.

Apologies: Claire Cashman, John Condon, Tommy Cooke, John Doyle, Celine McHugh, Donal Mullane, Phil Shanahan.

Meeting

Agenda Item 1: Moya Breen (TI) and Tom Ryan (Agriculture Pillar) were welcomed to their first meeting of the Economic Programme Management Group.

The Chair, Ned O'Connor set the scene for the topic of meeting, which was to identify the main economic points that need to be included in the County submission to the next National Development Plan. South Tipperary needs to ensure that its position (with Clonmel as a de facto hub under the Regional Planning Guidelines) is fully recognised with suitable resources allocated to the county to enable the County to fulfill its role in the National Spatial Strategy.

Agenda Item 2: Development of the food industry in Tipperary

Isabel Cambie outlined the activities that have been carried out through Tipperary LEADER on the micro food industry. (Strategic Action Plan had been circulated). It was agreed that the key areas where support for the food sector (particularly niche food production) should be focused are:

- Capital Support
- Training
- Access to markets and new outlets
- Address the exodus of women from farming. They were the 'connect' between farming and local food production/supply.

Agenda Item 3: Renewable Energy

Gabrielle Carroll made a presentation on behalf of BNS Leader Company. (Document had been circulated). Following discussion it was agreed that the key areas where support should be focused are:

- Preparation of an Integrated Renewable Energy strategy
- Grants for developing renewable energy pilots that will give leadership in local renewable energy production
- Developing interest in the area of renewable energy
- Overcoming the difficulties in making connections to the Grid
- Competitive taxation/grants for renewable energy use

Within the County the following actions are needed:

- Look at restrictions in Local Development Plans
- Consider a derogation for windmills less than 8m from buildings
- Bring 2 SPCs together to look at the issues with an input from Meitheal na Gaoithe

Agenda Item 4: Entrepreneurial/Sectoral Groups/Skills Groups

Michael Dee made a presentation on Skill Requirements in the Region. (Presentation notes had been circulated.)

A summary of the discussion identified that data is only available at a regional or national level. These indicate that there are looming problems in the manufacturing sector (falling numbers); construction (will plateau); and pharmaceutical (will drop). These three in particular will affect South Tipperary. On the positive side, Retail, Tourism and the Services sectors will grow.

The county (and region) is taking steps to address the matching of skills with job requirements including:

- Access time to work has been targeted and the Dual Carriageway Dublin/Cork and imminent improvements to the Limerick/Waterford road will bring places closer.
- FÁS is undertaking a regional survey of 4000 employers, results due in Q1 2005, which will indicate what skills training is needed.
- More promotion of the IT sector is needed
- Eight out of ten new jobs in the region are being created in the services sector. The region should be in a position to attract its fair share of these jobs.
- The SE is not performing well with the new business start –ups with potential to grow. South Tipperary has only 1 participant in the current Enterprise Ireland programme.
- SERA has applied for funding to develop a database of graduates from the region, who can then be targeted as a place to start business.
- More work can be done to develop the SE as an Entrepreneurial Region.

Agenda Item 5: Other Economic Items to be included in the NDP submission for funding post 2006

- Development of niche research in pharmaceuticals processes and equine matters
- Attract students into science; languages; sales and marketing. These are areas of expertise that the multi-nationals have developed and carried out in marketing their products. As there will be fewer multi-national set-ups in the Country, it will be necessary to develop Ireland's expertise in these areas.
- Advanced back to work courses for women who are in their 40s and 50s who have degrees that they have not used.
- Train services that suit the public need to be provided.

Agenda Item 6: Community Forum Consultation

A handout was circulated identifying the main issues arising from the Community Forum consultations as well as consultation with the IFA. Both of these consultations are being finalised and agreed.

Agenda Item 7: Any other business

Broadband: Premier Broadband has been awarded funding for the roll-out of wireless broadband throughout South Tipperary. The company expects to have 200 homes and businesses connected before the end of 2005 and full county coverage by the end of 2006. Their website is www.premierbroadband.net

Tourism: The major infrastructure required at this stage for tourism is hotels. John Quinn gave an overview of the progress of hotel development in the county, including the start of building at the Poppy Fields in Clonmel and the Kings Castle site in Cashel. Blarney Woollen Mills intend to proceed with hotel development in 2006. Ballingarrane is progressing in discussions with operators. The planning application for Cahir is currently with an Bord Pleanála and there is a planning application in process for Marlfield. On the issue of a tourist office for Clonmel, it was agreed that as there is a full time office in Cashel, SERTA is unlikely to operate a full time office in Clonmel. So a local solution is needed where a tourist office is supported locally by a number of community groups. An example of this is in Carrick on Suir, operated by the Carrick Development Association, contact person is Patsy Fitzgerald.

Next meeting: Tuesday 21 February 2006 @ 2.15 pm in Ballingarrane, Clonmel.