

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the October monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority
held at the County Civic Offices, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, on Monday, 22nd
October 2007 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. B. Coffey, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. C. Long, Cllr. M. Maguire, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. L. O'Brien, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. S. Ryan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. D. Walsh.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Mr. M. Moroney, European Officer
Ms. M. Wixted, Projects Coordinator
Ms. B. Maher, Research & Projects Executive
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated Co. Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. T. Maher, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. M. Roche.

Before the meeting commenced, the Cathaoirleach and members thanked Mr. Micheál Fahey, Facility Manager, South East Regional Materials Recovery Facility in Dungarvan, for the guided tour of the facility which had been organised prior to the Authority meeting. The members found their visit to this facility to be very useful and informative.

The Cathaoirleach also stated that there was an addition to today's Agenda – Item 3(a) would be a brief presentation on The Gateway Innovation Fund.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Walsh, 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.

Matters arising from the Minutes

The following enquiries were made in relation to the minutes:

- If any information was available on Dr. Jim Port's Report on the application of WIT for designation as a University for the South-East

The Director informed the members that no further information had been received to date and that the Authority would write to the Dept. of Education & Science to follow up this matter.

- If any reply had been received from Enterprise Ireland regarding the restructuring of the Organisation, particularly as regards the South-East

The Director informed the members that the Authority had written to both Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment and Mr. Frank Ryan, CEO, Enterprise Ireland, regarding this matter. Copies of these letters had been circulated, but no response had been received to date.

- If any reply had been received from the HSE regarding points of contacts for public representatives

The Director informed the members that a letter had been received from Ms. Patricia O'Sullivan, General Manager, Waterford Regional Hospital, stating that this request had been forwarded to Mr. Richard Dooley, Network Manager, for his attention.

Transport in the South-East Region

Mr. Michael Egan, Head of Corporate Affairs, National Roads Authority, (NRA) made a presentation to the members under the following headings:

- National Roads Strategy
- Key National Roads Objectives
- 2007 Allocations
- 2007 Programme
- Current status of N7/N8 Dublin/Portlaoise/Cork
- Current status of N9 Dublin/Waterford
- Current status of N11 Dublin/Wexford
- Current status of N30 Enniscorthy/New Ross
- Current status of N24 Limerick/Waterford
- Current status of N25 Cork/Waterford/Wexford/Rosslare
- Current situation regarding the Upgrade Phases of the M50
- Other initiatives of the NRA.

Mr. Egan then responded to comments and queries from the members including the following:

- Position and timescale regarding upgrading of the N24
- Concern regarding signage for rural towns and villages
- Application by NRA for motorway status for the M9
- The amount of NRA projects that are guaranteed Government funding
- Motorway status for the N11
- Who determines roads policy?
- What provision will be made for cyclists on the roads?
- The possibility of connecting road and rail networks
- NRA position regarding advertising on roads

- The position regarding tolling on Waterford City By-Pass.

The members also raised the following local issues to which Mr. Egan responded:

- The position regarding By-Passes for:
 - Carrick-on-Suir
 - Carlow
 - Kilmacthomas
 - Mooncoin
 - New Ross
 - Thomastown
 - Mallow/Fermoy
- Flooding problems between Waterford and Tramore
- Need for upgrading of the N80 between Enniscorthy and Carlow
- N81 – Plans for the Tullow By-Pass
- Timeframe for road improvements between Bansha and Pallasgreen
- Dual-carriageway for Rosslare Harbour access road
- Insufficient signposts for Waterford from Waterford/Kilkenny Road
- Completion date for Kilkenny City Ring Road
- Position regarding Kilkenny/Callan Road
- Upgrade of Ballyragget/Durrow Road.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Egan for his very interesting and informative presentation and requested that he return for another presentation to the Authority at a future date.

Regional Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region

Ms. Deirdre Byrne, Project Scientist, Fehilly Timoney Ramboll, Consultants, made a presentation to the members on the Regional Bioenergy Plan for the South-East Region, copy of which had been circulated. Ms. Byrne outlined her presentation under the following headings:

- Introduction
- Drivers: Legislation and Policy
- National Policies
- National Targets
- Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the Region
- Drivers for developing a Bioenergy Plan
- Current Regional Situation
- Energy Use per Sector
- How realistic or achievable is Ireland's commitment to limit greenhouse gas emissions to 13% above 1990 levels by 2008 – 2012?
- Estimated Regional Resources
- Regional Targets for 2010/2020
- Achieving these targets
- Benefits to the Region.

Following her presentation, Ms. Byrne responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- Insufficient Government incentives to encourage farmers, suppliers and consumers for which bioenergy must be viable
- The fact that the transport sector is being targeted more than other sectors
- Means of reducing CO₂ by burning timber
- If the 2010 and 2020 Regional Targets are realistic
- The characteristics that make the South-East eligible to be leaders with the Regional Bioenergy Plan
- Concern that domestic housing is not adequately covered in the Plan
- The Budget for the Plan
- Government incentives for energy generation through wind, wave and tidal.

The Director informed the members that this Plan was a product of twelve months intensive work and that the Authority is the first region in Ireland to produce a Bioenergy Implementation Plan following a wide consultation process. The Authority will now work with local authorities and public agencies and manage the implementation of the Plan.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Brennan, seconded by Cllr. D. Walsh, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Regional Bioenergy Implementation Plan, subject to more emphasis on greener homes scheme.

The members also requested that the Authority write to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government expressing concern that the grant available under the greener homes scheme has been reduced since October 2007, thus discouraging people to use alternative energy.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Byrne for her excellent presentation to the Authority which enabled the members to fully comprehend the contents of the Plan.

Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF)

Mr. Michael Walsh, Waterford City Council and Mr. Fergal Reidy, Economic Development Officer with Waterford Co. Enterprise Board made a brief presentation to the members on the Gateway Innovation Fund. Their presentation was outlined under the following headings:

- Introduction to the GIF
- Proposals being prepared for Waterford Gateway application
- The Gateways involved in the Fund
- Waterford Gateway
- Proposals & Objectives of the Fund

The members expressed the following concerns following the presentation:

- Timing for the proposal is too short
- Each Gateway should have its own fund
- A rail link should be included in the Plan
- If the proposal is successful, a full detailed presentation be made to the members at a further Authority meeting.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Walsh and Mr. Reidy for attending the meeting and presenting this information to the members.

Budget in respect of financial year ending 31st December 2008

The members considered the draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2008, copy of which had been circulated. The Director stated that a copy had been circulated to the constituent local authorities and that it has been discussed with City/County Managers in the Region.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Tobin, seconded by Cllr. D. Geoghegan, the budget, as presented, was unanimously approved and adopted by the members.

Because the previous agenda items had taken longer than expected, the Cathaoirleach stated that any outstanding agenda items would be deferred to the November Authority meeting.

Other Matters

- Cllr. D. Mac Partlin expressed concern over a decision from An Bórd Gais not to provide natural gas to any of the main towns in Co. Wexford. He asked that the Authority request the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources to introduce a Public Service Obligation (PSO) as the only mechanism capable of ensuring that natural gas be brought to Co. Wexford. All members agreed with Cllr. MacPartlin's proposal.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____