

Sustainable Value Creation Seminar
Forwarding Regional Environmental Sustainable Hierarchies (FRESH)

Thursday 21st January 2010

University of Limerick

**Welcome Address by Cllr. Leo Walsh, Cathaoirleach, Mid-West Regional
Authority**



Good morning everyone.

As Cathaoirleach of the Mid-West Regional Authority I'd like to welcome you all here this morning to the University of Limerick to launch the European Project, FRESH – Forwarding Regional Environmental Sustainable Hierarchies. I would also like to relay a special welcome to our European Colleagues who have travelled from Finland, UK, Romania and Italy, to be with us here today and I hope they enjoy their brief stay in County Limerick and the Mid-West Region of Ireland.

Today's Seminar, entitled "**Sustainable Value Creation based development at regional level**" is being organised by the Irish Partners in the FRESH Project, namely the Mid-West and South-West Regional Authorities and the University of Limerick.

Environmental Sustainability is an important focus in today's society and as a member of a Local Authority responsible for Local and Regional Planning, I feel it is important that we ensure greater eco-design in regional planning policies. The Department of Environment and the Planning Authorities in their policies endeavour to promote high quality, safe and sustainable design and construction, notably, through ongoing review of the Building Regulations and prioritisation of energy efficiency and eco-design.

Regional Authorities are responsible for preparing Regional Planning Guidelines and we are currently at draft publication of planning guidelines for the Mid-West region. Ireland's Regional Planning Guidelines have a direct correlation with the Government's National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Authority through the regional planning guidelines will develop a planning framework for the region for the period 2010-2022. This involves setting population and strategic land-use planning targets, while also taking into account strategic level environmental polices.

The purpose of today's event is to launch the FRESH Project and we have some excellent speakers in today's line-up. Our keynote speaker, Professor Merrit Bucholz, Head of the School of Architecture here at University of Limerick and an internationally renowned architect will speak to you about his experience and thoughts on Regional Development and the concept of Sustainable Value Creation.

Liam Conneally will outline some good practice examples of eco-planning and design here in the Mid-West region such as the eco-village project in Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary, and the E-Towns initiative in Miltown Malbay, Co Clare. These and other projects focusing on sustainable urban living, will be central to the Mid-West region's focus during the FRESH project in promoting environmental sustainability and economic competitiveness.

Through our participation in the FRESH project, we will be cooperating with our project partners in the region in seeking to disseminate Ireland's good practice of regional development policies and instruments promoting environmental sustainability and economic competitiveness.

Finally I'd like to thank you for taking the time to attend today's event and wish you a successful seminar and a very successful European Project.

Thank You.