

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Twelfth MEETING REPORT

Meeting held: June 17, 2002
Members present: 18 (62 % attendance)
Chair: Oliver Clancy.

SUMMARY

The key points which emerged for the CDB from a community review were:

- A cultural change is needed to ensure agencies actively consult with each other and agree an overall process before significant community engagement commences. This should be a performance indicator for the County Development Board.
- There can be gaps between the intent of policies and the programmes that are delivered. A key question is how the County Development Board can assist in bringing inconsistencies to the attention of the relevant Minister, Department or agency?
- There was consensus that there is a need for a strong community group in each community and that the Platform be resourced directly or indirectly to achieve that target. The community sector needs to be structured so as to make best use of public sector engagement. How can the County Development Board support the Platform to carry out this task and to benefit from other community development personnel employed in local development companies and public bodies? A framework is needed to guide the Platform.

Decision: The South Tipperary County Development Board agreed to establish a Community Framework Working Group to review the input and output of the review of the Community Sector with a specific emphasis on how the partners in the CDB will support South Tipperary Platform to ensure a good community structure in each community in South Tipperary.

The County Development Board also reviewed the implementation of the County Strategy at the June meeting. The following **decisions** were made:

1. A Cultural Programme Management Group recommendation that Bru Boru and also Excel be formally added to list of cultural providers providing outreach services in an amendment to the County Strategy (3.4.1) was agreed.
2. The brief for the Proofing workgroup was endorsed.
3. It was agreed to respond positively to any request regarding the establishment of a County Tipperary Sports Partnership.

The Board also reviewed reports on the preparation for RAPID, the County Childcare strategy, the Rural Transport Audit and a Regional Passenger Transport Strategy.

1. Community Watch

Marion O'Dwyer and Bridget O'Keeffe presented reports on behalf of the South Tipperary Platform in relation to progress over the past twelve months and on the key issues arising from the community consultative processes in the preparation of the County Strategy. The key points in the presentation were:

- South Tipperary Platform had used the resources arising out of the Government White Paper on Supporting the Voluntary Sector to employ a part time community development co-ordinator. The co-ordinator, Philip Ryan, works out of the Wilderness Youth Services Centre in Clonmel. Because of information and administrative service requirements by community groups and by the Platform itself, the amount of time available for community development outreach is quite limited. The Platform requests additional resources from stakeholders to support administration and also project development which is a key need of community groups.
- The Platform has eighty member groups and the focus of community development activity is to ensure that there is a community group, which can co-ordinate on behalf of each community with public sector requests and initiatives.
- The Platform has to date met all the requests of the public sector in regard to community pillar representation on various committees. The co-ordinator prepares a monthly newsletter informing members of impending issues and also reports from various meetings. Open seminars are held as required if formal consultation is required. While there is great enthusiasm among the Platform members for this new approach to public governance, the overstretching of volunteers, most of whom give considerable time to their own community, is a concern. There is an onus on all stakeholders to ensure that the community sector activists get value for the time expended.
- A considerable number of issues of concern to the community sector arose in the consultations on the County Strategy. Some of these issues do not fall within the ambit of the county strategy in that they are largely single agency initiatives but they need to be noted and ideally addressed by the relevant agency. These issues include delivery of hospital services and appointments, support services in social work and psychiatry, the operation of CAREDDOC and policing in rural areas. The community sector feels that these services are meeting the needs of the service delivery agent and their professionals rather than the needs of their customers. Other issues which are being addressed in the county strategy are childcare facilities and rural transport services. The Platform also requests that adult education be formally targeted in the County Strategy. There is a goal around lifelong learning in the County Strategy but an adult education strategy involving all stakeholders might help realize the goal.
- The Platform welcomes the emphasis in the County Strategy on timelines, targets and indicators. These provide a basis for straight talking and for agreed reviews of progress. There has to be progress. Communities are tired of consultation that does not achieve some progress. The Platform welcomes the gathering together of existing plans in the RAPID areas so that unnecessary surveys of needs can be

