

## EPMG Priority Actions 2010

### Economic Programme Management Group Members

Members:

Cllr Michael Murphy STCC, Moya Breen – TI; Isabel Cambie – STDC; Sinéad Carr – C&E; Anna Tuohy-Halligan – CDP/FRC Network; Margaret Lovatt – FÁS; Clodagh Whelan EI; Thos. Hayes – CEB; Pat Holland – C&E; Bernard Lennon – CVF; Siobhan McEvoy – IDA; Donal Mullane – TEAGASC; Business Pillar representatives: Brian Cleary Clonmel Chamber Sean Moloughney Cashel, Terry Flynn Carrick-on-Suir, Brian English Tipperary town. Mary O Halloran Failte Ireland.

### Aim: Increase the competitiveness of South Tipperary for Investment and income generation

Key Action	Target/Standard/Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
<p><i>Infrastructure:</i> The EPMG will continue to maintain a <b>watching brief</b> on vital <b>infrastructure development</b>, inputting where it can to ensure the county progresses with infrastructure development.</p>	<p><b>Broadband</b> Increased accessibility, availability.</p>	<p>STCC SERA Private Enterprise DCENR ENet</p>	<p>Carrick-on Suir, Tipperary Town/Limerick Junction, Cashel and Cahir broadband infrastructure ‘Lit’.</p> <p>Increasing the usage of the MANS</p> <p>Rural Broadband penetration expanded through Department’s ‘3’ licence.</p>	<p><b><u>Broadband MANS Phase 1</u></b> In Clonmel there are 16 direct connections (compared to 8 at the start of 2009) to the MAN (14 end users, 2 of which have two connections for resilience. Our records indicate that 5 carriers are servicing the area – Smart / BT / Cable &amp; Wireless / Digiweb and UPC. In the case of Digiweb and UPC, there would be multiple end customers benefiting from MAN connectivity, highlighting the fact that the MANS are a middle mile solution allowing multiple last mile or access technologies to complement and work in tandem with them.</p> <p><b><u>Phase 2</u></b> Cahir, Cashel, Carrick on Suir and Tipperary Town were handed over to e net in mid Dec. All of these, except Cashel, have BT backhaul and are available for traffic Enet and other significant stakeholders are trying to overcome the backhaul challenge from Cashel. To date , the following have shown some interest in MAN connectivity (Alza – Cashel, Dep. Of Justice / Pall – Tipperary Town)</p> <p>Rural Broadband project is being delivered by “3”. Twenty-two EDs in South Tipperary have been completed, with five remaining to do (and 72% of Tipperary, north and south completed) and the remainder is to be completed by Autumn of 2010. There are almost 11,000 addresses to be covered in Co. Tipperary (N+S)( see details at end)</p> <p>Eircom continues to enable exchanges, 8 in 2009. Three more are to be enabled but no date for this work is available. There are also six exchanges which will not be enabled of whom three might be partly or totally covered by the NBS (details at end). This would indicate that there may be gaps remaining after the NBS and Eircom programmes as well as incomplete coverage in areas covered.</p>

