

**South-East Regional Authority**  
**Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt**

**Minutes of the November monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at County Hall, Carlow on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at 2.30 p.m.**

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

**Also Present:** Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. Maguire, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. W. Paton, 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, European Officer  
Ms. S. Thompson, Regional Broadband Coordinator  
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager  
Mr. M. Malone, Designated County Manager.

**Apologies:** Cllr. S. Connick, Cllr. M. D'Arcy, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. S. Nyhan.

**Confirmation of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Tobin, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, the minutes of the October monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

**Freight Movement and Logistics in the South-East Region**

Mr. Albert Byrne, Waterford Institute of Technology, was not available to make this presentation to the members. It was stated that this presentation will be made at the January 2007 meeting of the Authority.

**Designated County Manager's Report**

The members noted and considered details of the Designated County Manager's Report, copy of which had been circulated. Mr. Michael Malone formally

presented the report which outlined the main activities of the Authority over the period from October 2005 to December 2006 and set out how the Authority provided for better co-ordination and co-operation in activities and linkages between its constituent local authorities and with other regional authorities.

A discussion followed from the Report and the members expressed concerns about the following:

- Rollout of broadband infrastructure in the Region and the high cost of broadband connections - The Cathaoirleach suggested that the Authority compile a report for the members on the uptake of broadband in the region and outline any initiatives the Authority can take to improve access to broadband services and the development of broadband generally. He also suggested that focus areas be given prime consideration, i.e. Bellview Port and industrial estates
- Joint Waste Management Plan - The Cathaoirleach requested that a summary of the Plan for the region be prepared for the January 2007 meeting of the Authority
- Alternative Energy Policy - The members suggested that a Policy for the region be formulated without delay
- University for the South-East Region - The members enquired about the current situation regarding the securing of a University for the region. The Director informed them that an external independent expert has been appointed to assess the application by Waterford Institute of Technology for upgrading to a university
- South-East Regional Airport - The members requested that awareness of the Airport and its new destinations be increased.

The Designated County Manager thanked the Director and staff of the Authority for their hard work and cooperation over the period covered by the report.

### **Regional State Aid Guidelines 2007-2013**

The members noted details of a report (copy of Ireland's Regional Aid Map had been circulated) on Regional State Aid Guidelines 2007-2013 recently published by the European Commission.

The report stated that the whole of the South-East Region has been designated eligible for regional aid throughout this period, and outlined in detail the

designated areas within the Southern & Eastern NUTS II Region and the percentage rates available to large, medium and small firms.

### **Quarterly National Household Survey**

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Quarterly National Household Survey for Quarter 2/2006 recently published by the Central Statistics Office, which outlined the most recent trends in (un)employment levels.

The summary report outlined the main highlights from the full report and also detailed the following tables:

**Table 1:** Comparison by NUTS III regions at Q2/2006

**Table 2:** Unemployment Rate (%) Comparison by NUTS III Regions at Q2/2006.

A discussion followed and the members expressed concern over job losses in the region, especially in smaller towns. They attributed these job losses to the lack of competitive infrastructure and questioned the role of the IDA in attracting investment to the region. The members requested that the Authority write to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment outlining the situation and requesting that all efforts be intensified to replace jobs in the region.

### **Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2005**

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2005, recently published by the Central Statistics Office.

The report presents a comprehensive picture of Ireland today, providing detailed information, tables and graphs on a wide range of topics including population, labour force, education, justice, the economy, agriculture, industry, services, prices, houses and weather.

### **Ex-ante Evaluation of Investment Priorities for the NDP 2007-2013**

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Ex-ante Evaluation of Investment Priorities for the NDP 2007-2013, recently published by the ESRI.

The report considers investment priorities across a wide range of areas including transport, environment services, housing, education, health, childcare, R&D and investment in human resources.

### **'DRIVE' Project**

The Director explained to the members that the Authority has been invited to join as a Partner in the 'DRIVE' Project (Directing Research into Viable Enterprises for Growth). This project is an INTERREG IIIB co-funded project with partners in the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland.

'DRIVE' aims to build stronger connections between research institutions and small companies with a view to improving their innovation capacity.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Allen, seconded by Cllr. D. Goeghegan, the Authority unanimously approved the Authority's participation in this project.

### **Other Matters**

- The members expressed concern over the levels of radon in the ground in the South-East region and requested that the Authority examine the situation and coordinate a strategy to deal with this issue
- The members congratulated all involved in the 'Community Challenge' Programmes recently broadcast from the region
- The members congratulated all involved in the recent 'All Stars' Awards
- The members congratulated Kilkenny hurlers who received 'Sports Personality of the Year' and 'Hurler of the Year' Awards
- Season's Greetings - The Cathaoirleach extended good wishes to all members and staff for a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

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