

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

Minutes of the April monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at County Hall, Clonmel, on Monday, 28th April 2008 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. M. Brett, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. B. Coffey, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. Mac Partlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. S. Ryan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. S. Thompson, Research & Policy Officer
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. C. Long,
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated County Manager.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Codd, seconded by Cllr. L. O'Neill, the minutes of the March monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Matters Arising

The members enquired if there was any update regarding the university issue. The Cathaoirleach informed them that efforts were ongoing in trying, in the first instance, to organise a meeting with the Director of Waterford Institute of Technology to discuss the matter.

Tourism in the South-East Region

Mr. Joe Palmer, General Manager, Fáilte Ireland-South-East, attended the meeting and made a presentation to the members on '*Tourism in the South-East Region*'. In his presentation he outlined the following key priorities in the 'Investing for Growth' Programme for the South-East Region:

- Major New Irish Marketing Programme
- Focus on Key International Markets
- New Investment Programme
- 3 Year Strategic Plan
- Focus on Business Development
- An Ambitious Target.

Mr. Palmer distributed the following Fáilte Ireland Publications to the members:

- South-East Ireland Pocket Guide
- Fáilte Ireland South-East Operational Plan 2008
- Fáilte Ireland South-East Regional Tourism Development Plan 2008-2010
- Discover Ireland 2008 Leisure and Activity Breaks
- Ireland's South Coast.

Mr. Palmer discussed the above with the members and responded to their questions and comments as follows:

- The members welcomed the restructuring of Fáilte Ireland
- Problems with coastal erosion and litter on beaches
- Funding for festivals
- Assistance for B&Bs and Guesthouses
- The need to promote tourism in small towns and villages
- The lack of customer care in Irish hotels
- The situation regarding the Rock of Cashel
- Concern over number of ferry users
- The need to close down tourism/festival websites that are out of date.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Palmer for his very informative presentation and stated that he would be welcome back for a further presentation in 2009.

Report on Broadband MANs in the South-East Region

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on Broadband MANs in the South-East Region. The report detailed the current status of the MAN programme in the Region that is part-funded by the DCENR, and detailed what was involved in Phase I and II of the programme, stating that under Phase III of the programme, a Value-for-Money Review and convening of a Next Generation Forum have been undertaken by the DCENR. A Policy Paper is expected to be published by the Department at the end of April 2008 which will detail the proposals and process for the next phase of the broadband MANs rollout.

Statistics on Information Society and Telecommunications 2007

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on Information Society & Telecommunications 2007 recently published by the CSO. The key findings of the report were outlined under the following headings:

- ICT Sector in Ireland
- Use of ICT by Enterprise
- Use of ICT by Households
- Statistics on Internet Connections
- Telecommunications
- International Comparisons.

'Spirit of Enterprise' Forum

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the South-East Region's 'Spirit of Enterprise' Forum. The European Officer outlined to the members the main functions of the Forum since its establishment in 2006 and listed significant achievements made by the Forum. He stated that South-East Enterprise Week will be held again this year from 13th - 17th October, following its success last year.

Report on Local and Regional Government

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on Local and Regional Government, recently published by the IPA. The main report examined twelve different categories of organisations operating at local and regional level and stated that the principal focus of the research involved an examination of the levels of autonomy and accountability for each of these categories across several key themes, including human resources, finance and policy.

A Green Paper on Local Government entitled '*Stronger Local Democracy - Options for Change*' is due to be published shortly by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. This matter will be on the agenda for the May Authority meeting and a submission will be made by the Authority.

Arts & Cultural Plan 2008

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated on '*Arts & Cultural Plan 2008*'. The report highlighted the specific initiatives included in the Arts and Cultural Plan 2008 and outlined the number of major cultural infrastructure projects that will be completed in

2008, including the €33 million Wexford Opera House project due to be open in September 2008.

Notice of Motion

The following Notice of Motion, submitted and proposed by Cllr. D. MacPartlin was seconded by Cllr. D. Walsh:

“That this Authority urges the Government to favourably consider the request by Waterford Wedgewood Group to underwrite the €30 million bank facility which the Group has said is needed to protect their business and secure the employment of 500 jobs which are vital to the economy of the South-East Region.”

This resolution was passed by the members, subject to contacting Mr. John Foley, CEO, Waterford Crystal and Mr. Walter Cullen, Regional Industrial Organiser, UNITE Union, in order to ascertain their views on the propriety of the Authority making representations to the government in this regard and at this time. It was agreed that no action should be taken until replies are received to this correspondence.

Other Matters

- The Director informed the members that an invitation has been received for the Authority to undertake a study visit to Budapest, Hungary, in the context of the EU inter-regional collaboration and cooperation. The members accepted his recommendation that the Authority accept the invitation for a delegation of representatives to make the study visit which would include meetings with government officials and regional administrators. The proposed dates for the study visit are from 5th to 8th June 2008. The following members were nominated by the Authority to participate in the study visit:

Cllr. P. O’Callaghan	Cllr. Martin Murphy	Cllr. A. McDonald
Cllr. D. Walsh	Cllr. D. Landy	Cllr. D. Hurley
Cllr. W. Paton	Cllr. C. Phelan	Cllr. L. Brazil
Cllr. D. Geoghegan.		

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Síniithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____

