

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the May monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held
at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford, on Monday, 28th May 2007 at
2.30 p.m.**

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

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. S. Ryan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh, Cllr. T. Wright.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. Angela Sheehan, Office Manager
Ms. Breda Maher, Research & Projects Executive
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated County Manager.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. P. Codd, the minutes of the April monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

The Cathaoirleach and members congratulated current Authority members Cllr. S. Connick and Cllr. M. D'Arcy on their recent election to Dáil Éireann. They also congratulated former Authority Cathaoirleach, Cllr. R. Aylward on his recent election.

Foreign Direct Investment in the South-East

Ms. Siobhán McEvoy, Regional Manager and Mr. Brian Conroy, Area Director, IDA Ireland attended the meeting and made a presentation to the members on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the South-East. In their presentations they outlined the following:

- Vision of Ireland in 2020
- International Business Trends
- IDA's work in a global context
- Attractions for FDI in Ireland
- Competition between Ireland and other European countries
- Requirements of investors
- Position of the South-East region
- IDA Regional Strategy
- Regional strengths and challenges

- Requirements for development of the South-East region.

Ms. McEvoy and Mr. Conroy then responded to questions and queries from the members including the following:

- Attractions necessary in the region for FDI
- Training/Retraining for industries in decline
- Better roads infrastructure/public transport as means of travel to work
- The need to make Waterford a competitive gateway
- The importance of amenity and recreation facilities to potential investors
- What the profile of the South-East is as a 'Dynamic Location'
- If there is any measure of FDI for indigenous companies
- The need for a University and an enhanced Airport in the region to attract FDI
- The need for Irish Entrepreneurs to be encouraged to use our Industrial Parks
- Concern regarding energy and waste management costs and the possible need for an incinerator in the region
- The situation regarding IDA landbanks in the region
- Links between the IDA and private businesses
- The need to promote pharmaceutical investment in the region.

The Designated Co. Manager stated that this discussion was very useful and that the comments regarding lack of infrastructure in the region were very relative. He stated that the advantage of having a Gateway in the region is mitigated if access is limited, and therefore, it is essential that access to Waterford be upgraded.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. P. Codd, the members unanimously requested that the Authority lobby the Department of Transport as a matter of urgency to bring forward the improvement of the N.24.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. McEvoy and Mr. Conroy for their very interesting and informative presentations.

Broadband in the South-East Region

Mr. T. Byrne informed the members that the South-East Regional Broadband Project 'SERB-II' was currently under construction and that the fibre towns should be completed by December 2007. Progress is also being made with the wireless towns.

The members then noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the position regarding broadband in the South-East Region, under the following headings:

- Introduction to broadband
- Background to broadband in the South-East Region and in Ireland
- Current broadband infrastructure in the South-East Region
- Issues emerging regarding broadband in the South-East Region
- Recommendations to tackle issues identified.

The members expressed concern regarding the lack of uptake of broadband in the region. On the proposal of Cllr. D. MacPartlin, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, it was

unanimously agreed to forward this Report to the Government to highlight the issues regarding broadband in the South-East Region.

National Broadband Scheme – Procurement Process

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, regarding the procurement process for the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) recently launched by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The NBS will provide broadband services to areas in Ireland that are currently unserved and ensure that every reasonable request for broadband in these unserved areas is met. The aim of the NBS is to reach 700,000 broadband subscribers by the end of 2007 and to ensure 100% coverage when the scheme is complete in order for Ireland to be on the path of economic and social prosperity.

Strategy for the Protection of Irish Society and the Economy

The members noted details of a report “*2020 Vision- Protecting and Improving Ireland’s Environment*”, copy of which had been circulated, on the Strategy for the Protection of Irish Society and the Economy, recently published by the Environmental Protection Agency. The report outlined the 6 environmental goals within the Strategy:

- Limiting and Adapting to Climate Change
- Clean Air
- Protecting Water Resources
- Protecting Soil and Biodiversity
- Sustainable use of Resources
- Integration and Enforcement.

Rural Water Spending Programme 2007

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Rural Water Spending Programme 2007, recently announced by Mr. Dick Roche, Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The report also outlined the 2007 allocations to each constituent local authority in the South-East Region. This programme is being funded under the NDP 2007-2013.

OECD Review of the Irish Public Service

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on a recent OECD Review of the Irish Public Service. This Review will examine how effectively government objectives are being translated into actions and will focus on the quality of services being delivered to the public. A public consultation is now underway and views on the following aspects are being sought:

- On the Public Service generally
- On particular parts of the Public Service
- On a specific organisation, e.g. Civil Service, Education Sector etc.

The objective of this Review is to benchmark the Public Service in Ireland against other comparable countries, the results of which will assist in shaping recommendations as to future direction for Public Service reform.

The members recommended that, despite the short timescale, the Authority make a submission to this Review which must be made by 1st June.

Organic Interpretive Centre

The European Officer informed the members that at the January 2007 meeting, they had agreed to subscribe the sum of €26,000 under the INTERREG IIIB Biologic@ project to the Organic Interpretive Centre in Wexford. He stated that this Centre is now on-site and that the official launch of the Centre would be held on 11th June next.

Census 2006 Population Changes

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on “*Census 2006-Population of Urban Centres in the South-East Region*”. The report outlined details of the main urban centres under the following headings:

- City/Town
- 2002 Population
- 2006 Population
- Actual change in population
- % change in population.

Quarterly National Household Survey 2007

The members noted details of a report recently published by the CSO, copy of which had been circulated, on Quarterly National Household Survey for Q1/2007. The report outlined the highlights from the Survey and provided the following tables:

- Table 1 : Comparison by NUTS III regions at Q1/2007
- Table 2 : Unemployment Rate (%) Comparison by NUTS III Regions at Q1/2007.

Correspondence

- Letter from the Minister for Transport regarding the current status of the N.11 and N.24 routes.

The members requested that the Authority invite the CEO of the National Roads Authority to a future meeting to discuss the transport situation in the region.

In this regard the members requested that the Authority maintain pressure on the Department of Transport/NRA to bypass Ferns, Camolin and Enniscorthy in Co. Wexford.

Other Matters

- The members requested an update on the current situation regarding neurology services in the South-East
- The members congratulated Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Coffey, on his recent participation in the General Election.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____