- avoided. Proofing of the County Strategy from the community perspective needs to include agreed regular audits of progress.
- The Platform also welcomes the Local Agenda 21 wheel but there will be a great challenge to make it real. For example, training and education are important needs for the community sector. Volunteers are busy and training must be customized and deliver as locally as possible. Given public resources in schools and other facilities at community level, there is ample opportunity for us to get local delivery of services right.
 - The Platform and the Community Pillar nationally is disappointed with some outcomes of the National Social Partnership Process, particularly the reduction in breach of a national agreement of numbers on community employment schemes. The focus of the Social Economy Programme is also of concern in that original aspects such as demand deficit services and public contracts need to be promoted more.
 - Another aspect of National and local concern is the level of bureaucracy and lack of integration of funding opportunities. There needs to be a national goal of reducing red tape and easing the access of communities to resources. This requires a major change in the way in which the public sector does businesses.

Key points in the discussion arising from the presentations by the South Tipperary Platform included:

- Is there anybody listening to the community sector? Many of the issues presented have been presented before. The County Development Board needs to facilitate the delivery of results on issues that are multi-agency at the very least. There was agreement that public sector consultation with individual communities needs to be more integrated. Simple information about who is proposing to do what needs to be exchanged. For example when the County Council was engaged in Local Area Action Plans in Cullen, Clonoulty and Hollyford, the Tipperary LEADER Group and the South Tipperary Platform were also involved. However, it might have been an opportunity to look at all public service delivery and also at the needs of the hinterlands of these villages rather than at the villages themselves. A cultural change is needed to ensure agencies actively consult with each other and agree an overall process before significant community engagement commences. This should be a performance indicator for the County Development Board.
- An issue for agency representatives is that they are often implementers of programmes rather than involved in the development of policy that informs the policies. There can be gaps between the intent of policies and the programmes that are delivered. There can also be socio-economic changes that change the original reason why programmes are developed. A key question is how the County Development Board can assist in bringing inconsistencies to the attention of the relevant Minister, Department or agency?
- There was consensus that there is a need for a strong community group in each community and that the Platform be resourced directly or indirectly

to achieve that target. The community sector needs to be structured so as to make best use of public sector engagement. The Platform has a key role in this regard. How can the County Development Board support the Platform to carry out this task and to benefit from other community development personnel employed in local development companies and public bodies? A framework is needed to guide the Platform.

Decision: The South Tipperary County Development Board agreed to establish a Community Framework Working Group to review the input and output of the review of the Community Sector with a specific emphasis on how the partners in the CDB will support South Tipperary Platform to ensure a good community structure in each community in South Tipperary. The members of the working group are John Devane (Chair), Deirdre Cowan, Ciaran Lynch, Seamus Moore, Marion O’Dwyer and Bridget O’Keeffe. The Working Group is also to review how multi-agency issues raised (such as adult education) can be advanced for inclusion in the County Strategy.

2. Implementation of the County Strategy

The four programme management groups met in April/Early May. More than two thirds of the 62 actions in the County Strategy have commenced. Progress reports on each action are available on the www.southtippcdb.ie website. Some of the major actions (for example the County Childcare Strategy implementation) have their own specific committees. However, where the same stakeholders are involved in a number of discrete actions, these stakeholders have agreed to participate in one overall implementing forum. Already a Cultural Providers Group has met, an Economic Services Providers Group will also meet and the existing Social Inclusion Measures Working Group will take on the smaller social programme actions.

Decision: The Board agreed that progress on actions be maintained on the website and that it was not necessary to circulate hard copies of progress reports to members at each CDB meeting.

Decision: A Cultural Programme Management Group recommendation that Bru Boru and also Excel be formally added to list of cultural providers providing outreach services in an amendment to the County Strategy (3.4.1) was agreed. The amendment will be posted at the next date of publication – after the Board meeting on the website and in printed version – in the 2002 Annual report scheduled for publication in 2003.

