

Meeting Notes of  
**South Tipperary Social Inclusion Group**  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2010

Fire Station Building, Heywood Road, Clonmel.

Attendance:

Gerry Hickey, SIM Chair	(South Tipperary County Childcare Cttee)
Clare Curley	(South Tipperary Co Co)
John Devane	(South Tipperary Development Company)
Angela Joy	(HSE)
Lisa Kavanagh	(South Tipperary VEC)
Fionuala McGeever	(South Tipperary VEC)
Carmel McKenna	(Suir CDP)
Donal O'Halloran	(South Tipperary Disability Group Forum)
Kathleen Prendergast	(RAPID / Community & Enterprise STCC)
Mark Ryan	(RAPID/ Community & Enterprise STCC)
Patricia Wall	(South Tipperary C & V Forum)

Guest Inputs:

Mags Casey	(Tipperary Rural Travellers Project)
Anne-Marie O'Donnell	(Tipperary Rural Travellers Project)
Ruairi O'Caisleain	(HSE)

Apologies:

Clare Cashman	(Millennium Family Resource Centre)
Sinead Carr	(South Tipperary Co Co)
Cllr Denis Landy	(South Tipperary Co Co)

### **1. Introductions & Notes of Last Meeting**

The Chair, Gerry Hickey, opened the meeting and the notes of the last Meeting (June 30th) were adopted.

### **2. Matters Arising**

The Meeting discussed the need to fill both the FAS and Garda Siochana vacant seats on SIM. Appropriate contacts will be made to both bodies for new nominations.

### **3. Endorsement of the Traveller Interagency Strategic Plan**

Clare Curley and Mags Casey introduced the Integrated Plan for the Delivery of Services to Travellers in South Tipperary 2010-2013.

The Plan was outlined as a comprehensive response to the needs of Travellers in the County and involves strong co-operation from a variety of key partner bodies including Statutory, Community & Voluntary groups. The Meeting was told that the Plan contains 51 Actions agreed by the participating agencies/groups under the aegis of the Dept of Justice and Law Reform and the County Development Board.

The Plan contains a General Profile of the Traveller Community in the County including Population, Age, Accommodation, Health, Education and Training.

The stated Objectives and Actions within the Plan were presented to SIM for endorsement. In her presentation Clare Curley specified that of the 51 Actions, 43 were Commenced or in Progress and Clare thanked the previous Chair and Current Chair of the Group - Mary Roche VEC and Mags Casey Tipperary Rural Travellers Project - for their dedication and commitment to the process.

While there was satisfaction at the obvious progress of the Traveller Interagency Group, there was concern surrounding FAS support for the Traveller Local Training Initiative in Cahir. Clare and Mags highlighted that the LTI in Cahir had not been included in the FAS Budget for 2011. This means that the 10 Participants on the LTI will not progress to Level 2, which had been the intention. The Traveller Interagency Group has expressed their dissatisfaction at this outcome and Kathleen Prendergast suggested that SIM should refer this to the County Development Board for action by FAS.

It was agreed that the CDB would be asked to formally contact FAS at both Regional and National level and to cc this to all relevant Public Representatives.

The Traveller Interagency Strategic Plan was formally endorsed by the SIM Group.

#### **4. Input by Anne Marie O'Donnell - Traveller Enterprise Group**

Anne Marie O'Donnell, Enterprise and Employment Worker with Tipperary Rural Travellers Project, was introduced and welcomed to the Meeting by Gerry Hickey. Ann Marie circulated a handout and provided an input on a FAS Special Initiative for Travellers (SIT) operating in the County.

Ann Marie identified the key issues of concern regarding Enterprise & Employment, particularly in terms of existing cultural issues impacting on Travellers opportunities.

The Special Initiative for Travellers, funded by FAS, was initially launched in South Tipperary in 2010 and two support workers were employed to assist in the development of Enterprise and Employment among Travellers. Ann Marie provided a detailed account of the progress of the initiative including:

- \* securing employment and training for Travellers;
- \* links with local employers in Tipperary, Cahir, Cashel and Clonmel;
- \* Career Guidance to released prisoners;
- \* Ongoing Employment and Training Supports;
- \* Development of a Social Enterprise - An Siopa and the Salad Bowl.

The presentation to SIM was to seek support for an application that was being prepared to submit to FAS to retain the Programme in 2011. The SIT was funded for one year initially and the progress in that time was exceptional.

