

Seminar: 'EU policy for regenerating town and city centres'

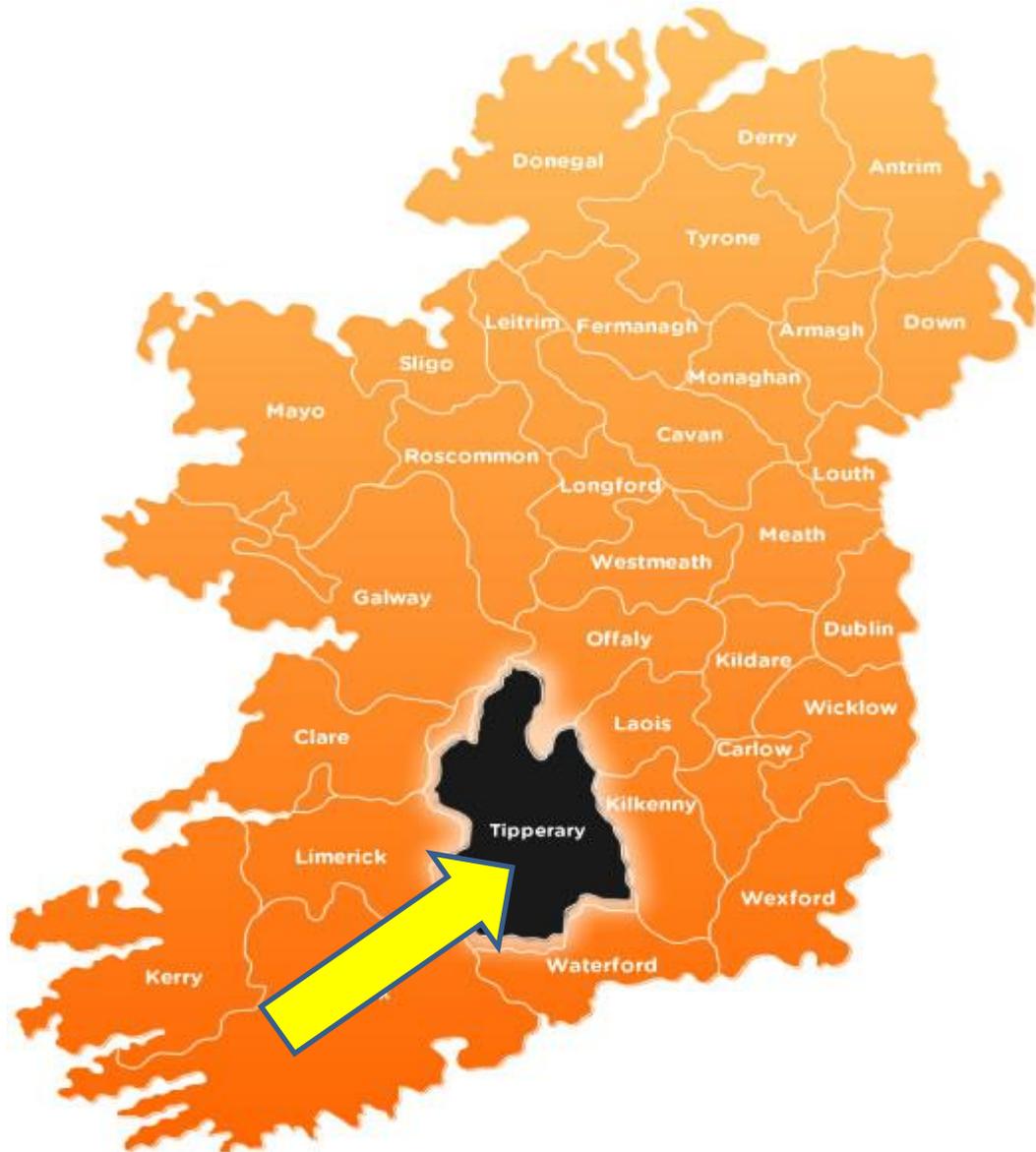
Tuesday 13 October 2015
Committee of the Regions, Brussels

