

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the July monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at
the Council Chamber, County Hall, Clonmel, on Monday, 28th July 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. 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. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, 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
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated Co. Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. B. Coffey.

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

- With the family of Cllr. Seamus Whelan
- With the family of Cllr. Joe Cody
- With the family of Eddie Kirwan, Wexford County Council
- With the Aylward family (Bobby & Liam) on the death of their mother.

Address by Outgoing Cathaoirleach

The Cathaoirleach began by welcoming everyone to his final meeting in the Chair. He congratulated the members of the Authority who had recently been elected as Mayors/Cathaoirleach of their local authorities:

- Cllr. T. Breathnach - Cathaoirleach, Kilkenny Co. Council
- Cllr. T. Howlin - Mayor, Wexford Borough Council
- Cllr. T. Wright - Mayor, Dungarvan Town Council
- Cllr. A. McDonald - Cathaoirleach, Bagenalstown Town Council.

He said it was a great honour to serve as Cathaoirleach of the Authority for the past 12 months during which time the Authority continued to work successfully to advance the region's development needs and priorities and continued to be a strong voice for the South-East. He outlined the following projects and activities in which the Authority were involved during his term:

- 'SERB-II': South-East Broadband Phase II Project - Construction of Broadband Networks in 5 towns - Thomastown, Cahir, Cashel, Carrick-on-Suir and Tipperary

- Supporting and promoting the case for the establishment of a University in the South-East Region
- Implementing the Regional Planning Guidelines
- Promotion of renewable/bio-energy initiatives through preparation of a Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region – launched by Minister John Gormley in March this year and now in its implementation phase
- Spearheading the Region’s ‘Spirit of Enterprise’ Initiative and assisted in organising a “Spirit of Enterprise Week” in the region which will continue to be an annual event
- Prepared a Prioritisation Study for the N.24. The Authority, along with the Mid West Regional Authority met with a delegation from the NRA to make the case for the priority upgrading of the N24 Route
- Submission to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the Reform of Local Government
- Participated in the work of the Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly, the EU Committee of the Regions and other bodies
- Promoted issues of regional importance, such as:
 - the region’s transport infrastructure (road, rail, ports)
 - the South-East Regional Airport
 - Radiation Oncology & Neurology Services
 - Industry, enterprise and regional development
 - Renewable energy.

He stated that the region is facing many challenges, and the Regional Authority has a key role in providing the leadership to ensure that the interests, needs and priorities of the South-East are addressed.

He also expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Leas-chathaoirleach, Cllr. William Paton, and to his fellow members of the Authority, to the Designated County Manager, Ned O’Connor, to the Director, Tom Byrne, and to the Staff for all their help and cooperation during his term as Cathaoirleach.

Many members expressed their thanks to the Cathaoirleach and complimented him on the manner in which he discharged the role of the office of Cathaoirleach over the past year.

Election of Cathaoirleach

Nominations were invited for the position of Cathaoirleach of the Authority for the ensuing year.

Cllr. M. Fitzgerald was proposed by Cllr. J. Crowe and seconded by Cllr. D. Landy.

As there were no other nominations, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald was declared elected as Cathaoirleach of the South-East Regional Authority for the ensuing year. He then took the chair.

Cllr. Fitzgerald expressed his thanks and appreciation to his proposer, seconder and the members for electing him to the office of Cathaoirleach. He said it was an honour to be elected and thanked the outgoing Cathaoirleach for his contribution to the Authority over the past year. He also paid tribute to all Cathaoirleach and members of the Authority since 1994 and stated that he looked forward to working with the members and staff of the Authority to advance all the issues of importance to the development of the region over the coming year.

The new Cathaoirleach spoke of the year ahead and the challenges facing the Authority and stated that his priorities for the region for the forthcoming year would include:

- University Status for Waterford Institute of Technology
- Promotion of health and education in the region
- Promotion of broadband infrastructure in the region
- Promotion of N.24 issue.

Election of Leas-chathaoirleach

Nominations were invited by the Cathaoirleach for the position of Leas-chathaoirleach of the Authority for the ensuing year.