Key Action	Target/Standard/Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
	<p><b>Business Parks</b> Consolidation of recent development. Strategic planning and development of landbanks.</p>	<p>STCC TI IDA EI CEB Private business</p>	<p>Ballingarrane Marketing campaign continued.</p> <p>Campus Innovation Centre progressed</p> <p>R&amp;D centre grown</p> <p>Private business parks continue development when opportunities arise.</p>	<p>A consultant has been employed to assist in the marketing campaign and there is a reasonable expectation that the first deal will be signed off shortly. A new brochure has been prepared.</p> <p>The Incubation Unit for Tipperary Institute at Ballingarrane is being actively followed up but progress will be delayed due to current negotiations. The R&amp;D Centre in Ballingarrane continues to be active.</p> <p>Anthony FitzGerald has been in the position of Business Development Executive since the beginning of September 2009. A baseline study of industry in South Tipperary has been completed and a number of initiatives have arisen out of this study such as feasibility studies, business to business training (CITE / Intellicom), a profile on the provision of training / upskilling within the County and active management of public business parks within the County. The linkage with Industry is resulting in greater levels of interaction between the business community and the various state agencies.</p>
	<p><b>Hotels</b></p>	<p>Private enterprise</p>	<p>Promote the sustainability of hotels where possible.</p>	<p>Due to the economic climate, there has been little opportunity to progress this initiative.</p>
	<p><b>Rail</b> Upgrade Limerick Junction Rail Station</p>	<p>Iarnród Éireann SERA CDB MWRA</p>	<p>Park and Ride facility, developed.</p> <p>Passenger facilities and services on the Waterford/Limerick rail line improved.</p> <p>Commencement of a joint strategic rail initiative between the SE Region and the Mid West Region on the Limerick – Waterford - Rosslare route.</p>	<p>Due to economic climate, little progress on the actual development of the site which has been given permission. Work by EI on more car parking has started. Services on the Waterford Limerick Line were reduced in service from December 2009 but STCC successfully met with IE to minimise this impact to one service (return) per day being affected. Arising from this an initial meeting has taken place with IE to see if various interests in South Tipperary would actively work with IE to promote the service.</p> <p>The focus of the Strategic Rail Initiative is now being expanded from the county to a regional and cross regional basis. Sinead Carr DoS and Jim O'Mahoney Senior Planner will shortly be starting a series of meetings with Directors of Service and Senior Planners from Wexford, Waterford City, Limerick and perhaps Clare to work on the Strategic Rail Initiative and to agree a regional approach.</p>
	<p><b>Roads</b></p>	<p>SERA STCC CDB</p>	<p>Inclusion of the Tipperary Town and Carrick on Suir by-passes in the NRA programme pre 2013</p>	<p>N 24: The Tipperary town-bypass and roadway to/from it : funding has been received to undertake an Environmental Impact Statement and CPO documentation for the final planning phases this year so that the project will be ready to proceed when funding becomes available. The Carrick by pass and roadway to/from it: the new 2+2 design is just completed and the results, showing the route etc, will go out</p>

Key Action	Target/Standard/ Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
	<i>Childcare infrastructure</i>	STCCC	Strategic Mapping/Zeno Updated Quality Programmes Promoted Childcare Services with CCSS supported Voluntary Notification supported HSE & County Council Child protection workshops supported Childcare providers supported in creating easier access to their services for Traveller children.	on public consultation in the next few weeks  CCC Priorities for 2010 will be 1. sustaining services 2. Administering ECCE & CCSS –Aistear and Siolta 3. Higher Level Training 4. Child Protection Training 5. Capital Budget?
<b>Engineering Sector</b>	<i>Engineering Sector Action</i>	TI FÁS CEB EI STCC Engineering companies	Workshop on European R&D funding held Training & Development Association promoted Action plan developed and implemented	The Engineering Network has now met four times, with the last meeting being an information/training night re grants etc. The network continues to be facilitated by Breda Kenny of TI and financially supported by FAS. A number of other actions are being planned by and for the Network and a programme has been set up.
<b>Energy</b>	<i>Energy Action</i>	STCC Private enterprise ESB DCENR	Creation and implementation of action plan  Identify approaches that eliminate problems associated with delays in connections to the grid.  Wind energy and biogas projects in the pipeline implemented	We are still awaiting a reply re the Gussing application to a joint Oireachtas committee. In the meanwhile PH has been consulting a number of agencies/bodies with a view to identifying potential actions and a list of these has been sent out for consideration and adoption. The next step will be a meeting to confirm these.  It is understood that work will begin shortly on a substation which will allow for the construction and connection of three wind installations in the Hollyford Hills. In addition, Greenside Properties have indicated that they will proceed with the gas powered plant in Cahir in early 2010 (electricity generation)



