

Minutes of the April 2011 Monthly Meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30pm on April 7th 2011, in the Council Chamber, North Tipperary County Council, Nenagh, Co Tipperary.

Cllr G Fahy, Cathaoirleach presided.

Present;

Clare CoCo;

Cllrs. Gerard Flynn, Oliver Garry, Patrick Keane, PJ Kelly, Pat McMahon, Brian Meaney & Sonny Scanlon

Limerick City Co;

Cllrs. Ger Fahy, Michael Hourigan, Joe Leddin, Kathleen Leddin, Denis McCarthy

Limerick CoCo;

Cllrs. Mike Donegan, John Egan, Noel Gleeson, Stephen Keary, William O'Donnell, Leo Walsh & Richard Butler.

North Tipperary CoCo;

Cllrs Gerard Darcy, Seamus Hanafin, Mattie Ryan & Virigina O Dowd.

Also present;

Ned Gleeson, Designated Manager

Liam Conneally, Director.

Fiona McCormack, Staff Officer.

Paul Mulvaney, ESB Ecars

Joc Saunders & Gerry Siney – Shannon Protection Alliance

Absent;

Cllrs Diarmuid Scully, Micheal Lowry & Phyll Bugler

Cllr Richard Butler addressed the Cathaoirleach and the members by apologising for his absence but will be attending the monthly meetings from now on.

1. Minutes of the March monthly meeting held on 3rd March 2011

Proposed by Cllr Gerry Flynn, seconded by Cllr Mike Donegan and agreed as presented.

2. Minutes of the Finance Sub Committee Meeting held on 3rd March 2011

Proposed by Cllr Gerry Flynn, seconded by Cllr Mike Donegan and agreed as presented.

3. Matters Arising

Members queried if a response from the Minister of the Environment was received regarding the issue raised at the March meeting on the proposed expansion of environmental designations (SAC, SPA, NHA) in the Mid-West region. The Director informed the Members that an acknowledgement letter had been received from the Minister indicating that the Authority's query is currently being researched and that a more detailed response would be issued in due course.

The Director addressed the Members regarding the Authority's statutory obligation under the Planning and Development(Amendment) Act 2010(section 19) informing

Members that the Authority is obliged to make submissions or observations on referrals made to it in respect of sections 12 and 13 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, i.e. Development Plan Making and Variation. He outlined that the statutory consultation periods for Development Plan Variations can be very tight and sometimes may not allow the Authority time to meet to consider draft submissions/observations. He referred specifically to the Kilrush Town Plan proposed variation referral deadline of 26th April, 2011. The Members agreed that the draft Submission would be emailed to each Member for their consideration and that following the Members' consideration the Authority's Submission would be emailed to the Local Authority. The Director stated that in order that Members be in a position to consider statutory referrals at Authority Meetings he will write to each local authority requesting their Plan Making/Variation work schedules for the next 12 months.

4. Correspondence – Schedule attached

- Letter dated 28th February from Clare County Council; Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017
- Letter from South East Regional Authority dated 8th March re; South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022
- Letter from Wexford County Council dated 7th March 2011 re; New Ross Town and Environs Development Plan 2011-2017.
- Letter from Cork County Council dated 9th March 2011 re Variation to the Cork County Development Plan 2009 Variation no. 1 Special Local Area Plan for Cork Airport Enabling Variation
- Letter from Waterford County Council dated 14th March 2011 re Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017
- Letter from Mr Phil Hogan, TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government acknowledging letter re National Parks & Wildlife Service Designations.
- Letter from Western Development Commission dated 15th March 2011 re Policy Briefing Air Access and the Western Region; A Regional Perspective. Copy circulated to all members
- Letter dated 15th March 2011 from Limerick County Council re Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2011-2017
- Letter dated 16th March 2011 from An Bord Pleanála re Clonroadmore Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade, Clonroadmore, Ennis, Co Clare.
- Letter dated 22 March 2011 from the EPA re details of water quality levels in all rivers in the counties of Limerick & North Tipperary.
- Letter dated 28th March 2011 re Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016

Correspondence received after the agenda was issued;

- Letter from Carlow Town Council dated 29th March 2011 re review of the Carlow Town Development Plan 2009-2015
- Letter dated 29th March 2011 from Clare County Council re Notice of preparation of the Proposed Variation No.1 to Kilrush Development Plan 2008-2014

