

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

Minutes of the February monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at County Hall, Clonmel on Monday, 26th February 2007 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. P. Coffey, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. Maguire, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. Mac Partlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh, Cllr. T. Wright.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. L. O'Neill.

Before the meeting commenced, the following votes of sympathy were passed:

- To Designated County Manager, Mr. Michael Malone, on the death of his mother, Bridget Malone
- To former SERA Cathaoirleach, Cllr. James J. Brett, on the death of his mother, Mary Anne Brett.

The Cathaoirleach requested that everyone stand for one minute as a mark of respect.

The Cathaoirleach then stated that it would be appreciated if the members would inform the Authority office when a death occurs of anyone with a connection with the Authority.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, seconded by Cllr. W. Paton, the minutes of the January monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Broadband Services in the South-East Region

Ms. Gráinne Naughton from e-Net made a presentation to the members entitled '*Metropolitan Area Networks – Enabling Business in the Regions*'. This presentation outlined the uptake of broadband services and promotion in respect of the MANs in the South-East Region. In her presentation, she highlighted the following:

- Information about e-Net
- The MANs in Ireland and backhaul arrangements
- Services provided by e-Net to Telecommunication Companies
- List of e-Net customers
- Customer feedback
- E-Net and Government Agenda
- Challenges for the MANs
- Expanding the reach of the MANs in the future
- Summary of e-Net's progress with the MANs to date.

Ms. Naughton then responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- The urgent need to invest in infrastructure to speed up connectivity
- The urgent need to connect to MANs in order to attract Foreign Direct Investment
- Lack of MANs at key industries
- Lack of use of MANs by Government Departments and public authorities
- Lack of broadband in disadvantages areas
- Prohibitive costs to connect to MANs.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Naughton for her very interesting and informative presentation. He emphasised the importance of the transfer of information within our country. He then requested that Ms. Naughton prepare a report for the Authority on the uptake of MANs in each of the towns/city in the South-East Region.

Statement of Accounts for year ending 31st December 2006

The Statement of Accounts in respect of the financial year ended 31st December 2006, copy of which had been circulated, was considered by the Authority and, on the proposal of Cllr. L. Allen, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, was unanimously approved by the members.

Report of EU Committee of the Regions

The members noted a report on the work of the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR), copy of which had been circulated, by Cllr. D. Landy, member of CoR. The members enquired about the current situation regarding the establishment of Regional Policy Panels. Cllr. Landy informed the members that he will report back to the members on this issue after the next CoR meeting.

National Development Plan 2007 - 2013

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the NDP 2007-2013. The Director informed the members that the current NDP involves an estimated expenditure of €184 bn. into the Irish economy over the next seven years and outlines the key targets, outputs and objectives for the funding under the following headings:

- Economic Infrastructure
- Enterprise, Science and Innovation
- Human Capital
- Social Infrastructure
- Social Inclusion
- Horizontal Themes
- All-Island Cooperation
- Value for Money.

He also informed them that:

- The real focus of the current NDP is the delivery of balanced regional development
- The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is at the centre of an investment strategy contained within the NDP
- There is a strong focus at NUTS III level
- There is more focus on individual regions at regional level
- Regional Authorities will be involved in the implementation process through representation on the Central Monitoring Committee and OP Monitoring Committees
- Regional Data and Indicators will be provided at NUTS III level.

The members expressed concern over the following issues:

- The fact that the South-East Region has not benefited sufficiently from the NDP to date

- Concern about the N.11 dual-carriageway from Gorey to Rosslare
- Concern about the N.24 from Waterford
- Transparency regarding public funding
- Monitoring of the NDP.

The Cathaoirleach requested that the Authority write to the National Roads Authority and the Department of Transport regarding these issues.

EU Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013

The members noted details of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for Ireland : 'Supporting and Enabling Dynamic Regions' EU Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013, copy of which had been circulated. This report provides a summary of draft reports and programmes that have recently been published concerning various elements of the 2007-2013 regime.

Spirit of Enterprise Forum

The European Officer informed the members that the *Spirit of Enterprise* Forum was established in 2006 and is primarily the result of two inter-related EU projects involving the South-East Regional Authority and Centre for Entrepreneurship, Waterford Institute of Technology respectively. The Forum is regional in nature, aims to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise in the South-East and is made up of influencers from outside the region, agencies and interested parties from within the region and members of the target market the forum is seeking to influence. The Forum membership has now been broadened to ensure that all relevant actors have the opportunity to participate. Much work has been carried out on many facets of the Forum including defining the vision, objectives, structure, functioning and composition.

The members complimented the Authority on this very worthwhile initiative and requested that a brief progress report be distributed to them after each *Spirit of Enterprise* meeting.

Annual Report 2006

The members noted details of the draft Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 2006, copy of which had been circulated. On the proposal of Cllr. D. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, the draft Annual Report 2006 was adopted by the members.

Correspondence

- Letter from Mr. Micheál Martin, TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment, regarding unemployment in the South-East and the need to intensify efforts to attract additional investment and job creation in the region.

Other Matters

- The Cathaoirleach informed the members that under the EU funded 'Biologic@' Project, the Authority would be hosting an Organic Food Fair and Information Day at Kildalton Agriculture College on Sunday, 9th March 2007. He asked that all members spread the word about the Fair
- The members enquired if there had been any communication from Dr. Jim Port regarding university status for WIT. The Director informed them that no communication had been received and that he would follow up on this matter
- The members requested that the Authority support issues such as Parkinsons Disease, Cancer and other such illnesses. They then expressed concern over the lack of representation by public representatives on health issues since the establishment of the HSE. The Cathaoirleach suggested that each member raise the issue with their relevant Local Authority and requested that the Authority write to the Minister for Health & Children and the HSE expressing the members concerns
- The Cathaoirleach informed the members that the annual Study Tour would take place around mid-June 2007. Further details to follow.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____