Key Action	Target/Standard/ Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
	<p>providing for unemployed people.</p> <p>A coordinated approach is required between Tipperary Institute, FÁS, VEC and other agencies such as TEA (Tipperary Energy Agency) as new solutions and programmes are developed and rolled out to those being made unemployed in the county.</p>	<p>FÁS/Carrick Employers' Group</p>	<p>also link into a regional approach that would be the remit of some agencies). Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs analysis</li> <li>• What the agencies can provide</li> <li>• How the agencies can work together</li> <li>• Pooling data</li> </ul> <p>Carrick on Suir Employers Network/Training investigated and progressed</p>	
<p><b>Aim 3: Increase the Economic performance of Targeted Sectors and Grow Entrepreneurship</b></p>				
<p>In the development of a Rural Development Plan /Cohesion plan(s) for the county ensure that the economic component will have a strong emphasis on developing a strategic plan and accessing resources for <i>rural development in Tourism and Food</i></p>	<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <p>County Tourism Structure in place</p> <p>2009 Tourism actions implemented re: Marketing Product Development Training</p>	<p>ST Tourism Company STDC STCC Tourism Trade providers Fáilte Ireland Teagasc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of 'Butler Trail'</li> <li>• Develop and implement a strategy for Internet/website/ on-line booking/visitor surveys</li> <li>• Promotion at Trade shows in Ireland, the UK Germany, Netherlands</li> </ul>	<p><b>Priorities for 2010</b></p> <p>The 2010 Guide Book has been printed</p> <p>Coillte and the Glen of Aherlow Society have prepared and costed plans for a cycling trail in the Glen and it is hoped that this can be developed in 2010 if funding is available</p> <p>It should also be noted that a STDC have facilitated a private entrepreneur to undertake a feasibility study for the setting up of incubation food units in the area and this is expected in April.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of 'Butler Trail' – <i>work is in progress on this initiative – Tourism Development International (TDI) has made a number of progress reports to the board on how this will proceed. OPW senior officials have been contacted and have brought into the initiative. A lot of the "cogs" are in</i></li> </ul>

Key Action	Target/Standard/ Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate potential initiatives</li> </ul> <p>Irish Music Tipperary association with the horse Linking Rock of Cashel with Cashel town</p> <p>Revamp the Tipperary 2011 Holiday Guidebook</p>	<p><i>place – TDI, as a next step will present the board with a proposed “on-the-ground” delivery mechanism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a strategy for Internet/website/online booking/visitor surveys. <i>This is also a W.I.P project. We have had a meeting with North Tipperary Tourism Company and have sought advice from TDI on how best to proceed. The board will be finalising its strategy on this at the next board meeting. In the meantime, a meeting will take place with Steve Dudley – IT manager with Discover Ireland – the main objective is to discuss difficulties / operational issues with the current Discover Ireland site and to see if a consensus can be reached on changes / enhancements that would enable the site to function as “the county” site</i></li> <li>Promotion at Trade shows in Ireland, the UK Germany, Netherlands <i>The company has taken a stand at holiday World 2010 and at the Brussels holiday Fair. We have agreed a schedule of promotions with North Tipperary. As a result of this county Tipperary will be represented at least 16 holiday shows domestically and internationally in 2010. An application for funding has been made to STDC to cover the South Tipperary costs of attending shows</i></li> <li>Investigate potential initiatives</li> </ul> <p><i>Irish Music – A meeting took place with Larbhas and Una O’Murchu at our last Board meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> . David McNulty of TDI will attend Meitheal with the Comhaltas Marketing Manager to get guidance and feedback on the requirements of tour operators their requirements around availability of Irish music. We can then proceed to develop this initiative</i></p> <p><i>Tipperary association with the horse – nothing done yet</i></p> <p><i>Linking Rock of Cashel with Cashel town – Meetings have taken place with Cashel town council. 2 “trail maps” will be developed to “pull” tourists from the Rock and entice them around the town. These trail maps will be aimed mainly at the FYI (Free Independent Traveller segment)</i></p> <p><i>Revamp the Tipperary 2011 Holiday Guidebook – a meeting took place last week with north Tipperary Tourism Company. A timetable of actions has been drawn up with a view to having decided on the format for the redesign and to have funding in place fund the redesigned guidebook</i></p>