5. Address by Mr. Paul Mulvaney, Managing Director, ESB Ecars

Paul Mulvaney briefed the Members regarding the introduction of Ecars into Ireland and the targets that have been set in their roll out. Mr Mulvaney informed the Members that the Nissan Leaf Ecar is available in Ireland and also informed the Members on how Ireland is an ideal test bed country, i.e. Ireland has a single network company in operation, massive wind penetration, limited range between cities, ideal climate for batteries and home ownership is greater than 80%. It is envisaged that these next generation of cars will use the energy but will feed back into the energy grid. Mr Mulvaney briefed Members on the process involved in charging the ecar, the cost and the infrastructure which will be put in place. The following methods will be available to the public; home owners will have a charging device which will enable them to charge overnight approx 6-8 hours charge time, there will be public charging facilities which will take 1-6 hours (dependant on type of car), the fast charging service will be made available in public places also but will only take 20 minutes to charge the car up to 80%. The ESB are working with companies to make the Ecar launched into the Irish market as quickly possible. This is an ideal opportunity to standardise the launch of these cars into the Irish market and also the high home ownership in Ireland means that more people will be charging their car at home.

Mr Mulvaney informed the Members that it is intended to roll out 3,500 Charge Points by end 2011. The ESB are currently tendering for the installation of these charge points. These charge points will be fully accessible by the public and the public will be able to decide on which supplier to use. Mr Mulvaney informed the members that 95% of this electrical infrastructure is already in place.

1500 On Street Charge Points distributed in the following locations;

- Dublin & County 500
- Cork 135
- Limerick 45
- Galway 45
- Waterford 45
- At least one charging point for every town > 1500 population

30 Fast Chargers

- On all major inter urban route
- Every 60 Kms

Cost of the charging infrastructure;

Home charging- €450 - €2,000
Public charging - €3,000 - €5,000
Fast charging -€20,000 - €30,000

Mr Mulvaney briefed Members on the challenges & opportunities that are presented with the launch of the Ecar into the Irish market;

Challenges:

Safety, Standardisation, Electrical network re-enforcement, New technology, New user experience, Incentives, Price point / affordability, Business models, Highly capital intensive, Low margins, Infrastructure cost recovery, EU Procurement rules.

Opportunities:

- Enterprise & job creation -charging systems currently being developed by a Co Wicklow company
- More environmentally friendly & green environment
- ICT opportunities;
 - Charge Point Payment System (security portal)
 - Charge Point Management System
 - Charge Point Control System
 - Electricity Retail Market Interface System
 - APN/VPN Mobile Network
 - Other interfaces, XML for mobile apps, RPA, Renault
 - Call centre/Customer service
- Car related
 - Training
 - Conversion
 - Insurance
 - Taxis
 - Batteries
 - Components & servicing
- Research/Demonstration projects
 - EU Projects with academia
 - ecar user behaviour trial
 - Collaboration with industry / government agencies

Benefits of Ecars

- For the driver
 - Fun to drive, chic, lower operating costs, doing the right thing
- For the network
 - Energy storage, support of renewables, virtual spinning reserve, better use of assets
- For the country
 - Cleaner atmosphere, enterprise opportunities, leadership role, oil import substitution

Mr Mulvaney outlined the importance of engaging the public and to ensure that they are fully aware of what is involved in the purchase of the Ecar. Ireland has some natural advantages and we need to focus on these. Mr Mulvaney informed members that support from all government agencies is vital and in particular the local

authorities in the near future as regards to on street parking and introduce incentives to the public i.e free parking for Ecars and also inclusion of policies in County development plans. The ESB are encouraging the businesses/state agencies to buy/lease Ecars.

The Members thanked Mr Mulvaney for his informative presentation and raised the following issues;

- Noise level in urban areas
- Cost of domestic charging points
- In car charge system
- Cost of insurance
- Amount of time to charge smaller cars
- Use of electricity for heavy good vehicles
- Distance travelled in winter in comparison to summer

Mr Mulvaney addressed the above issues as follows;

- Ecars are silent – some manufacturers are installing artificial noises to make the car more appealing/safer to consumers
- The first 2000 domestic chargers will be provided free of charge.
- Not possible for an in-car charge system as fuel source required
- Insurance will be lower than rates for regular cars due to consumer type purchasing ecars
- High speed charge will take 20minutes different charge points will have different modes
- Use of electricity for HGV's is not possible due to battery weight
- The range will be affected during winter months

The Cathaoirleach and Director thanked Mr. Mulvaney for his comprehensive presentation to Members and stated that the Authority would assist the ESB where possible in the roll-out of the necessary electricity infrastructure to speed up the delivery of Ecars to Irish society.

