

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the April monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority
held at the Arboretum Lifestyle & Garden Centre, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow
on Monday, 24th April 2006 at 2.30 p.m.**

Present: Cllr. S. Ryan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Also present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. P. Coffey, Cllr. S. Connick, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Fitzgerlad, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. C. Phelan-Holden, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh, Cllr. T. Wright.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. S. Thompson, Regional Broadband Coordinator
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager,
Mr. M. Malone, Designated County Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. M. D'Arcy, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. O'Halloran.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. W. Paton, seconded by Cllr. T. Howlin, the minutes of the March monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Renewable Energy Development in the South-East Region

Mr. Thomas Cooke, Chairman of BNS Leader and Director of Meitheal na Gaoithe Developments Ltd. made a presentation to the members on renewable energy in the South-East. In his presentation, he outlined the following:

- The current status of renewable energy in the South-East Region
- The current status of renewable energy in Ireland
- Ireland's Energy Sources 2004

- Ireland's Energy Import Dependency 2004
- Estimated energy consumption by sector in Ireland in 2004
- Windfarm planning permission issues
- Wood energy new technology
- Wind energy in the South-East
- Biomass Energy in the South-East
- Details of 'Ethanol Ireland' Project
- Recommendations regarding renewable energy in the South-East.

Mr. Cooke then responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- Lack of encouragement and incentives in Ireland for renewable energy
- The need for a Centralised Support Programme – difficult for local authorities to act without support
- Lack of availability of planning guidelines
- The effect of windfarms on property values
- The effect of windfarms generally within the next 10 years
- The possibility of collecting and comparing policies of the constituent local authorities regarding renewable energy
- The members requested that the Authority write to the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government regarding the issue of planning permission for windfarms
- The members requested that a copy of Mr. Cooke's presentation be circulated.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Cooke for his very interesting and informative presentation on such an important issue for the South-East Region.

Draft Annual Report in respect of year ended 31st December 2005

The Director outlined to the members the contents of the Draft Annual Report, copy of which had been circulated, in respect of year ended 31st December 2005. He informed the members that this was the first draft of the Report and that certain minor changes still needed to be made. Subject to these changes, the Regional Authority Draft Annual Report 2005 was unanimously agreed.

Progress Report on Regional Broadband Programme

The Director outlined the current situation in the South-East Region regarding the Regional Broadband Programme. He informed the members that Phase II of the Regional Broadband Programme involves 9 towns in the South-East. 5 of these towns will use fibre-optic cabling and the other 4 will be using wireless

technology. The tendering procedure is currently in place for the design and supervision contract and it is expected that the Authority will be in a position to go to tender for the build of the networks later in the year.

The members enquired about the delay with government funding for the broadband programmes and asked about the County & Group Broadband Scheme. The Director informed them that the 3rd call for this scheme is imminent.

National Strategy on Biodegradable Waste

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the National Strategy on Biodegradable Waste. The report outlined the background to the Strategy, the targets that have been established and the Action Plan for the Strategy.

National Roads Programme 2006

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the National Roads Programme for 2006. The report outlined the key aspects of the National Programme and also detailed the 2006 National Roads Improvement and Maintenance Allocations to Local Authorities in the South-East Region under the following headings:

- Local Authority (Each constituent local authority)
- Improvement Allocations
- Maintenance Allocations
- Total Allocations.

Report on Local Government Finance in Ireland

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the recent review of Local Government Financing, published by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The main recommendations of the report are as follows:

- More locally based sources of funding
- Greater devolution of expenditure responsibility to local authorities
- Economic charging for local authority services generally
- A contribution from commercial properties not currently covered by commercial rates, and
- Extension of water charges and the introduction of a new tax on non-principal private residences.

The members indicated that they do not support the contents of this Report and enquired as to what would be the follow-up to the Report. The Designated County Manager informed them that this would be at the discretion of the Government.

Correspondence

- The members asked if any correspondence had been received regarding the issue of a University for the South-East and requested that they be informed of any such correspondence.

Any other matters

As there were no other matters, that concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____