Key Action	Target/Standard/ Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
	<p><b>Food</b></p> <p>Develop a Food Network incorporating the artisan/ organic/ high quality commercial food sectors.</p> <p>Identify programme of work/county food &amp; drink plan</p>	<p>STDC STCC Food Network CEB Tipperary Tourism Co Fáilte Ireland TEAGASC EI IDA</p>	<p>Set up interagency meeting led by TI to include, STDC, TEAGASC, CEB, FÁS and Trade.</p> <p>Progress the 'long-table' concept of promoting South Tipperary Food.</p> <p>Action plan developed.</p> <p>Link made with tourism actions for marketing purposes in place.</p> <p>Potential of R&amp;D Development Association considered.</p>	<p>The Tipperary Food Producers Network is a developing food network established in August 2008 by food producers to collectively further the food agenda in Tipperary and to drive their individual business performance through shared learning and development. The Network has identified a total of 66 food producers throughout Tipperary, 28 of these producers are members of the Network. The current chairperson of the network is Mr. Pat Whelan. Since its inception the Network has taken on initiatives that have raised the profile of food within the county.</p> <p>Short term goals and actions, 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop quality criteria for membership</li> <li>• Raise profile of producers locally</li> <li>• Shared distribution</li> <li>• Implement identified training</li> <li>• Networking opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Key Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of all members of the Network and procedure to assess new members to the Network</li> <li>• Roll out of Long Table dinner in four venues across county in conjunction with key restaurants</li> <li>• Attendance as a collective group at key events, St. Patrick's Day, Food Farming Event, Christmas Fairs</li> <li>• Engagement with secondary schools via Connect Programme in September 2010 (again funding through Leader with some assistance under negotiation from Co. Co.)</li> <li>• Engage with Bord Bia re: development of Cluster Distribution</li> <li>• Organise network specific training to develop skills and expertise of producers.</li> </ul>
<p>Prepare an action plan arising from the study of the <b>equine industry</b></p>	<p><b>Equine</b> Tourism</p> <p>Innovative equine projects</p> <p>Investigate the possibilities that exist to expand the range and accessibility of lands for equine pursuits.</p>	<p>TEAGASC CEB Co Co Private enterprise</p>	<p>Equine tourism 'bundle' developed led by North Tipperary CDB.</p> <p>Support Sport Horse project proposed by a private entrepreneur.</p> <p>STDC be asked to consider developing of off road horse riding with</p>	<p>No significant development on the equine front to date. There is some opportunity to develop a tourism product based around Coolmore/Cashel and Fethard.</p>

Key Action	Target/Standard/Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
			Coillte.	
<p>Create an environment within the <b>county</b> that nurtures and celebrates entrepreneurial activity <b>Entrepreneurship</b></p> <p>Create and develop an <b>entrepreneurial region.</b></p> <p>Undertake a County Innovation and Enterprise Strategy</p>	<p><b>County</b></p> <p>Promote a joint approach to fostering <b>entrepreneurship</b> in the county.</p> <p><b>Region</b></p> <p>Identify regional strategies to address the five key issues facing the SE in the current Climate</p> <p>Innovation and enterprise Strategy adopted</p>	<p>South Tipperary Enterprise Forum</p> <p>Spirit of Enterprise CEB Co Co EI STDC IDA</p> <p>Spirit of Enterprise</p> <p>Spirit of Enterprise</p> <p>EI</p>	<p>Agreement on 2010 approach to Forum and Week</p> <p>Implementation of Innovation Strategy</p> <p>Enterprise Week developed and improved.</p> <p>Strategies and coordinated approaches to addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current and pending increasing rate of redundancies</li> <li>• Increasing number of businesses struggling to survive</li> <li>• Lower rate of exports from the region</li> <li>• Less inward FDI</li> <li>• Low rate of high potential start-ups</li> <li>• Increase in start ups of Technology enterprises</li> </ul>	<p>a) A consultation is taking place at regional level regarding the Spirit of Enterprise Forum and the Spirit of Enterprise regional enterprise week in 2010. It is intended to create a new position paper regarding the Forum with suggested objectives and a mission statement.</p> <p>b) ST CDB have (under the Spirit of Enterprise Collaborative network) collated enterprise related statistics (on a county and regional basis) from the various economic development bodies in the region.</p> <p>c) South Tipperary County Council's Interagency Innovation/.Enterprise Strategy has been completed and published and an implementation plan is being put together by Anthony FitzGerald and Pat Holland by consultation with the main stakeholders.</p> <p>d) Enterprise Web site for the County has been developed by STCC with links to key economic development agencies and significant employers. The formal launch has been delayed but is expected later in 2010.</p> <p>e) County data Unit – All relevant agencies committed in 2009 to supporting the practical implementation of a County Data Unit by way of financial commitment and provision of relevant and available data so as to create a multi-agency GIS based data platform for the county. The work of the Unit has now started.</p> <p>(a) Micro-Finance / First Step The CEB &amp; STCC on behalf of CDB had a number of discussions with First Step about accessing micro-finance for start-up &amp; existing enterprises in the county. The first loan application was submitted - First Step have requested additional information to progress the loan proposal to a decision. The applicant has been advised and is currently considering his options.</p> <p>(b) Community &amp; Voluntary Sectors / Clann Credo STCC have had discussions with Clann Credo about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing finance for Community &amp; Voluntary Groups in the county</li> <li>• working with Tipperary Institute to explore the possibility of accessing European Funds</li> </ul> <p>A meeting has been arranged for mid-March 2010.</p>

