

DRAFT

**Meeting Report from the Economic Programme Management Group (EPMG)
Tuesday 22 February 2005**

Chair: John Quinn

Attended: Isabel Cambie, Claire Cashman, Oliver Clancy, Tommy Cooke, Eileen Horgan, Bernard Lennon, Celine McHugh, Donal Mullane, Caroline O'Reilly, John Quinn, Billy Shoer.

Apologies: John Condon, Michael Dee, John Doyle, Toss Hayes, Walter Heneghan, Ned O'Connor, Nicholas Ryan.

Meeting

Agenda Item 1: Celine McHugh (IDA) and Billy Shoer (Trade Union Sector) were welcomed to their first meeting of the Economic Programme Management Group.

Matters arising from the last meeting notes.

- Agenda Item 4: 'Ahead of the Curve'. The Government has not yet announced any decision relating to the document. The CDB will prepare a response once decisions are announced.
- Agenda Item 5: John Quinn outlined activity on progressing Broadband delivery in the region to date.
 - A group broadband scheme for rural areas has been announced. South Tipperary Co C is leading an initiative to bring a regional working group together to make a cohesive and comprehensive application for wireless broadband coverage in the county/region. This may include the SE /North Tipperary/ Limerick. The regional working group would include the Co Cos, LEADER, Community Forum, TEAGASC, EI, TI, WIT, IDA, SERA, CIE, ESB.
 - SERA has appointed a project officer, Mary Wixted, to coordinate applications to the rural group broadband scheme.
 - SEISS, managed by WIT is working on projects preparing content for broadband.
 - The Clonmel broadband/MANS cabling has been completed. There is poor uptake by the telcos, which is likely due to cost and the minimum amount of broadband width being too high. SERA is following this up with the management company ENET and with the Department.
 - The application for wireless connectivity to Cahir is still being processed by the Department.
 - Bids are ready for a fibre optic cabling in Carrick on Suir and Tipperary Town, and wireless connection for Cashel in anticipation of the next Call for broadband roll out expected this year.

Agreed Action: That the following new economic action would be recommended to the County Development Board for inclusion in the County Strategy:

“Broadband would be available to every rural community in the County”

Coordinating partner: South Tipperary County Council

Supporting partners: BNS LEADER company, Tipperary LEADER

Agenda Item 2: Results Area Number 1.

John Quinn brought the meeting through the Results Based Accountability that has been taken to reviewing CDB economic actions and prioritising actions for 2005-2008. (the document was circulated with the agenda). The priorities were agreed as detailed in the RBA document:

1. *Ballingarrane*
2. *Decentralisation*
3. *Targeting investors to specific sectors:*
4. *Targeting investors to specific locations:*

Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary Town, Cahir, Cashel and Slieve Ardagh.

It was noted that the county needs to develop solutions to the town centre problems and not have development only on the outskirts of towns. Site identification and amalgamation within town centres is required as is the promotion of sustainable projects such as Farmers' Markets.

5. *Other infrastructure*

- Broadband
- Roads
- Rail
- Water/waste
- Energy – this was left out of the CDB picture at the last meeting. The EPMG agreed that the CDB strategy should be more supportive of the local production of renewable energy. The cost now of attaching to the Electricity national grid is prohibitive. Industry needs to respond to this monopoly. The business community needs to be involved in making a submission to the government. Electricity has poor infrastructure in parts of the county.

Action: Caroline to bring back work arising from Tipperary Institute Renewable Energy personnel/TEA and other agencies

In discussion it was agreed that the results area one is broad, but it covers 2005-2008 and actions will be prioritised annually.

Agenda Item 3: Results Area Number 2.

Oliver circulated a document 'FÁS Report, South Tipperary ' and led the discussion. FÁS is leading the economic action to fill available job opportunities by improving skills of the South Tipperary Workforce. (This will be combined with another action listed under the Social Actions). There was a reduction of over 12% in the unemployment rate in the county between 2003 and 2004. At the same time there was a low number of vacancies advised to FÁS. FÁS now sees its role progressing through working more closely with employers to identify the skills they need in the future; training and upskilling those in employment as well as those underemployed and unemployed to take up the new jobs that are being created. It aims to do this through setting up a local interagency groups make the appropriate links between employers, those needing upskilling and the training agencies.

Actions:

1. Implement an information gathering system re emerging employment
2. Implement an inter-agency cooperation strand

3. Localise the work by bringing the data and information to local level networks.

One weakness in the local groups is the employer representation which will have to be addressed. A region wide survey is currently being undertaken by FÁS and FÁS will talk to Tipperary Institute to find solid information trends. There is a need to identify sectors where there are risks and to develop early warning systems.

FÁS is currently prioritising two new programmes to progress this action: Competency Development Programme; and One Step Up Programme.

This strategic approach was accepted by the meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Results Area Number 3.

ICT action: This is currently not being led up. It was agreed that a forum was needed to look at the ICT action and identify what is being implemented and what the potential was. It was agreed that a Broadband group led by the County Council to include Tipperary Institute ICT, LEADER, CEB would take a look at this action with a view to having broadband available to all households in the county within 3 years.

Equine Action: Donal Mullane, TEAGASC, has indicated that there is an opportunity to set up a working group on this action now. It is a big industry in the county and there are employment and training opportunities that would fit with TEAGASC functions as well as the FÁS initiative. He will start this process over the next couple of months.

Agenda Item 5: Regional Dimension

Celine McHugh circulated a document 'Creating and Developing and Entrepreneurial region (attached) prepared by Bill O'Gorman, ERC/WIT and Michael Dee, EI. The main theme is to implement innovative actions that will develop the South East as *The Entrepreneurial Region*.

- A register of businesses in the SE will be ready in 2 months time
- Work is beginning to identify opportunities in the SE. Agencies are connecting with only 13% of companies in the area. It was agreed that the region needs to widen the scale and scope of connecting with entrepreneurs. One theme would be to look at professional services with a view to developing competencies in providing services for non-english speaking companies looking to set up in Ireland.

In addition to the regional item:

- Locally there is a South Tipperary Entrepreneurial Awards scheme to be launched by the Chamber of Commerce over the next couple of weeks.
- Nationally, work is progressing on a project 'Entrefest' to promote/celebrate entrepreneurship. Depending on funding it may begin in the autumn of 2005 or 2006.

Agreed Action:

It was agreed to recommend the following action to the County Development Board
"Creating and Developing the Entrepreneurial Region"
(Incorporating South Tipperary Entrepreneurial Awards and Entrefest)

Agenda Item 6: Integration of economic programme – Is there anything missing?

To assist the EMPG to identify entrepreneurial groups/Sectoral groups from the 84% of businesses not reached by the state enterprise agencies, it was agreed to ask Michael Dee of Enterprise Ireland to make a presentation outlining the profiles of the workforce in all regions at the next meeting.

Examples of the services that could be developed include Sociitors, Architects, Planners, accountants developing the skills to work with companies coming from non-english speaking countries such as China who need these skills to access European and American markets. 20% of employment id in professional services in Dublin. In the SE it is 3%. There is a lot of potential to increase this percentage.

It was agreed to work at a political level through the SPCs to look for a single national telephone call rate.

John Quinn outlined the path of implementation of actions agreed to at these EPMG meetings.

- The economic actions agreed at the EPMG go to the CDB.
- They also go to the Economic Planning and Development SPC for discussion
- Then brought to the Council by the Chair of the SPC.
- It then feeds into the County Development Plan.

Agenda Item 7: Schedule of meetings

Meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of February and September from 2005 – 2008 @ 2.15pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday 20 September 2005 @ 2.15 pm at a Clonmel Venue.