

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

Minutes of the November monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at the City Hall, Waterford, on Monday, 26th November 2007 at 2.30 p.m.

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

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. B. Coffey, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. Mac Partlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. L. O'Brien, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh, Cllr. T. Wright.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director,
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. B. Maher, Research & Projects Executive
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager.

Apologies: Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated Co. Manager
Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. S. Ryan.

Before the meeting commenced, the Cathaoirleach proposed the following votes of sympathy:

- To Cllr. Catherine Phelan on the death of her father, Jimmy Phelan
- To Cllr. Cora Long on the death of her brother-in-law, Liam O'Shea.

A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect.

Confirmation of Minutes

At the request of Cllr. D. Landy, the minutes of the October monthly meeting held on 22nd October 2007, copy of which had been circulated, were agreed to be amended to include reference to the responses of Mr. Michael Egan, Head of Corporate Affairs, National Roads Authority, with respect to his questions about the upgrading of the N24 National Primary Route and in particular the proposed Carrick-on-Suir Bypass.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. P. Codd, the minutes of the October monthly meeting, as amended, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The members referred to correspondence issued to the Authority from Ms. Mary Hanafin, T.D., Minister for Education & Science, regarding the Report by Dr. Jim Port on the application of Waterford Institute of Technology for designation as a university. They expressed extreme dissatisfaction at the insinuation that the Report may not be published and requested that the Authority write to the Minister stating that this response is totally unacceptable and requesting that the Report be published immediately.
- The members requested that Mr. Michael Egan from the NRA be invited to attend a future meeting of the Authority
- The members requested that a representative from Iarnród Éireann be invited to attend a meeting of the Authority in the near future to speak about their services in the South-East Region.

Prioritisation Study for N24

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on proposals for a Prioritisation Study for the N24 National Primary Route and to engage consultants (Colin Buchanan & Partners) to undertake the study.

The report detailed the rationale for the Study that is intended to form a key input by the Regional and Local Authorities into the NRA's prioritisation analysis of the non-major inter-urban road schemes proposed for upgrading/development under the terms of '*Transport 21*'. It also outlined the objectives of the Study and research actions to be undertaken. When completed the study will crystallise the case for the prioritisation of the major by-passes and improvement schemes on the N24 and will be used by the regional and local authorities in pressing government and the NRA to give them due priority.

It was noted that the cost of the study will be met by contributions from the relevant local authorities.

It was unanimously agreed to proceed with the Prioritisation Study and on the proposal of Cllr. D. Landy, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, it was resolved:

"That we, the South-East Regional Authority, having regard to the report and recommendation of the Director on the evaluation of tender submissions received in response to the public procurement process for the N24 Prioritisation Study, hereby accept the tender of Colin Buchanan & Partners

Limited in the sum of Fifty Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty Six Euro (€57,866.00) inclusive of VAT”.

South-East Regional Broadband Infrastructure Project – Phase II

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the South-East Regional Broadband Infrastructure Project – Phase II.

The report outlined progress on each of the five urban centres (Tipperary, Cahir, Cashel, Carrick-on-Suir and Thomastown) with works on four of the towns fully completed.

The Director informed the members that proposals have been prepared for the provision of wireless networks in Bagenalstown, Tullow, Dunmore East and Tramore. However, the indications are that all wireless MANs are on hold pending completion of a review of the National Broadband Programme by the Department of Communication, Energy & Natural Resources. He also stated that meetings are currently being held between the Authority, Wexford County Council and the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources regarding the provision of broadband for the County Wexford towns of Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross.

The members requested that the Authority write to the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources regarding rural connectivity in County Wexford.

Broadband WiFi Networks in Kilkenny City and Wexford Town

The members considered a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the *‘ESTIIC’ Regional Framework Operation ‘CEBxS’ Project – Construction of Wifi Networks in Kilkenny City and Wexford Town.*

The report outlined the details of this project and stated that the Authority, in consultation with eNet, the company responsible for management of the MANs in Ireland and which has developed a similar Wifi network on the Carlow MAN, has developed an initiative that would have tangible and worthwhile benefits. Resulting from these consultations, a ‘Wifi Initiative’ has been proposed for Kilkenny City and Wexford Town and these networks should be in place within a period of two/three months.

Enterprise Ireland regional structure in the South-East

The members noted details of contents of a letter from Mr. Frank Ryan, CEO, Enterprise Ireland, resulting from representations made by the Authority with regard to the reported reorganisation of EI regional structure in the South-East Region.

In his letter, Mr. Ryan confirmed that EI is maintaining the existing structure in the South-East Region.

Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2008-2010 “Transforming Irish Industry”

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2008-2010 – ‘*Transforming Irish Industry*’. The summary report outlines Enterprise Ireland’s response to the challenges of competing in global markets worldwide which will make a substantial contribution to the continued internationalisation of Irish companies through innovation.

The members expressed grave concern regarding the unemployment situation in the South-East and stated that they felt that neither Enterprise Ireland nor the IDA are doing enough to attract foreign industry and industrial investment to the region. They also requested that the Authority write to these bodies seeking support for the establishment of a university for the South-East and also to invite them to a meeting with the Authority and all Senators/TDs in the region in order to discuss the problems and issues in detail.

Quarter 1 Housing Statistics Bulletin 2007

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Quarterly Housing Statistics Bulletin for Quarter 1/2007. The report outlined the main points of the Bulletin issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government and also showed the following tables:

- Total and Private House Completions in the South-East between 1st January and 31st March 2007
- Details of Affordable Housing Schemes in the South-East between 1st January and 31st March 2007
- Total Output under Part V, Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006 in the South-East between 1st January and 31st March 2007.

CSO Live Register for September 2007

The members noted details of a summary report on the Live Register for 2007 recently published by the Central Statistics Office. The report outlined the main features of the register and provided a table which showed persons on the Live Register classified by Region.

Water Quality in Ireland 2006

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated on *Water Quality in Ireland 2006* recently published by the Environmental Protection Agency. The report presents the latest data available in Ireland on the eleven most relevant and significant indicators of water quality. The findings of the report were outlined under the following headings:

- River Quality
- Nitrates and Phosphates in Rivers
- Lake Quality
- Fish Kills
- Estuarine and Coastal Water Quality
- Bathing Water
- Pollutes at Sea Incidents
- Nitrates in Groundwater.

A discussion on this issue followed and the members requested that the Authority write to the Chairman of An Bord Pleanála, Mr. John O'Connor, outlining their concerns regarding one-off housing and Mr. O'Connor's assertion that such houses in rural areas are primarily responsible for groundwater pollution in Ireland.

Correspondence

- Letter from Dept. of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources regarding a natural gas service for County Wexford
- Letter from HSE South regarding points of contact for Authority members with HSE South-East
- Letter from Dept. of Education & Science regarding Waterford Institute of Technology's application for university status.

Other Matters

- Season's Greetings - The Cathaoirleach extended good wishes to all members and staff for a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year and extended an invitation to all to join him for refreshments in the Tower Hotel.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____