Key Action	Target/Standard/ Process	Partners	KPI	Progress in year 2010
Hold Enterprise Skills Workshops for 'Technology' sector	Hold workshop and work with other agencies to ensure a good turn-out attendance.			

#### Update from County Childcare Committee

The priorities set out in 2009, included the delivery of relevant training to providers and childminders, increased networking opportunities for the same cohort and sustainability for community services experiencing difficulties. The increase in the numbers of Voluntary Notified Childminders and the dissemination of appropriate grants to them, was also a priority. The committee welcomed the handover of the Parent & Toddler grants from the Katherine Howard Foundation and prioritised the issuing of these to all P&T groups in the county.

#### Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme

The announcement from the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs in April, about the 'Free Pre-school Year or Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) scheme, added a major priority to the County Childcare Committee's work plan for the year.

The administration of the ECCE or Free Pre-school Year quickly became a priority in the second half of the year. It was firstly promoted to all providers in the county and then, seventy three applications were processed. The scheme had to be brought to the attention of parents of eligible children, through information sessions and advertisements in the local press. Local radio stations were utilised through their community noticeboard facility and by conducting live interviews.

There were sixty seven successful applicants who were assisted with compiling their statement of projected income and outgoings for 2010, which would lead to an electronic return being made in January 2010.

#### Provider Training and Networks

The 'Children First' course delivered by the HSE in May to twenty of our childcare services' managers was an important step in the right direction and needs to be built on quickly with a planned programme of further training for 2010 – 2012.

There was high demand for First Aid and Refresher First Aid courses. A full complement of the various Network Meetings were facilitated where relevant information was presented and discussed.

## **CCSS**

A small number of community services received intense support with their administration and childcare planning which allowed them to stay operational until the ECCE scheme started in January 2010. All community services participating in the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) were supported with administration of the scheme and with their financial returns.

### **Childminding**

The number of voluntary notified childminders in the region doubled in 2009. This was brought about by a number of factors;

- The support work carried out with Childminders in 2008 paid dividends.
- The Childminders subsequently voluntary notified and were happy to encourage their colleagues to do the same.
- Having voluntary notified, they quickly availed of the Childminding Development Grant
- A new group of Childminders applied for the Quality Awareness Programme and received support visits in the voluntary notification process by the CMDO.
- Informative childminding network meetings were held around the region and the advisory service was advertised through various media in the county.

## **Structures and Operations**

### **Staff at South Tipperary County Childcare Committee**

The South Tipperary County Childcare Committee staff complement consists of an Administrator, three Development officers and a Manager. One Development officer works a 28 hour week and another works a 31 hour week. The other three staff work a 35 hour week.

Manager – Gerry Hickey.

Administrator – Marian O’Riordan

Childcare Development Officer – Gerardine Boland.

Childcare Development Officer - Elaine McGowran

Childminding Development Officer – Carol Knox

### **The Board of South Tipperary County Childcare Committee**

The South Tipperary County Childcare Committee has a balanced membership to include representatives from the Statutory Sector; the Social Partners, Local Development Partnerships/Groups, National Voluntary Childcare Organisation (NCVO"s), Parents, Providers of Childcare Services in the County and Childminders.