The Meeting agreed that this was a critical issue for attention and agreed that SIM would move quickly to inform FAS of its fullest support for the continuation of the SIT. Gerry Hickey, Ann Marie O'Donnell and Mark Ryan would liaise on this matter on behalf of SIM.

## **5. 2010 End of Year Reviews;**

2010 Sub-Group Updates were presented as follows:

### **5.1 Disconnected Youth Sub-Group**

Lisa Kavanagh of the VEC presented an Update Report on the Disconnected Youth Sub-Group. She circulated and discussed the findings and recommendations of the Sub-Group Policy Paper on Early School Leavers. Fionuala McGeever added that one of the difficulties in progressing Early School Leavers issues was that there were a multitude of Agencies with this brief and no single Agency had overall responsibility. Also, the withdrawal of the Dept of Education and Science, as well as the uncertainty of the role of FAS, had impacted on inter-agency action to progress the issue. It was agreed that Lisa Kavanagh and Kathleen Prendergast would liaise on providing supporting statistical analysis on the theme and to explore examples of local initiatives in other Counties regarding Early School Leaving e.g. Limerick City.

### **5.2 Elderly Sub-Group**

Kathleen Prendergast, South Tipperary County Council, presented an Update Report on the Elderly actions during the Year and outlined a number of high-profile public events held during the year including the "Positive Aging Week" in Cashel in September. Also, the South

Tipperary Elderly Services Review Group had worked during 2010 to:

- \* Support Networking between Elderly Groups and Service Providers - including networking between local Day Care Centres;
- \* Enhancing Information Services - Launch of Older Persons Directory of Services;
- \* Combating Isolation - Pilot a "buddy system" and build on existing supports e.g. Libraries, Public Health Nurses, Community Education.

The Elderly Sub-Group was also focused on South Tipperary becoming an "Age Friendly County" in light of successful initiatives in Co Louth and currently being rolled-out in Co Kilkenny. South Tipperary intended to replicate this framework at the next available opportunity and to develop an "Ageing Well Network" in the context of an Age Friendly County Strategy for the County.

### 5.3 Disability

Donal O'Halloran of the South Tipperary Disability Groups Forum presented an Update Report on the work of the Forum in 2010. The DGF represents up to 35 Disability Groups in South Tipperary and Statutory bodies such as the HSE and VEC. Donal re-emphasised the role of the DGF to promote the development of policies, actions, and ways of working to seek to ensure the full involvement and inclusion of all people with disabilities in everyday South Tipperary life and in the roll-out of the South Tipperary County Development Strategy. Among the key issues developed by the DGF in 2010 were:

- \* Access Audit Workshop with the County Council Access Officer;
- \* Meetings with individual Area/Town Engineers to monitor implementation of the 2008 Capita Symonds Access Audit;
- \* Disability (This-Ability) Awareness Event in May 2010;
- \* The Cashel Goldstar project was a significant achievement in 2010;
- \* During Social Inclusion week in October there was a Disability Access walk-about to highlight the upgraded facilities in the VEC Building in Clonmel;
- \* The DGF works closely with the South Tipperary Community & Voluntary Forum and the Social Inclusion Programme within STDC.

### 5.4 Traveller Interagency Committee

Clare Curley, South Tipperary County Council, detailed a number of the Actions in Progress under the Strategy outlined in the earlier presentation to the Meeting. Key issues reported during 2010 included:

- \* Education & Training;
- \* Accommodation Supports;
- \* Health;
- \* Employment Supports;
- \* Youth Development;

\* Community Safety.

Individual Projects for notable highlight were:

- \* Traveller Men's Development Worker;
- \* FAS Special Initiative for Travellers - Enterprise & Employment;
- \* Pre-Tenancy Training with the Local Authority;
- \* Library Service to Traveller Visiting Teachers;
- \* Driver Theory and Road Test Preparation Classes at various locations in the County.

Fionuala McGeever highlighted the absence of representatives from the Dept of Education & Science and South Tipperary Development Company on the Traveller Interagency Committee.

## 5.5 Safety & Security Partnership

Mark Ryan, South Tipperary County Council, presented an Update Report on the County Safety & Security Partnership. Among the key issues for consideration in 2010 were:

- \* Contributing to the Community Safety Strategy of the new County Joint Policing Committee;
- \* Supporting Drug Awareness Workshops in Clonmel, Carrick, Tipperary and Cashel;
- \* Awareness of Community Drugs issues including the rising trend of Families Intimidated by Drug Indebtedness;
- \* Bonfire/Halloween Strategies across the County;

Also in 2010, agreed Priority Actions for development by SIM included:

- \* Garda Liaison Officer to work locally on Drugs Support Networks with workers on the ground and affected families;
- \* Real-time Dial-a-Drugs-Deal Hotline;
- \* Adequate and effective Garda representation on the Local Drugs Task Force;
- \* Resolve gaps in Victim Support services.