Cllr. P. Codd was proposed by Cllr. C. Phelan and seconded by Cllr. T. Howlin. As there were no other nominations, Cllr. Codd was declared elected.

Cllr. Codd thanked his proposer and seconder and stated that he looked forward to working with the Cathaoirleach and members of the Authority for the ensuing year.

Confirmation of Minutes

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

Presentation on Terra Madre

Mr. Donal Lehane, Chairman, *Terra Madre Ireland 2008* made a presentation to the members on the *Terra Madre* Food Conference entitled '*The Future of Sustainable Food Production in Ireland*' to be held in Waterford in September. His presentation was delivered under the following headings:

- History and background of *Terra Madre*
- Key objectives
- Critical success factors
- Examples of Conference topics and workshops
- Workshop Chairman and Hosts
- Highlights of the Food Festival
- Delegates attending the Conference
- Key benefits for delegates

- Reasons to participate in *Terra Madre*
- Costs involved in participation.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Lehane for his interesting presentation and urged all members to promote and support the event in September.

Report on meeting with NRA following publication of the N24 Prioritisation Study

The Director stated that the N24 Prioritisation Study has been circulated to the Authority members and to various bodies in the region and it is hoped to meet and brief the Oireachtas members on the Study in the near future.

The Director informed the members of a meeting held on 10th July 2008 between the Cathaoirleach, Director and Designated County Manager of SERA, the Cathaoirleach and Director of MWRA and the Chief Executive and Regional Manager of the NRA to discuss the N24 issues.

He stated that he had outlined the undeniable case for the priority upgrading of the N24 National Primary Route in the NRA's post-2010 Roads Programme and stated that this case is presented clearly in the N24 Prioritisation Study.

Consultation Process on the Green Paper for Local Government Reform

The members noted details of a draft submission to the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government on the *Consultation Process on the Green Paper for Local Government Reform*, copy of which had been circulated.

The Authority made a submission on the initial consultation process which envisaged the need for regional government to be apportioned a greater role in any reform of local government, which is not reflected in the Green Paper.

The members suggested that the following items be included in the submission:

- Health services should be brought back to regional level as these services are not filtering down to the ordinary people
- That additional resources be provided to Regional Authorities
- That Information Technology, Communications and Education be included in the submission.

Details of Local Electoral Area Boundaries

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on details of *Local Electoral Area Boundaries* recently published by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The report outlined details of the revisions made to each electoral area in the South-East Region for the information of the members.

Energy in the Residential Sector

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on *Energy in the Residential Sector*, recently published by Sustainable Energy

Ireland. The report outlined the key findings of the main report and stated that it also includes forecasts of residential sector energy use to 2020 and is intended to inform future policy options.

The members stated the importance of energy awareness, especially given the increase in ESB and gas prices. They stated that energy awareness must be promoted at local level with solar panels to be encouraged in all future planning applications.

Climate Change

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on *'Ireland in a Warmer World: Scientific Predictions of the Irish Climate in the Twenty-First Century'*, recently published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The report outlined the main climate changes likely to affect our country in the 21st century.

HSE Structure

The Director informed the members that the Regional Authorities feel that local input into the HSE is very poor as the Regional Health Fora are not working very successfully. Other Regional Authorities have written to Ms. Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health & Children stating that they are unhappy with the delivery of Health Services and requesting that the HSE attend Regional Authority meetings twice a year.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Mac Partlin, seconded by Cllr. T. Howlin, it was unanimously agreed by the members that the Authority write to the HSE expressing concern at the difficulties being experienced by elected representatives in making representations to the HSE and in having their queries responded to, and also expressing dissatisfaction at the lack of local political representation on the board of the HSE.

The members also requested that a representative from the HSE be invited to attend an Authority meeting in the near future.

Correspondence

- Letter from Mr. Joe Palmer, General Manager – South-East, Fáilte Ireland, regarding the Authority's concerns about coastal erosion.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ceadaithe: _____ Date: _____