A recommendation of the Economic Programme Management Group that each Management Group nominate representatives onto a Proofing Workgroup was accepted. The members of Proofing Group are:

Eddie Daly Tipperary Centre for Independent Living – Social Programme

Claire Hartley, CDP Network – Economic Programme

Walter Heneghan, Business Pillar – Local Agenda 21 Programme

Laura Lenehan, South Tipperary County Council – Local Agenda 21 Programme
Liam Murphy, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs –Cultural Programme
Niamh Murphy, Waterford LEADER Partnership – Social Programme
Fr Gerry O’Connor, Barrow Nor Suir Rural Development – Cultural Programme
Alan Robinson, Clonmel Community Partnership – Economic Programme.

The Proofing Workgroup met in early June and received technical support from CORI, a member of the National Community Pillar. The brief for the Proofing Workgroup, which hopes to report before the end of the year, is to simplify the proofing requirement (environment, equality, poverty, rural) so that:

- (i) it can be easily integrated in the work of the CDB (Board, Management Groups, Action Committees) at all phases of strategy development (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and
- (ii) it adds value to the quality and the effectiveness of the strategy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Decision: The brief for the Proofing Workgroup was endorsed.

In relation to monitoring and evaluation, the Director of Services reported that no agreement had been agreed nationally yet in relation to a monitoring system. Progress has been made and a system may be available by the next Board meeting. The Director proposes to devise terms of reference for an independent evaluator once consensus has been reached nationally on a monitoring system.

In relation updating specific actions:

- ✓ Mary Finnegan Burke on behalf of the VEC reported that the Irish Sports Council has requested the North Tipperary Local Sports Partnership to liaise with South Tipperary in order to advance one Sports Partnership for the county, which would have one co-ordinator and two development officers. She recommended that South Tipperary co-operate with this initiative so that resources might be available to the county in the near future.
- ✓ Mary Finnegan Burke also updated the Board on a new Department of Education School Completion Scheme, which will benefit two schools in Clonmel and Tipperary. The Director of Services indicated that the County Development Board had been requested to participate in the Management Committees of the School Completion Scheme and he proposed to nominate the Education Co-ordinator of Clonmel Community partnership and the RAPID Co-ordinator in Tipperary Town to the respective schemes.

Decision: It was agreed to respond positively to any request regarding the establishment of a County Tipperary Sports Partnership.

3. Other Information

The three RAPID Co-ordinators have been appointed:

- ✓ Kathleen Prendergast based in the Clonmel Community Partnership offices
- ✓ Mark Ryan based with in the Tipperary LEADER Group offices in Tipperary Town
- ✓ Denis Shanahan based in the Carrick on Suir Town Council offices.

The first meetings of the RAPID Area Implementation Teams have been scheduled as follows:

- ✓ Carrick on Suir (First Meeting scheduled for July 2 at 9.30 am)
- ✓ Clonmel (First Meeting scheduled for July 3 at 9.30 am)
- ✓ Tipperary Town (First Meeting scheduled for June 25 at 2.15 pm)

The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group will meet in Kilkenny on June 20 to review the draft work programme recommended by the Director of Services for each RAPID Area Implementation Team.

The first funds (€80,000) have been allocated to South Tipperary from the CLAR initiative.

SERA obtained 90% funding towards the roll out of Broadband Infrastructure in the county towns (Action 1.4.6) - €8 million project underway.

The County Childcare Strategy and action plan for 2002 has been agreed and approved by ADM. €100,000 core funding has been allocated to childcare measures proposed. Chair of the Committee, Maureen McNamara briefed the Board on the County Childcare Strategy. A new co-ordinator, Chris Sheehan, has been appointed. A map of existing childcare facilities was presented. Arising in the discussion on the County Childcare Strategy, the issue of promoting family friendly work practices was reviewed. The County Childcare Committee was requested to advise the Board on how local public, community and private businesses might address a family friendly work practice objective.

The County Rural Transport Audit has been completed. There is an unmet demand of 9500 among the rural population in South Tipperary. The Ring a Ling Rural Transport initiative will shortly be launched in the County.

A regional passenger transport study will also be completed shortly.