The following stakeholders are currently represented on the South Tipperary County Childcare Committee and vacant positions are also shown:

**Sally Ivers** *Chairperson* - Community & Voluntary Forum  
**Kathleen Prendergast** *Vice Chairperson* - South Tipperary County Development  
**Ann Comerford** *Secretary* - Private Provider Representative  
**Timmy O'Donoghue** *Treasurer* - Irish Farmers Association  
**Tommy Coleman** FÁS  
**Phil Shanahan** South Tipperary Development Company  
**Marian Fitzgerald** Childminding Representative  
**Kathleen Holden-Kelly** Community Providers Representative  
**Margaret Cleary** POBAL  
**Mary Hanna-Hourigan** South Tipperary County Council  
**Teresa Ring** Private Provider Representative  
**Maire Corbett** NVCO  
**Patricia Power** Community Providers Representative  
**Louise Horgan** Parents Representative  
*Currently vacant* Health Service Executive  
*Currently vacant* Dept. of Social & Family Affairs  
*Currently vacant* Trade Union Pillar

Board

## **Collaborations**

STCCC has worked professionally with a variety of bodies, both within the county and nationally during 2009. We have experienced high levels of co-operation and continue to strengthen relationships that have been built up over recent years. The following are some examples of our professional collaborations;

**OMCYA:** Implementing the new ECCE scheme.

**Pobal:** Administering CCSS and supporting community services that were experiencing difficulties.

**Barnardos:** Helped us devise a „Child protection“ code of practice for STCCC staff.

**NCNA:** We worked in partnership with them on their recent publication, ‘A Parents Guide to choosing Childcare’. We had a joint special needs training course and regular liaison on Siolta. We attended their conference.

**HSE:** We co-operate with and contribute financially to joint training courses, such as Child protection, Healthy Eating and Active Pre-school.

**South Tipperary County Council:** Close liaison on all planning applications that have a provision for childcare facilities included within the plan. We share our mapping information as it is updated so that it will be available from the County Data Unit.

**South Tipperary County Development Board:** Attendance at Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) group and Traveller Interagency Forum.

**South Tipperary VEC:** We support their FETAC Level 5 & 6 Childcare training programme.

**FAS:** We administer the subsidised training fund which they provide.

**Tipperary Institute:** Collated our Traveller Childcare Needs survey and produced the report.

**RAPID:** We are represented on the relevant sub-committees of the three RAPID areas of Tipperary South Riding.

**South Tipperary Sports Partnership:** Organising and tutoring the Buntus training for childcare services.

**An Garda Siochana:** ‘Beep Beep’ safe cross training and workshops for non-national families.

**South Tipperary Disability Group Forum:** We contribute information and attend meetings when required.

**Tipperary Libraries:** We supply all relevant publications and information leaflets to the libraries on an ongoing basis.

### **Successes during 2009**

There were a number of significant successes in 2009, as follows;

#### **ECCE**

The ECCE was a welcome programme in South Tipperary with an uptake of 98% of service providers availing of the scheme. STCCC worked continuously to ensure that all OMCYA requirements and timeframes were met. The STCCC team provided phone supports, visits and information sessions to all ECCE recipients ensuring the smooth transition of the ECCE scheme.

### **Capacity Building**

STCCC had a challenging but successful year in terms of Capacity Building, supporting a number of community groups with CCSS, ECCE and financial returns. Many childcare community committees required ongoing intensive assistance on basic committee skills, HR and areas of administration. This work is forecast to continue in 2010.

### **Road Safety Authority**

STCCC was one of five counties/cities to be selected to participate in a pilot Road Safety Pre-School Programme in collaboration with the Road Safety Authority (RSA). This pilot programme was delivered by the STCCC to 23 service providers in South Tipperary as part of the National Road Safety Campaign. All 23 childcare services participated in a 'Beep Beep' day on the 1st October with 463 children participating in the RSA Pre-school programme. Each of the 23 facilities was visited by a member of the STCCC staff on 'Beep Beep' day. The response from the service providers on the day was overwhelming and the feedback was extremely positive towards the programme; some comments included, "*the best programme we have ever been involved in.*" An RSA evaluation sheet was disseminated to all participating services for completion on 'Beep Beep' day.

