

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

**Minutes of the November monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford, on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 2.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach, presided.

**Also Present:** Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. M. Brett, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. Maguire, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. Mac Partlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. T. Wright.

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

**Apologies:** Cllr. B. Coffey, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. S. Ryan.

**Confirmation of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. D. Geoghegan, the minutes of the October monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

**Role, Functions and Developments of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs**

Mr. Aidan O'Reilly, Principal Officer, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, made a presentation to the members on the role, functions and recent developments of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. He outlined his presentation under the following headings:

- The LEADER approach to Rural Development
- Details of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP)
- Areas of coverage under the RDP
- Delivery of the axes of the RDP
- List of allocations under the RDP
- Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities

- Support for Business Creation and Development
- Encouragement of Tourism Activities
- Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population
- Village Renewal and Development
- Conservation and Upgrading of the Rural Heritage
- Training and Information/Skills Acquisition and Animation
- Management and Control Structures
- Cohesion Process.

Mr. O'Reilly then responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- How this programme compares with the previous programme
- Why gateways and hubs have been excluded
- Overlap with CEBs should be avoided
- Will South Tipperary and Kilkenny be joined in the LEADER Programme?
- Will village renewal be funded under the LEADER Programme?
- The need for emphasis to be put on job creation.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. O'Reilly for his very interesting presentation and suggested that he make presentations to each local authority in the region to outline individual details for each local authority.

The members requested that as a presentation had already been given on Axes 3 & 4 (LEADER) under the Rural Development Programme, a presentation be requested in the near future on Axes 1 & 2 from the Department of Agriculture & Food.

### **Review of Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG)**

The Director informed the meeting that the first RPGs were made in 2004 under the Planning and Development Act, 2000. A review is due to take place within 6 years of first making the Guidelines. A number of developments have occurred since that time including: the launch of the NDP 2007-2013; the introduction of the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive and the Habitats Directive; the need to prepare Flood Risk Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. There has also been a marked deterioration in the budgetary and fiscal environment.

The new RPGs will be effective from 2010 for a twelve-year timeframe. An indicative timetable has been set out between the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Regional Authorities and the Local Authorities. It will be necessary to issue public notices in February 2009 to inform the public that the RPG review process is about to commence. The review and updating is to be complete by early to mid 2010.

### **Spirit of Enterprise Forum**

- The Assistant Director informed the members that a very successful Enterprise Week had been held between 13<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> October which was supported by the SERA and the 6 constituent local authorities. Nearly 100 events were held involving 57 organisations, ending in a Regional Conference in Kilkenny. The event received a lot of media coverage and it is proposed to continue this very successful project on an annual basis.
- The members noted that the Spirit of Enterprise initiative has been nominated for the European Enterprise Awards in 2009. This award is given to outstanding initiatives that support entrepreneurship. There are only 2 initiatives going forward for the award from Ireland. The members congratulated all associated with this award.

### **Ireland's Environment 2008**

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated on '*Ireland's Environment 2008*', recently published by the EPA. The report assesses the overall quality of Ireland's Environment, the pressures on it and the way we are responding as a society to current and emerging environmental issues. According to the report Ireland is not making enough headway in meeting the huge challenges posed by climate change, water quality and waste management.

### **Regional Research and Indicators**

The members noted details of a short paper on regional research and indicators entitled '*Remote Rural Regions- How Proximity to a City Influences the Performance of Rural Regions*', recently issued by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy. This paper describes the characteristics of remote rural regions in Europe and how remoteness can be defined and measured. Based on this paper most of the South-East Region is considered to be a remote rural region, as the population of its largest city, Waterford, is marginally under 50,000 inhabitants.

### **Statistical Yearbook 2008**

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on the '*Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2008*', recently published by the CSO. The Yearbook provides detailed information, tables and graphs across a wide range of topics, including population, labour force, education, crime, the economy, agriculture, industry, services, prices, housing, knowledge economy and the environment. The report paints a comprehensive picture of Ireland today.

## Other Matters

- The Cathaoirleach proposed the following votes of sympathy:
  - To Cllr. Pat Norris, on the death of his brother, Jimmy Norris
  - To Cllr. Joan Murphy, on the death of her brother, Paddy O'Grady
  - To the family of Mary Coleman, Wexford County Council.
- The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Florin Marginean, a Romanian Intern who will spend some time with the Authority under the Romanian Young Professionals Scheme.
- The members requested that any Study Visit to be undertaken in 2009 be held early in the year in order to avoid the run-in to the local elections.
- The members referred to a letter from DoEHLG to County Managers regarding common wording for building policy in rural areas. They requested that this letter be taken into consideration when making/adopting the RPGs.
- 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 Maggie May's.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

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Ceadaithe: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dáta: \_\_\_\_\_