Two initiatives that were singled out for development were:

- \* Strengthening Families Programme as a Family Support Measure to target families with teenagers at risk of anti-social behaviour;
- \* Safety & Security Partnership is a Forum for processing County Joint Policing Committee initiatives re: Family Supports, Policing & Enforcement, Situational Planning, Social Planning.

## 5.6 Employment/Unemployment Strategy

John Devane, South Tipperary Development Company, outlined that this Strategy had first been compiled in 2008 and that the economic situation had altered dramatically since then. With the ongoing absence of the Social Inclusion manager, Phil Shanahan, there has been a slow-down on the Employment/Unemployment Strategy and that this would be revisited as a new start, as part of the overall STDC Strategy for 2011-2013.

## 5.7 Mental Health

Angela Joy of the HSE presented a South Tipperary Mental Health Management Update. Under the Reform Agenda in this Sector, Angela highlighted Patient-Centred Care including:

- \* Service User Input in association with Dublin City University;
- \* Consumer Panel Workshop with Service Users and Carers;

The Closure Plan for St Luke's Hospital was detailed with Plans to transfer Service Users from St Paul's, St Mary's and some of St Teresa's to this new complex in late 2011. Also, Plans for a High Support Hostel in Clonmel are on schedule for late 2011 and a Crisis House is also being proposed by the year end. Staff Training was also being rolled-out to support the current change process of moving individuals from institutional care to a community-based, person-centred model of care.

## **6. Identifying and Agreeing Priorities for 2011**

Mark Ryan told the Meeting that Sinead Carr, Director of the County Development Board, had agreed that it would be more practical to defer setting 2011 Priorities until the New Year when Services and Projects had a clearer sense of resource issues on the basis of anticipated cuts in national and local Budgets in the Government's December Budget. Gerry Hickey, Chair of SIM, asked the Meeting if they agreed to defer as suggested and it was agreed to host a half-day Workshop in early February on this basis. The Meeting also agreed to host this Workshop as part of a general SIM Review and to invite additional stakeholders involved in Social Inclusion work on the ground to input at that stage also.

Many of the SIM members pointed out their individual concerns and fears of impending Budget cuts and the ability to maintain service provision at a time when Social Inclusion provision was increasingly vital to quality of life and access to supports, entitlements and opportunities.

## **7. South Tipperary Development Company Input in the Social Inclusion Strategy Draft Guidelines**

John Devane, South Tipperary Development Company (STDC) gave an overview of the National Guidelines prepared by POBAL on the Local and Community Development Programme and the Planning and Assessment Process that is required. John referred to the transition from the LDSIP to the LDCP process and that POBAL had set down clear guidelines on how this would be achieved. Of particular note was that Actions in the Plan would have to demonstrate they are SMART Actions, fitting within the four prescribed themes of the Programme. Information evenings will be held by POBAL to explain the process locally and the Plans will be drafted in 2011 subject to funding allocations in the forthcoming (Dec 2010)

Budget.

Fionuala McGeever enquired when did the POBAL Guidelines become available; queried the levels of the 2010 Staffing and Programme Actions Budget; and did the 2011 Plan have to be developed by an external body when there was an appropriate in-house staff available to achieve this. Fionuala also expressed her concerns that there was a feeling in South Tipperary that there was little or no Social Programme funding spent in 2010 and that there was a shortfall in Staffing levels in the Social Programme. She was deeply concerned about the future of the Social Programme and that it needed addressing by SIM.

Mags Casey asked that the existing CDP's and FRC's be especially prioritised at this time under the LCDP Plan for 2011.

Angela Joy referred to the media focus on the Social Programme and that as a member of SIM she had concerns about lack of updates to SIM and other wider stakeholders and that media reports were informing stakeholder's opinions. This information flow needed correcting and her primary interest was to offer SIM-support to the STDC process at this time to ensure we secure an effective Social Programme that can deliver on the ground.

John Devane replied that there was not a shortage of funding under the Programme Actions Budget and this needed to be separated from the Staffing Budget. He pointed out that the Staffing Budget was under pressure to the year end 2010.

Kathleen Prendergast told the Meeting that from her familiarity of POBAL procedures that it is not easily permissible to transfer unspent monies from one funding line to another - in this case, from Programme Costs to Staffing Costs.