### **Active Pre-school Policy**

The HSE & South Tipperary Sports Partnership in collaboration with the STCCC organised three Active Pre-school workshops as a pilot with a selected number of providers to develop National Active Pre-school Policy guidelines for all service providers. This was a very positive initiative which is hoped to be continued and completed in 2010.

### **Networks**

In 2009, childcare networks took place in three general areas in South Tipperary, including Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel & Tipperary. Attendance at these networks was high, indicating providers were satisfied attending networks in these areas. There were seven Network meetings throughout the year. Training such as, Arts & crafts, Road Safety Authority Training, Health & Safety, Active pre-school and Creative music & dance was provided through the networks with over 238 childcare providers participating.

### **Training**

The year was a very active and positive one for Training with 400 people attending the 27 courses offered. STCCC held a diverse range of courses covering areas such as LAMH, Manual Handling, First Aid, Documentation in Childcare Regulations and Child Protection Training to mention a few. Providers also enjoyed Play Therapy, Buntus First and Primary Food Hygiene. One of the most successful events was the NCNA Special Needs Awareness Workshop which took place on 3rd October 2009. The Tutor covered many areas of difficulty and special needs from ADHD to Downs Syndrome, and how to look out for these as a childcare worker/ parent. Over twenty Providers attended as did Parents of our Special Needs Network.

Training calendars were designed and printed in-house for the second part of 2009 as it was more economically viable. 250 were printed and disseminated.

### **Childminding**

2009 was a very successful year for the Childminding sector. Eight information sessions were held with an overall attendance of 52. 100 tax books, 200 network leaflets and 250 newsletters were printed and disseminated to Childminders. 16 networks, two story telling sessions and three coffee mornings were carried out. There was an accumulative of 117 Childminders and 36 children in attendance. 310 training calendars were distributed in 2009. Nine childminding development grants were awarded in 2009. 35 joint visits were carried out to date, that is, information regarding voluntary notification and grants given in the same visit. Seven Childminding Development Grant verification visits were carried out. 51 visits were carried out in total. 15 voluntary notifications were received and 30 new childminders identified, giving a total of 54 existing and potential childminders in South Tipperary. 11 Parent and Toddler group grants were awarded. Two Quality Awareness programmes were carried out with 19 in attendance.

### **Child Protection Policy for Childcare Committees**

The committee decided to create a comprehensive policy, which would be available to other committees when completed. We were assisted in this by the local HSE and Barnardos. As part of this initiative, it was agreed that STCCC staff would be Garda vetted.

### **ECCE and CCSS information for Traveller families**

STCCC staff attended Traveller training courses to inform participants of the two schemes. Traveller specific leaflets on both schemes were produced in early winter and given to families with children in the appropriate age range. These leaflets were made available to all other CCCs who could carry out similar promotion. There was

constant liaison with the visiting teachers in the county. The take-up of ECCE places by eligible Traveller children will be recorded in January 2010.

### **Challenges during 2009**

The continuing recession resulted in some services in the county running into financial difficulties. Some Community Services in receipt of CCSS fell into this category also. They were not helped by the anomaly that allows eligible children gain entry to the scheme after the service has made its declaration. It was also expected that the service be able to cover this cost from their contingency, until the next declaration date. STCCC advised services on how to review the delivery of their service in order to sustain the business.

While the ECCE scheme was most welcome in 2009, it presented a difficulty by creating a much greater workload than anticipated for the latter half of the year. It is a testimony to the experience and tenacity of the staff, that the work was dealt with in a professional manner and did not disrupt the previously scheduled work in an adverse way.

Another challenge arising out of the ECCE scheme is the proposal to roll out Aistear and Siolta for all participating services, during 2010. As 2009 ends, we are still unsure as to what role we will have in trying to ensure this is a successful roll-out in South Tipperary in 2010.

Towards the end of the year, we identified that there will be an increasing need for places to accommodate the ECCE scheme through to summer 2013. Without a capital budget for new infrastructure, this will be a problem for the county in the coming years.

Getting Childminders to voluntarily notify is a challenge every year and 2009 was no different. A great deal of work went into getting another twelve Childminders to voluntarily notify and this will have been worthwhile if they are happy with the support and recommend to others in the business that they follow a similar path.

