

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

Minutes of the October monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Kilkenny, on Monday, 28th October 2008 at 2.30 p.m.

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

Also Present: Cllr. L. Allen, Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. L. Brazil, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. M. Brett, Cllr. B. Coffey, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. D. Geoghegan, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. P.J. Kavanagh, Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. A McDonald, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. P. Norris, Cllr. S. Nyhan, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. M. O'Halloran, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. W. Paton, Cllr. M. Roche, Cllr. S. Ryan, Cllr. D. Walsh, 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.

Apologies: Cllr. S. Doyle, Cllr. M. Maguire.
Mr. E. O'Connor, Designated Co. Manager.

Confirmation of Minutes

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

Port of Waterford

Mr. Stan McIlvenny, Chief Executive, Port of Waterford Company, attended the meeting and made a presentation to the members on the operation and development of the Port of Waterford. He outlined his presentation under the following headings:

- The European Perspective
- The necessity of shipping and ports for international trade
- Strategy of the Port of Waterford
- The objective of the Port of Waterford to be the biggest small port in Ireland

- Investments in infrastructure to upgrade facilities in order to attract new users and allow for the expansion of the current user business
- Contribution to the regional economy
- The importance of ports as economic drivers
- The money generated by the Port both at national and local level
- Value of trade handled by State Commercial Seaports.

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

- The viability of the Port in the current economic climate
- Opportunities to attract more cruise ships
- The ambition of the Port of Waterford to become the biggest small port and how this will affect Rosslare Port
- The issue of scrap metal and its affect on the environment
- The need for use of the rail network to the Port of Waterford
- The need for public representation on Port Authorities
- The need for the Port to attract new business and retain current business
- Port of Waterford's targets regarding building of marinas and development of the North Quay.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. McIlvenny for his interesting and informative presentation and welcomed all the information provided on the Port of Waterford.

Budget in respect of financial year ending 31st December 2009

The members considered the draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2009, 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. D. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. L. Brazil, the Budget, as presented, was unanimously approved and adopted by the members.

All Island Skills Report

The members noted details of report, copy of which had been circulated, titled '*All Island Skills Report*', recently published by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. The Report was compiled by Governments, north and south of Ireland, who agreed to work together to ensure that the required skills are in place to encourage sustained growth, resulting in a skilled workforce for a more prosperous all-island economy.

Service Strategy for Ireland

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on a '*Service Strategy for Ireland*', recently published by the Services Strategy Group. The report sets out new policy proposals on how the State can ensure the continued development and growth of Ireland's services sector. The Group believes that the implementation of these recommendations will enable Irish service companies to exploit new and exciting opportunities, such as e-Learning, business and financial services, professional and consultancy services and others.

Biofuels Obligation Scheme

The Director informed the members that a public consultation paper on the Biofuels Obligation Scheme has been launched by the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources.

As set out in the Energy Policy Framework, the Bioenergy Action Plan and the Programme for Government, the Government intends to introduce a biofuels obligation to ensure that a certain percentage of the transport fuel used in the state by 2020 consists of biofuels.

The Director invited the members to attend a discussion forum organised by the Authority and the Irish Bioenergy Association on the Biofuels Obligation Scheme to take place in Kilkenny Mart, Cillín Hill, Kilkenny on Tuesday, 4th November 2008 at 10.00am. Relevant stakeholders have been invited to attend and express their views to be included in a submission to the Department.

Decentralisation Programme

The members noted details of a report, copy of which had been circulated, on the Government's Decentralisation Programme.

The Report set out tables which outlined Decentralisation Projects in the South-East Region which are already advanced or which will continue to be progressed and also Decentralisation Projects deferred in the South-East Region pending a review in 2011.

The members requested that the Authority express dissatisfaction over the Report. The Director stated that he would request further information on the situation in the South-East Region and circulate this to the members.

Market Guide for Wood Heating in the Home

As part of its participation in the EU funded 'REGBIE+' Project, the South-East Regional Authority published a booklet entitled '*Market Guide for Wood Heating in the Home*'. This Guide will be made available to members who request it.

'Excellence Through People' Award

The Director informed the members that the Authority had recently been presented with the '*Excellence Through People*' Award by FÁS. This award is in recognition of achieving the operation of a human resource system which strives to achieve excellence through the training, development and involvement of staff.

The Director complimented the staff of the Authority on the hard work involved in achieving this award.

Correspondence

- Letter from Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, regarding recent correspondence in connection with grants for rural sewerage schemes.
- Copy of letter sent to Mr. Batt O'Keeffe, T.D., Minister for Education & Science, from Waterford City Council, regarding the inadequate level of grant aid for Higher Education.
- Letter from Ms. Mary White, T.D., regarding the Excise Relief Programme post 2010 for Pure Plant Oil Producers.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

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