Cllr. Hughie McGrath
Member of Tipperary County Council, Ireland

***Regenerating Irish Towns – The Experience of
Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland***



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Tipperary - socio-economic data

Area – 4,282 km² (6.09% of State area & 6th largest in State)

Population – 158,754 (2011) (3.46% of & 11th largest in State)

Largest Urban Centres – Clonmel (17,048) and Nenagh (8,439)

Rural/Urban (>1,500) Population Split – 60%/40%

Disposable Income per person – 94.43% of State

Live Register – 14,008 persons*

*(*Not a measure of unemployment but only statistic available at county level)*

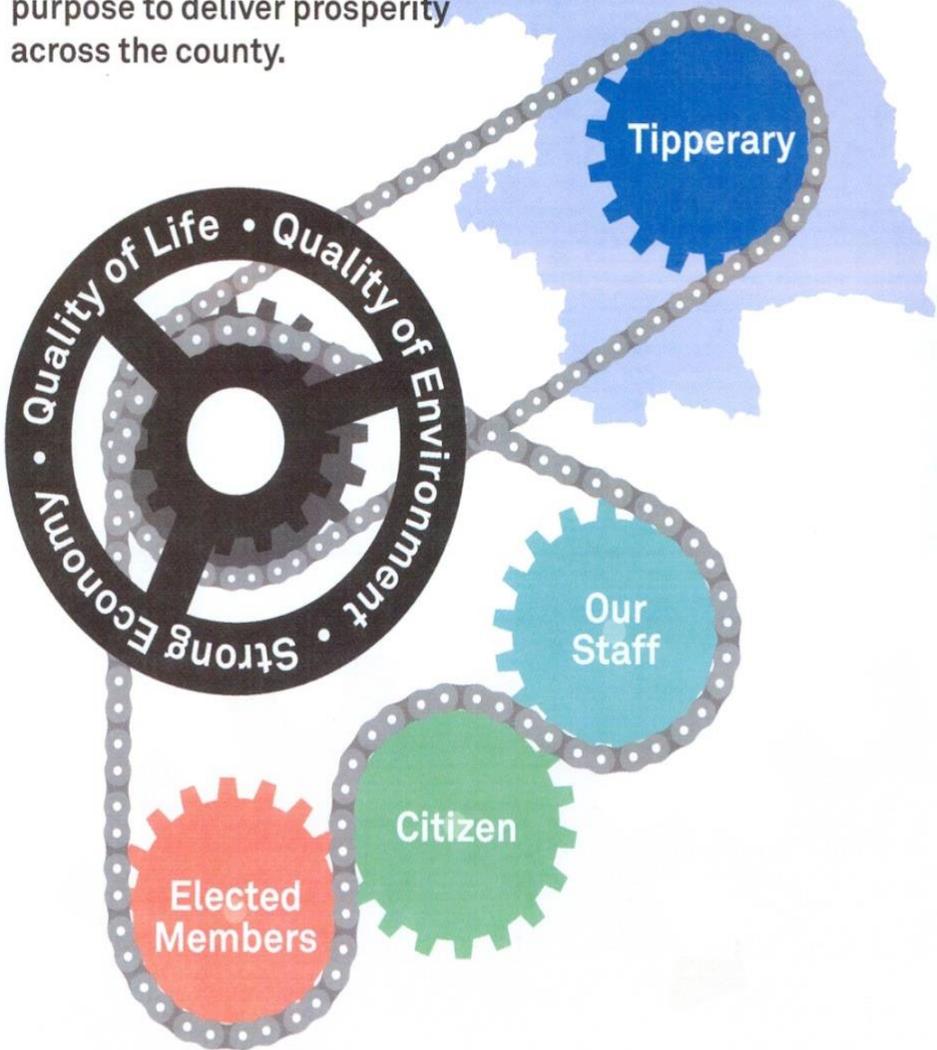
Main economic sectors – agriculture, services, manufacturing, pharmaceutical/medical devices, tourism



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2.3 Vision Statement

Tipperary Together - Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the county.



