

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the October monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority
held at County Hall, Wexford on Monday, 23rd October 2006
at 2.30 p.m.**

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

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. P. Codd, Cllr. S. Connick, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. M. D'Arcy, Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, 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. T. Maher, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, 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. A. Sheehan, Office Manager,
Mr. M. Malone, Designated County Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. D. Landy.

Confirmation of Minutes

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

Budget in respect of financial year ending 31st December 2007

The members considered the draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2007, copy of which had been circulated. The Director indicated that a copy had been circulated to the constituent local authorities and that it has been discussed with the City/County Managers.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. T. Maher, the budget, as presented, was unanimously approved and adopted.

'EU Funding 2007 - 2013 - An Overview'

Mr. Eamon O'Hara, Policy and Information Officer, Irish Regions Office, Brussels, made a presentation to the members on '*EU Funding 2007-2013 - An Overview*'. In his presentation, he covered the following:

- EU Budget 2007-2013
 - €866 bn. (1.045% of EU GNI)
 - Features of the Budget

- EU Funding in Ireland
 - Funds available under Centralised and Decentralised Management
 - Amount of funding available for Ireland compared to overall funding

- Other EU Funding
 - FP7 – Framework Programme for Research
 - Competiveness & Innovation
 - Citizens for Europe
 - Culture 2007
 - Lifelong Learning

- State Aid
 - Awaiting Regional Aid Maps for Ireland
 - Increase in de-minimus aid.

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

- Funding available for town twinning
- Whether the South-East Region is getting a fair share of funding by comparison with other regions and the overall funding available
- Concern regarding the NUTS categorisation for the region
- Programmes available for 'LEADER' funding
- A request that every effort be made by the Authority to secure all funding available to the region.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. O'Hara for his very interesting and informative presentation. He also requested that a Summary of Programmes be provided to the Authority when the new NDP has been finalised.

Energy Green Paper 2006 'Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland'

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on an Energy Green Paper entitled "*Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*".

The European Officer informed the members that the Green Paper outlines energy demand and forecast up to 2020 and options for future direction of energy policy based on the three pillars of:

1. Security of supply
2. Environmental sustainability
3. Economic competitiveness.

The Green Paper is now put forward for a period of consultation, which will culminate in the publication of a White Paper. The European Officer stated that the Regional Authority will make a submission to the DCMNR and invited members to contact the Authority without delay with any suggestions they wish to have incorporated into this submission.

Policy Briefing prepared by the Irish Regions Office - 'EU Policy Initiatives for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency : an Irish Perspective'

The members noted details of a report prepared by the Irish Regions Office, Brussels, copy of which had been circulated, on '*EU Policy Initiatives for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency : an Irish Perspective*'.

The Report outlined the Policy Initiatives under the following headings:

- Overview of Renewable Energy Policy
- Renewable Electricity
- Energy Efficiency
- Biofuels
- EU Programmes and Funding
- Future Outlook.

The Director informed the members that the issue of renewable energy is a very important one for our region. He stated that the Authority is currently preparing a Bio-Energy Plan for the South-East Region, which is the only Irish region to prepare such a plan. Public consultation and stakeholder workshops will be held in December 2006 and will include all parties who are interested in inputting into

the formulation of the Regional Bio-Energy Implementation Plan. Local Authorities, Energy Agencies, Teagasc and the Environmental Protection Agency are already involved and it is hoped to include the Commission for Energy Regulation, EirGrid and other key agencies and interests in the consultation and plan preparation process.

Atlantic Gateways Initiative Study Report

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the '*Atlantic Gateways Initiative Study Report*', the objective of which is to promote linkages and cooperation between the Gateways of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford in order to achieve critical mass and to provide a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area in furtherance of the NSS objective of promoting balanced regional development.

Rural Transport Initiative : Submission to Department of Transport

The members noted details of a submission made by the Authority to the Department of Transport, copy of which had been circulated, on the future development of the Rural Transport Initiative. The Submission included the following:

- Introduction
- Details of the South-East Authority (SERA)
- Details of Regional Planning Guidelines in the South-East Region
- Details of Regional Transport Strategy for the South-East developed by SERA in 2002
- Regional Structure for supporting Rural Transport in the South-East.

The members agreed that every support must be given to the Rural Transport Initiative.

Other Matters

- Cllr. L. Allen reminded the members that the LAMA would hold their Annual Conference in the Arklow Bay Hotel on 10th/11th November 2007
- The Cathaoirleach informed the members that a series of breakfast meetings are currently being held by IBEC to brief all businesses and interested parties in the South-East on the positive benefits of establishing a University in the Region and urged all interested parties to attend

- Cllr. D. MacPartlin informed the members that a meeting had taken place in Brussels to promote the interests of local authorities within the EU. He sought the support of the members for any future meetings that would be held in this regard
- Cllr. J. Tobin informed the members that he and other members of Waterford Co. Co. had visited a Thermal Treatment Plant in Vienna and recommended that the Authority invite an expert to talk to the members on the pros and cons of Thermal Treatment at a future meeting

The Director agreed to contact and discuss this proposal with South Tipperary County Council which is the lead authority for implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South-East Region

The Cathaoirleach suggested that the Regional Authority consider hosting a mini-seminar on Thermal Treatment in the future.

- The Cathaoirleach informed the members that at a meeting of the EU Operational Committee earlier that day, the members of the Committee had requested that the Authority write to the Minister for Education and Science requesting that she meet a delegation from the Authority to discuss the current status of the application of Waterford IT to become a University.
- The members requested that Eamon O’Hara’s presentation be circulated to them.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____