

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

**Minutes of the September monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority
held at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Clonmel, on Monday, 24th September
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. M. Fitzgerald, 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. M. Murphy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. L. O'Brien, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. C. Phelan, Cllr. M. Roche, 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
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated County Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. S. Ryan.

Before the meeting commenced, the Cathaoirleach raised the following issues:

- He welcomed Cllr. Brendán Coffey as a member of the Authority who had filled the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of his brother, Senator Paudie Coffey. The members thanked Senator Coffey for all his hard work and dedication during his term on the Regional Authority
- He proposed a vote of sympathy to Cllr. Michael Maguire on the death of his wife, Eileen. All members wished to be associated with this vote of sympathy. Cllr. Maguire then thanked everyone for their support during this difficult time.
- He congratulated the following on their All-Ireland victories:
 - Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team
 - Kilkenny Ladies Junior Football Team
 - Wexford Senior Camogie Team
 - Tipperary Minor Hurling Team.
- He informed the members that the Authority had received brief information regarding the reorganisation of Enterprise Ireland which could potentially place South Tipperary in the South West Region. The Director confirmed that no official information regarding such restructuring had yet been received.

The members expressed grave concern and requested that the Authority write to Enterprise Ireland without delay seeking urgent clarification of the matter

- He informed the members that the report of Dr. Jim Port on the case of Waterford IT for designation as a University had been submitted to the Department on 31st July 2007 for consideration by the Minister for Education & Science
- He informed the members that as an addition to the original Agenda, Mr. Martin Territt, Director of the European Commission Representation in Ireland, would attend the meeting and address the members on the development, evolution and progress of the EU, on the challenges that lay ahead and on the forthcoming EU Reform Treaty.

Confirmation of Minutes

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

The Role and Work of the Heritage Council

Mr. Michael Starrett, Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, made a presentation to the members on the role and work of the Heritage Council and the need for a National Landscape Management Programme in Ireland.

In his presentation he outlined the following:

- The role and functions of the Heritage Council
- The Heritage Act 1995
- The changes and challenges facing the Heritage Council
- Legislation governing the Heritage Council
- General Measures of the European Landscape Convention
- Key findings of survey on attitude towards heritage
- Key findings of survey on the benefits of heritage protection
- The future of the Heritage Council
- The importance of a National Landscape Strategy.

Mr. Starrett responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- Concern that major finds of national importance be kept and displayed locally
- The cost of maintaining listed buildings and the need for appropriate conservation grants to provide such maintenance
- Concern over rural housing and people being forced into towns and villages without sufficient infrastructure
- Concern over coastal erosion and pressure on sand dunes
- The key issues for the National Landscape Strategy.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Starrett for his interesting and informative presentation and assured him that the Authority will make a submission to Government on the development of a National Landscape Strategy when requested.

Development, Evolution and Progress of the EU

Mr. Martin Territt, Director of the European Commission Representation in Ireland made a presentation to the members on the development, evolution and progress of the EU, on the challenges that lay ahead and on the forthcoming EU Reform Treaty.

In his presentation he outlined the following:

- Part of his mandate is to talk to citizens and their elected representatives and to take note of their concerns regarding the EU
- He is seeking feedback from local level in order that EU policies and proposals for legislation can incorporate diverse interests from all regions
- 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the European Union, with the EU of today being 50 times more prosperous and with 3 times the population of the founding member states of 1957
- The EU tackles the challenges of the globalised world, including climate change, energy security, terrorism and organised crime, mass migration, a more competitive economic environment and global poverty
- The EU has achieved a system of European governance that has been created by Europeans and as such, has a significant degree of support across the continent and a huge degree of support in this country
- The need to be adequately prepared for the next 50 years, clarifying what purpose the EU will serve in the 21st century and Ireland's role within it
- In the past 50 years the EU has seen the extraordinary consolidation of democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal and witnessed the reunion of Western with Eastern Europe, so for the next 50 years we need a strong EU to play a leading role in shaping globalisation
- It is hoped that European Leaders will agree on a new Reform Treaty in the next few weeks which, hopefully, will be ratified by all EU members states by mid-2009
- The benefits of the new Treaty include the following:
 - A more democratic and transparent Europe
 - A more effective Europe with institutions and working methods which are more effective and streamlined
 - A Europe of rights and values, solidarity and security
 - The capacity to deliver change, to make Europeans more prosperous and secure and to open up their opportunities to shape globalisation.