Fionuala McGeever queried how POBAL came to agree a cohesion of one Company with a cocktail of Programmes without adequate staffing levels and the poor role that POBAL has played to require re-jigging at this stage of the year.

Patricia Wall told the Meeting - as a sitting Board member of STDC - that POBAL had agreed with STDC to identify appropriate projects which could be supported under the remaining unspent Programme Budget, by the year end.

Gerry Hickey asked if STDC can give an assurance that measures can be put in place to spend the 2010 allocation by the year end. John Devane replied that he could not give any assurances or guarantees that this would happen. Patricia Wall said she had been in regular contact with POBAL and that she felt that projects could be supported by the year end and that in response to concerns about the future of the Social Programme that she was confident there will be a Programme in 2011.

Fionuala McGeever repeated her concerns that we may not have a Social Programme in South Tipperary in 2011 and that was a disturbing scenario for the County. She felt SIM needed to take a stand on this and that the matter was not being resolved or properly reviewed by SIM.

Gerry Hickey pointed out that there were other matters on the Agenda for review and resolved that the matter had been discussed at length and the issues being aired were not appropriate to this SIM Agenda and was for another forum. He referred to Patricia Wall's comment that the best assurance we have at this time is a verbal assurance from POBAL to Patricia Wall that there will be an opportunity to identify Actions under the unspent 2010 Budget and that there will be a Programme in 2011. Fionuala McGeever stated the matter was not being sufficiently dealt with by SIM and expressed her disappointment with the situation.

Gerry Hickey asked that the matter be parked for now pending other STDC negotiations that were taking place with POBAL.

## **8. Family Support Services**

Ruairi O'Caisleain of the HSE was introduced to the Meeting and he proceeded to give an input on the "Families in Isolation" Conference that was hosted as part of EU Social Inclusion Week in October. Ruairi gave an account of the success of the event which included over 60 stakeholders from a broad variety of sectors including the Social Work section, Local Authorities, Family Resource Centres, Community Development Projects, Child Welfare Services, Youth Services and the broader Community and Voluntary sector. Guest Speakers on the day included Jim Gibson, HSE Child Care Manager; Fergal Landy NUI Family Research Centre; Clare Cashman, Millennium FRC; Hilery Tarrant, South Tipperary Volunteer Centre. The focus of the event was on identifying closer co-operation among service providers in the statutory and community-based sectors. Life-cycle Family Support interventions were explored and it was agreed to work on implementing suitable models in South Tipperary.

Ruairi gave an overview on the feedback from the day and there was enthusiastic support for greater linkages among practitioners on the ground. One of the recommendations was to repeat the networking opportunities as a regular event and to adopt a Family Supports steering-group in the County that will lead this process.

Mark Ryan told the Meeting that a key proposal on the day was to establish this Family Supports Steering-Group as a formal Sub-Group of SIM. Patricia Wall and Carmel McKenna supported this proposal and it was agreed by the Meeting. A number of key stakeholders will be invited to join this process, possibly led by the HSE.

Ruairi also used the opportunity to brief SIM on the preparation of a submission for a Children's Service Committee to the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). The HSE held an informal meeting with the OMCYA recently to advance this proposal and the indications were favourable at this point. The Children's Services Committee was seen as a significant development to deliver Social Inclusion initiatives and Gerry Hickey welcomed the progress as it had been frequently raised by SIM as a key support to the County.

## **9. Review of EU Social Inclusion/Active Citizenship Week**

Mark Ryan gave an update on the recent week of organised activities to highlight Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship. The programme of events involved promoting and highlighting Social Inclusion activities in five local centres in the County during the week, culminating in the "Families in Isolation" Conference. Mark thanked all those who participated to make the event a success across the County and the support of the Dept of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs and South Tipperary County Council was acknowledged.

## **10. AOB**

Lisa Kavanagh, South Tipperary VEC, gave an account of the recent Comhairle na nOg event in Tipperary. 116 youth from various parts of the County participated on the day and one of the themes for discussion was on Social Inclusion. The Meeting agreed with Lisa that the outcomes of the discussions be submitted to SIM as part of the Comhairle process.

Lisa Kavanagh briefed the Meeting on the Music Grant initiative promoted by U2. There is an opportunity to deliver tutorial sessions to youth in the County on a match-funding basis and fourteen areas will be selected under the proposal. Lisa is the nominated link person for South Tipperary on this scheme and it was agreed to present a fuller input to SIM in 2011.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next gathering of SIM will be the Review Workshop in early 2011.