The plan provides a vision for how we propose to deliver our services. It includes the following symbiotic elements that work in unison:

Citizen

We are ambitious for our residents and communities and we are demanding of ourselves as an organisation. The Council will seek to encourage residents to make a more active contribution to their local areas, working with elected representatives and other community activists to tackle local issues and ensure that council services are more responsive to their priorities and ambitions;

- Put people of Tipperary at the centre of all we do
- Encouraging public participation
- Building sustainable communities
- Improving quality of life
- Promoting Social Inclusion

Elected Members

Working with elected members to give a stronger voice and civic leadership to the people of Tipperary on the issues that matter to them, not just those issues we have a statutory responsibility to deliver.

- Providing leadership in the community
- Informed and supported
- Making policy and shaping the future
- Responding to the needs of the community

Our staff

As a new and progressive local authority, staff will work to provide a dynamic, flexible, quality-driven organisation committed to achieving excellent customer services. We will endeavour to work with all local and national agencies to ensure that citizens experience coherent, integrated and effective public services.

- Safe work practices
- Dynamic 'Can-do' approach
- Caring and customer focused
- Empowered to take responsibility
- Governance to match ambition

Our 3 strategic themes

Strong Economy: Positioning the County to be 'Open for Business' remains critical within our Corporate Plan. The economic vitality of Tipperary and the success of our businesses are fundamental factors in shaping the quality of life and prosperity of local residents.

Quality of life: Tipperary will continue to be a desirable place to live, with lively and attractive towns and picturesque and vibrant villages, surrounded by beautiful countryside. Future growth in population will be accommodated in sustainable urban extensions and through sensitive development of our rural areas. The infrastructure to support this growth will be delivered in a timely fashion to ensure sustainable and inclusive communities.

Quality Environment: To protect the unique identity of Tipperary, and to ensure that development is designed and managed in a way that ensures the protection and enhancement of the local distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment in Tipperary towns, villages and countryside for future generations.

Tipperary

Tipperary as a brand: Tipperary is already a great place to live, work and invest and there is much that we should rightly be proud of. The Plan seeks to build on that reputation as one county, and one council working to a shared purpose;

- Driving economic development
- Proud of the past and ambitious for the future
- Making opportunities
- Building a Tipperary identity

Elements will act in unison to implement sustainable programs that improve quality of life for all people in Tipperary by enhancing the Environment in which we live, developing a vibrant economy whilst maintaining an excellent customer service across the Organisation.

Issues facing Irish town centres

At the outset, something to bear in mind



Beyond the scope of a local authority to deal with

Issues facing Irish town centres

- Weakening Town Centre Retail Mix
 - Traditional indigenous department store anchor have ceased to trade
 - Remaining retail mix, while of value, generally trades off footfall rather than creating it
 - Dissipation of destination retailer(s) in town centre
- On-line competition
 - On street retailing faces very significant on-line competition
 - A large proportion of the Irish population now shop on-line

Issues facing Irish town centres

- Out of Town Retail Preference
 - Offering controlled retailing environment
 - Larger retailing space
 - Better quality of neighbouring tenants
- Consumer Behaviour
 - Consumers seeking mid-week convenience and weekend experience
 - Direct link between distance travelled and consumer spend
 - *further the distance, greater the spend*



Issues facing Irish town centres

- **Greater Consumer Mobility**
 - Large car ownership, not reliant on public transport
 - Willing to travel longer distances to visit primary destination shopping centres
- **Car-parking Charges & Enforcement**
 - Led to increase in appeal of out of town alternatives, where the retail tenants meet the parking cost in the context of the service charge they pay to Centre
 - Sometimes limited availability in town centre at peak shopping periods acts as deterrent



Issues facing Irish town centres

- Proactive Management
 - Out of town centres employ expert centre management teams solely dedicated to promoting, managing and co-ordinating the centres
 - Despite valued efforts of Chambers and Business Associations, with support from Council(s), no such dedicated single-purpose structure exists for town centres
- Mixed Landlord Base
 - Town centre vacancy levels higher than out of town shopping centres.
 - Out of town locations are commonly owned by single entity who, motivated by rental yield, eagerly seeks new tenancies.
 - Town centre property stock is owned by a mixture of landlords, some eager to retain a tenant in their premises, but some others who are less engaged