Mr. Territt responded to questions and comments from the members including the following:

- The need for ordinary European Citizens to feel directly connected to the EU
- The need to change attitudes towards the EU starting at Primary School level
- The need to educate people in relation to the Treaty in order to ensure that the Treaty is approved in the Referendum
- The need to look after the elderly in the EU, considering that they made Europe what it is today
- The need to address issues such as monetary problems, beef import/exports, fishing industry and climate change.

Mr. Territt assured the members that he would take their views back to Brussels for consideration.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Territt for attending the meeting and for his interesting and informative presentation.

Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region

The Director provided the members with a brief update on the preparation of a Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region. He informed them that the Authority had secured funding for the plan in 2006 which will enable the region to have a more focused and direct approach to the management of renewable energy at local level to ensure that national and EU policy are being adhered to. He outlined the principal objectives of the Plan and the organisations involved and stated that following a widespread consultation phase which concluded on 12th September, the final plan will be presented at the October meeting of the Authority for consideration and adoption by the members.

'Spirit of Enterprise' Initiative

The European Officer explained to the members that as part of the 'Spirit of Enterprise' Initiative, Enterprise Week takes place from the 1st to 5th October 2007 and will demonstrate further the cooperation that is now taking place in the Region. All agencies and organisations are coming together to celebrate and promote enterprise in the Region through hosting a series of events and activities throughout the week.

As part of Enterprise Week, a number of workshops, seminars, business briefings and much more have been organised in each of the five counties in the South-East to promote enterprise and innovation in the Region. Local businesses, people with a business idea and the public at large are expected to participate during the week.

Enterprise Week was officially launched in the Main Guard, Clonmel on 10th September by Mr. John McGuinness, T.D., Minister for Trade & Commerce, in the presence of a large gathering from across the South-East.

'Measuring Ireland's Progress 2006'

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on *'Measuring Ireland's Progress 2006'*. The main report, recently published by the CSO, shows the progress made in Ireland in important economic, social and environmental areas. It also benchmarks the situation in Ireland against the other EU member states.

Housing Statistics Bulletin 2006

The members noted details of a summary report, copy of which had been circulated, on Housing Statistics Bulletin 2006, recently published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The summary report outlined the main points of the full report which can be viewed at www.environ.ie.

Quarterly National Household Survey : Quarter 2/2007

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Quarterly National Household Survey for Quarter 2/2007. The report outlined the most recent trends in (un)employment levels on both national and regional basis. The report also outlined the following tables:

- Comparison by NUTS III Regions at Q2/2007
- Unemployment Rate (%) Comparison by NUTS III Regions at Q2/2007.

Annual Conference of Association of Irish Regions

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that an invitation has been received from the Association of Irish Regions to nominate representatives to attend its Annual Conference in Killarney on 19th October 2007 entitled *"The Challenge of Climate Change for the Island of Ireland"*. The Authority authorised the attendance of the following:

Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P. Norris

Cllr. J. Crowe

Cllr. T. Wright

Cllr. M. Anglim

Cllr. J. Brennan

Cllr. D. Hurley

Cllr. A. McDonald

Cllr. L. Brazil

Cllr. D. Landy

Cllr. D. Walsh

Correspondence

- Letter from Cllr. A. McDonald resigning his membership from the Regional Drugs Task Force. Cllr. McDonald complimented the Task Force on their hard work but stated that he could not give the time involved due to other commitments. He then proposed that he be replaced by Cllr. D. Hurley and this was seconded by Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh and this was unanimously agreed.

Other Matters

- The Cathaoirleach suggested that the members of the Authority visit the Waste Recycling Facility in Dungarvan before the next monthly meeting to be held in Dungarvan in October. Members will be notified in advance of arrangements for the visit
- The members enquired if the EPA had published a report on the impact of climate change in the South-East region
- The members enquired if a presentation could be made at a future meeting on the methods of alternative energy available in relation to planning applications
- The members expressed concern over the delay in the implementation of the breast check programme and requested that the Authority contact the HSE voicing their concern
- The members enquired if any reply had been received from the HSE regarding points of contact for local representatives. The Director informed them that no reply had been received and that the Authority would follow up this matter.

Sínithe: _____

Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Dáta: _____