

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the February monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority
held at Assembly House, Waterford on Monday, 23rd February, 2009 at 2.30 p.m.**

Present: Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, 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. S. Doyle, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. L. O'Brien, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. S. Ryan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh, Cllr. T. Wright.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, Asst. Director
Ms. S. Thompson, Research & Policy Officer
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated County Manager.

Apologies:

Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. W. Paton.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Brazil, seconded by Cllr. M. O'Halloran, the minutes of the January monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 – Consideration and approval of Issues Paper

Mr. Dominic Walsh, Senior Executive Planner, Carlow County Council, who has been assigned to the Regional Authority as RPG Officer, made a presentation to the members on the RPG process and presented the Draft Issues Paper to the members.

He outlined his presentation under the following headings:

- Project Organisation
- Timeframe
- Issues to be addressed in the RPG Document
- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Region

- Strategic Goals
- Population
- Economic Strategy
- Industrial, Commercial and Retail
- Education, Training, R&D
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Water & Waste
- Energy & Communications
- Community, Heritage & Social Inclusion
- Recreation, Leisure and Sports
- Agriculture, Marine and Rural Development
- Tourism & Culture
- An Ghaeltacht
- Achieving Critical Mass
- Next Steps.

The full content of the Draft Issues Paper and an Issues Leaflet had been circulated to the members in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Bernadette Guest, Heritage Officer, Waterford County Council, made a presentation to the members on the Strategic Environment Assessment and Appropriate Assessment process.

She outlined her presentation under the following headings:

- SEA and AA – Process
- Content of Environment Report
- Scoping Process
- Environmental Issues
- Water
- Climate Change
- Landscape and Cultural Heritage
- Outcome of the SEA and AA Process.

A Scoping Document that flags likely significant issues and invites comment on environmental issues to be covered in the environmental report was circulated to the members.

Mr. Walsh and Ms. Guest then responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- Protection of Rural Heritage
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Broadband
- Health Services

- Infrastructure in Villages
- South-East Waste Management Plan
- Flood-prone Locations.

Mr. Walsh stated that the Issues Paper is designed to encourage debate and to pose questions for parties interested in making a submission.

The members unanimously approved the Draft Issues Paper and agreed that the public consultation phase for the RPG process could commence.

The Cathaoirleach and members thanked Mr. Walsh and Ms. Guest for their very informative presentations and for the work put into the review of the RPGs to date.

Annual Financial Statement

The Annual Financial Statement in respect of the financial year ending 31st December 2008, copy of which had been circulated, was considered by the Authority and, on the proposal of Cllr. L. Allen, seconded by Cllr. P. Norris, was unanimously approved by the members.

Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion

The members noted details of a Submission to the European Commission on the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion "*Turning territorial diversity into strength*", copy of which had been circulated, regarding the Consultation Process on the Green Paper. In the Authority's submission, the following areas were addressed:

- Definition of Territorial Cohesion
- Scale and Scope of Territorial Action
- Better Co-operation and co-ordination
- New Territorial Partnerships
- Improving Understanding of Territorial Cohesion.

The Director informed the members that any comments or ideas that members may have for the submission should be sent to the Authority without delay.

National Higher Education Strategy

The members noted details and terms of reference for a new National Strategy for Higher Education recently announced by Mr. Batt O'Keeffe, T.D., Minister for Education and Science. The strategy will set out the blue print for the development of the sector over the next two decades.

Government Action Plan – “Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future”

The members noted details of a recently launched Government Action Plan titled “Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future”. Government aims to change the transport mix in Ireland so that by 2020 car share of total commutes will drop from the current 65% to 45%.

National Broadband Scheme

The members noted details of the National Broadband Scheme recently announced by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The report states that following a competitive tendering process, the Minister has entered into a contract for the delivery of the scheme with the company ‘3’. According to the report Ireland will have 100% broadband coverage by September 2010 with half of the area under the scheme to be covered by the end of 2009.

Live Register Figures

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Live Register figures recently published by the CSO. The figures show that Live Register increases occurred across all regions in January 2009.

Correspondence

- Letter from Ms. Mary Coughlan, T.D., Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment regarding Waterford Crystal.

Any Other Matters

The members expressed grave concern about the situation that is prevailing in the Waterford Crystal firm at present and requested that the Authority again write to the office of the Tánaiste expressing these concerns.

Concern was expressed at the rising unemployment situation in the Region. The Director informed the members that Forfás is currently preparing Regional Competitiveness Agendas for the eight regions and will have a draft shortly. This report will be brought the Authority for discussion.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínte: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____