### **Current Provision in the county and remaining gaps**

There are currently 33 community and 38 private services in the county. Together, they provide 1900 childcare places. A new community service, Lullabies & Laughter opened in the Glen of Aherlow in September. Two existing services in Ballyporeen and Ballingarry are on schedule to open new facilities in 2010 and Donohill Childcare will be opening a new facility in September 2010 also.

Three areas have been identified as being in need of additional places. Two of these, Kilsheelan and Fethard had large scale applications turned down in 2009 because of the withdrawal of capital funding in the budget. There is a need for a childcare facility in the „Three Drives“ area of Tipperary town which is a RAPID area. STCCC are working with groups in these areas to come up with a solution.

There are 24 voluntary notified Childminders and another 30 active childminders are known to STCCC. The County Childcare Committee will continue to work with all known Childminders in the region to increase the quality of their services and increase the level of voluntary notification.

We advertised this to all our services in the first half of the year and got a high level of interest. It was then organised with the National Children’s Nurseries Association – NCNA, to start in October and run over the winter. However, when it came to collecting the fees for the course, only six people paid up and the course had to be cancelled.

### **Subsidised training fund:**

This fund was available this year from FAS, albeit on a smaller scale. There were fourteen successful applicants in the first half year appraisal and there is another appraisal in November. We are currently trying to seek an application from FAS for next year’s fund.

### **EPMG:**

The **proposed 2010 work programme** to centre on the following areas but with the facility to discuss other topics including urgent items.

- Broadband: monitor and encourage greater access to better broadband services countywide
- Support and develop business parks and their tenants throughout the county
  - Create opportunities through linkages and sub supply for smaller businesses
  - Develop networks where this would add value from an upskilling perspective, market perspective and information perspective
- Railways: Continue to monitor services and work with IR and the community to better market services and develop commuter services
- Roadways: press for continued progress on Tipperary and Carrick-on-Suir by passes
- Childcare: continue support for childcare programme and for its development
- Engineering and Food networks: continued support for their development and action plans
- Slieve Ardagh group: Work to support the group through a change in emphasis and tactics and so continue the development of the area

- Tourism: continue the actions as outlined in action plan above.
- Continue support and encourage the roll out of entrepreneurial activities including local events in Spirit of Enterprise week and
- Draw up an implementation programme arising from the Interagency innovation and Enterprise Strategy and implement accordingly
- Renewable Energy Initiative: Continue to seek and develop job and other opportunities from this area

## **Broadband details**

### 3 NBS Scheme

The following EDs in South Tipperary have been completed: Burncourt, Clonbeg, Coolagarranroe, Cullen, Emly, Lattin, Rodus, Shronell, Bruis, Poyntstown, Ballygriffin, Derrygrath, Golden, Kilcoran, Kilpatrick, Oughterleague, Thomastown, Tubbrid, Tullaghmelan, Ardfinnan, Cloneen and Garrangibbon.

See Eircom website <http://www.broadbandatoz.ie/your-area.asp?id=65>

The following exchanges were enabled by Telecom in 2009: Newcastle, Mullinahone, Ballylooby, Gortnahoe, Grange, Hollyford, Donohill, and Cappawhite. Three remain to be enabled (according to Eircom website): Ballyporeen, Clerihan and Ballingarry.

There are six exchanges in South Tipperary which will not be enabled by Eircom but which they say (on the web page above) that the 'NBS is expected to cover these areas'

However when we look at the NBS map (on the NBS site <http://bing.bizmaps.ie/threeireland/Pages/Public/NBSPublicPage.aspx> and making allowance for the fact that some locations are very close to NBS areas) I find that

- Aherlow (seems to be covered by NBS)
- Goolds Cross (seems to be covered)
- New Inn (does not seem to be covered but parts of the area will be.)
- Lisronagh (does not seem to be covered)
- Boherlahan (does not seem to be covered)
- Rosegreen (does not seem to be covered)

I am informed by 3 that while the MANS in Carrick is now live, there have been no requests for an preliminary surveys for its use, though of course that does not mean that there is not either a company which is going to take on 'distribution' of the service or potential customers.