

South-East Regional Authority
Údarás Réigiúnach an Oir-Dheiscirt

Minutes of the October monthly meeting of the South-East Regional Authority held at City Hall, Waterford, on Tuesday, 27th October, 2009 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. T. Kinsella, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Also Present: Cllr. M. Anglim, Cllr. E. Aylward, Cllr. T. Breathnach, Cllr. J. Brennan, Cllr. P. Cody, Cllr. J. Conway, Cllr. J. Crowe, Cllr. J. Cummins, Cllr. J. D'Arcy, Cllr. K. Doyle, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. D. Foley, Cllr. M. Greene, Cllr. P. Kavanagh, Cllr. D. Landy, Cllr. A. McDonald, Cllr. C. McLoughlin, Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. P. O'Callaghan, Cllr. L. O'Neill, Cllr. A. Phelan, Cllr. W. Quinn, Cllr. M. Sheehan, Cllr. J. Tobin, Cllr. J. Walsh.

In Attendance: Mr. T. Byrne, Director
Ms. A. Sheehan, Office Manager
Mr. J. Crockett, Designated County Manager.

Apologies: Cllr. T. Howlin, Cllr. D. Hurley, Cllr. D. MacPartlin, Cllr. E. O'Meara.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Tobin, seconded by Cllr. L. O'Neill, the minutes of the September monthly meeting, copy of which had been circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Tourism in the South-East Region

Mr. Gary Breen, Chief Executive, Fáilte Ireland-South-East made a presentation to the members on the operations, plans and programmes of Fáilte Ireland-South-East in relation to the development and promotion of tourism in the South-East Region. He outlined his presentation under the following headings:

- Current climate for tourism
- Tourism recovery in line with the current economic climate
- Tourism Revenues
- Strategic Plan and Implementation Update
- Strategic Pillars
 - Heritage & Culture
 - Family Market
 - Soft Adventure
 - Access Transport
- Next Steps post-2010

- Fáilte Ireland Strategy Framework – Survival, Recovery, Growth.

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

- The potential for each county in the region to utilise its connections abroad in order to generate tourism in the region
- The impact of new motorways on B&Bs off the beaten track
- The need to improve signage in rural areas
- The need for value for money in Irish hotels – difference in hotel rates alarming
- The need to address and fund local tourist initiatives
- The importance of promoting cooperation between Fáilte Ireland and the constituent local authorities/sports partnerships
- The importance of keeping Irish people holidaying at home
- Problems with inland tourism compared to coastal areas
- The need to promote the following amenities in the area:
 - Coolmore Stud Farm
 - Tall Ships return to Waterford in 2011
 - Irish Coursing Club
- The following suggestions were made to generate tourism in the region:
 - London Olympic Games 2012 – encourage people to stay in Waterford and the region and travel using Waterford Regional Airport
 - Supply and promote farmhouse accommodation in the region
 - Promote genealogy to the Irish/American market
 - Promote historical houses in the region and provide booklet with information about the houses
 - Enniscorthy's 1500th Anniversary in 2010 – an opportunity for Fáilte Ireland to examine schedule of celebrations and become involved.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Breen for his presentation and stated that regular updates on tourism in the region were welcomed by the Authority.

Budget in respect of financial year ending 31st December 2010

The members considered the draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2010, 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.

The Director stated that next year's proposed expenditure has been reduced to a minimum and is the amount necessary to fund the plans, programmes and operations of the Authority for the financial year. He said that in preparing the draft Budget 2010 regard was had to the very difficult fiscal situation existing in the national, regional and local economies arising from the economic downturn and to the significant challenges facing local

government in meeting its obligations in the provision and maintenance of public services. As the net expenses of the Regional Authority are met by the constituent local authorities, it is necessary to take cognisance of the difficult financial position facing local authorities in providing and maintaining services. The draft Budget provided for a decrease in net expenditure and in the demand on local authorities of 10% over the figures for 2009.

The Designated County Manager stated that next year will be the toughest ever in local government, with huge cuts in all local authorities, where tough decisions will have to be made to budget for essential services to survive. He stated that pay has been cut already but there is no proposal to cut members expenses. He asked the members to be mindful of all money saved going towards the provision of essential services.

Members requested that the provision in the draft Budget for the '*Ad Hoc*' expenses be re-examined with a view to increasing the amount.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Landy, seconded by Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, it was agreed that the Whips meet with the Director and Designated County Manager to discuss this matter and that further consideration of the draft Budget 2010 be deferred to the November monthly meeting of the Authority.

Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) Review 2010-2022

The Director informed the members that work is ongoing with the RPGs. The latest draft has been sent to the RPG Steering Committee today for examination and consideration. It is intended to circulate the final draft to the members in advance of the November meeting, and following its consideration and approval by the Authority, the draft will then go on public display for 10 weeks.

Quarterly National Household Survey

The members noted details of a summary report on the Quarterly National Household Survey, recently published by the CSO for Q2/2009. The summary report outlined the main highlights of the full report and displayed tables outlining the un/employment rates (%) comparison by NUTS III Regions at Q2/2009.

Regional Drugs Task Force

The following members were nominated as representatives to the Regional Drugs Task Force:

Cllr. D. Landy	-	South Tipperary
Cllr. D. Foley	-	Carlow
Cllr. P. O'Callaghan	-	Waterford
Cllr. J. Cummins	-	Waterford
Cllr. A. Phelan	-	Kilkenny
Cllr. D. MacPartlin	-	Wexford.

Role, Operations and Plans of e | net

Mr. Conal Henry, Chief Executive, e | net, the government-appointed Management Services Entity, made a presentation to the members on the role, operations and plans of e | net in the marketing and management of the 11 completed broadband MANs in the South-East Region.

Mr. Henry outlined his presentation under the following headings:

- e | net and the MANs status update
- MAN Project Background
- Delivering on policy objectives
- The SERA experience
- What is the MAN?
- Unseen benefits of the MANs
- Cost of managing the MANs
- Details of connections to the SERA MANs – Phase I
- Phase II in the South-East Region- what to expect.

Mr. Henry then responded to comments from the members including the following:

- The capacity for use of the 3 spare sub-ducts within the main duct using the MAN
- The selection process for Phase II
- Problems with uptake of the MAN in Dungarvan
- Problems with broadband in rural towns, e.g. Cashel has broadband problems due to lack of adequate backhaul options.

Correspondence

- Letter from Department of Finance regarding the Authority's submission on the recommendation in the 'McCarthy Report' to abolish the Regional Authority government structure.
- Letter from Department of Finance regarding the 80% windfall tax being considered as part of the NAMA legislation.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Sínithe: _____ Ceadaithe: _____

Dáta: _____ Dáta: _____