TCC Initiatives to address Issues

- TCC's Town Centre Initiative (TCI)
 - Towns are home to 40% of county's population and their influence extends across full county
 - A strategic approach focusing on town centres
 - Represents just one element of TCC's economic development strategy
- Focused generally on the primary town centre retail areas

Two main elements to TCI:

- Enable Town Centre Forums
- Complementary Council Supports



TCC Initiatives to address Issues

- Town Centre Forums
 - TCC engaged services of Retail Consultant to facilitate
 - Stakeholders come together as a Town Centre Forum to manage the retail offer
 - Prepare short, medium and long-term Strategic Plan with TCC support
 - Forum (including TCC) work together to deliver plan objectives
- Complementary Supports
 - Commercial Incentive Scheme
 - Painting Grant Scheme
 - Town Centre Parking Strategies
 - Engagement of Local Enterprise Office (LEO)
 - Grants to Local Festivals/Events
 - “Shop Local” media campaigns
 - Town Centre Enhancements/Public Realm Plans



TCC Initiatives to address Issues

- Commercial Incentive Scheme
 - Reduce number of ground floor vacant properties in the town centres through the payment of grants to qualifying applicants on a reducing scale over a three-year period, equivalent to 75%, 50% and 25% respectively of the commercial rates payable
- Painting Grant Scheme
 - Support and encourage individuals to upgrade their buildings to enhance the character and appearance of the townscape (both and town centre residential properties)



TCC Initiatives to address Issues

- Strategic Town Centre Parking Strategies
 - Re-design to act as incentives for town centre shoppers
 - Parking charges a necessary element
 - Critical to enable the effective operation of town centres



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TCC Initiatives to address Issues

- Engagement of Local Enterprise Office
 - Assist in the areas of marketing, management development training, business skills training, dedicated mentoring and can also provide online trading vouchers
- Town Centre Enhancements/Public Realm Plans
 - Infrastructural upgrading of public spaces aimed at improving quality of the town centre for residents and visitors which help to increase footfall and retail spend



Nenagh....



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Photo by Robin Wallace

Nenagh....

- Nenagh Town & Environs Development Plan 2013-2019
- Significant interest during 2015 in Town Centre Enhancement & Painting Scheme
- Review of parking strategy currently underway
- Introducing a Commercial Retail Incentive Scheme to encourage businesses to establish in vacant retail units in town centres thus increasing footfall, providing a good retail mix and restoring vitality. Grant Scheme based on commercial rates liability on a phased basis for initial years after start up



Nenagh....

- Traffic Management Plan – plan drafted which includes proposed introduction of one-way system to alleviate traffic congestion and allow for removal of traffic lights; also consideration of pedestrianisation of particular areas to help create focal points
- Establishment of Town Centre Forum – Strategic Plan to be in place before end 2015
- Financial and non-financial support to Festivals and Events in the town, e.g. Visit Nenagh Classic, People's Picnic, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Fleadh na Mumhan



Nenagh....



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Photo by Padraig O'Flannabhra

Nenagh....

- Signage strategy aimed at improving the visitor experience – clearly indicating parking availability; consistency in the type, size and format of signage; removal of obsolete signage and decluttering.
- Development and enhancement of historic realm to incorporate Nenagh Castle, Gaol, Nenagh Arts Centre, Heritage & Genealogy Centre, Banba Square again with a view to attracting visitors and tourists
- Supporting the efforts of Tidy Towns Committee which saw Nenagh get its first ever bronze medal in 2015
- Inclusion of Nenagh Castle in Ireland's Ancient East Signage Programme (a Fáilte Ireland initiative)



Nenagh....

- Re-vitalisation of Chamber of Commerce with drive for new members and funding from TCC towards specific initiatives undertaken by them
- www.nenagh.ie – web domain made available by TCC to Chamber of Commerce for promotion of the town
- CCTV Scheme aimed at improving security in the town centre for both business premises and users alike
- Provision of cycleways and proposals to develop Nenagh as a Cycle Hub
- Improvement of recreational facilities including Nenagh Town Park and refurbished Leisure Centre



Go raibh milé maith agaibh

www.tipperarycoco.ie



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