6. Address by Mr. Joc Sanders & Mr Gerry Siney, Shannon (River)Protection Alliance

Mr Sanders briefed the Members on the history of the Shannon Protection Alliance which was formed in 2006 to protect the River Shannon from abstraction of water. He informed the Members that Dublin City Council initially started with 3 options in 2000 – Lough Ree; Liffey / Barrow; Desalination: Lough Ree option favoured by Dublin City Council. SPA were opposed to the Lough Ree proposal in SEA phase 1. Following feedback from phase 1, DCC launched SEA phase 2 in Nov 2008 with 10 options. In February 2009 submission was made by the SPA opposing the proposal. Dublin City Council issued a non-technical summary & preliminary report in July 2010, indicating their recommended option to be “Option F”. SPA argue that their supply requirement is based on assumptions and they feel that it is a costly project at €470million. The recommended option – Dublin City Council propose to abstract water from Terryglass Bay / Carrigahorig Bay area, and pump an average 350Ml/d (4,000 litres/sec = 4m³/sec) via twin 1400mm pipes to storage in Garryhinch bog. The pump capacity proposed is 4.8m³/s, so water will be extracted for a minimum of 10 months of the year, not just in peak flow. The Midland bog is to be developed as a recreational water park / storage

facility by Bord na Mona. Water will then be treated and pumped via twin 1200mm pipes to a termination point / distribution reservoirs in Peamount & Saggart in west Dublin. (Note 1 cubic metre per second = 1m³/sec = 1,000 litres per second)

Mr Sanders outlined the next steps in the process;

July – December 2010

- Stakeholder Briefings
- Agree Scope of EIA (Stakeholders & An Bord Pleanála)
- Adoption of Technical Proposals in (2010) draft Plan (DCC /DEHLG)
- Adoption of (2010) draft Plan by Local Authorities
- Publish Adopted Plan and SEA Statement (SEA Close-Out)

2011 – 2014 +

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) / Stakeholder Consultations
- Planning – Strategic Infrastructure Act (An Bord Pleanála)

Dublin City Council expect to start on the EIA process early in 2011, and SPA will be making a submission as a stakeholder on the EIA when it is published. Shannon Protection Alliance have engaged the services of a private consultant and their views are based on the advice received. SPA have the following concerns regarding the project;

- The €470M scheme for 350MI/d is unnecessary, and it is based on unrealistic “Celtic Tiger” assumptions.
- Why are Dublin City Council looking for 350MI/d when they only need 170MI/d + 80MI/d to allow for peaks in 2040.
- 100MI/d are available by reducing existing leakage from 30% to 15%.
- 125MI/d are available from Fingal / Meath aquifer groundwater in their own area
- Further volumes of water are available from demand management, conservation measures, metering / charging, planning measures – grey water, rain water harvesting
- Effects on the Mid West Region as regards to fishing & angling tourism
- The future water requirements of the 18 Local Authorities in the Shannon RBD have not been quantified or considered.
- Who will control the abstraction?
- Who will have the authority to stop the abstraction if the Shannon cannot cope?
- Reduction in flow rate through Lough Derg poses a water quality risk which is against the principles of the Water Framework Directive

Shannon Protection Alliance would like the following to be carried out;

- Independent critical review of the demand assumptions driving the project.
- Independent scientific survey of Lough Derg to examine possible environmental impacts.
- Independent report on the monitoring and water level controls required to ensure adequate levels in the Shannon as a whole, its lakes and its tributaries for industrial development, local water supplies, fish spawning, recreation activities, etc
- A National Water Management Strategy & Structure to conserve and manage all fresh water sources.
- New planning laws to match development with infrastructure (including water supply)
- Introduce grey-water systems, rain water harvesting, metering and water conservation measures as planning permission conditions.

Shannon Protection Alliance would like Dublin City Council to carry out the following;

- Do a complete review of the criteria driving this project in the context of the downturn
- Reduce leaks to best EU standards
- Introduce water conservation measures
- Introduce water metering
- Use alternative sources within their own area – desalination, groundwater, rain-water harvesting, waste water recycling etc.

Mr Sanders requested that the Members of the Authority to oppose this water abstraction project to its conclusion.

Members thanked Mr Sanders for his presentation and raised the following issues;

- Is there an abstraction rate that SPA would be agreeable to?
- If remedial work had to be carried out on the River Shannon in order to prevent flooding would SPA have an issue regarding this
- Focus on the clean up of the River Shannon

Mr Sanders stated the preferred option by Dublin City Council is a premature and that they don't have a clear view. SPA would have no objection to remedial work being carried out but would be interested to view any proposals. All agreed that the clean up of the River Shannon is vital.

Members agreed that it was good to hear both sides of the Shannon Water Abstraction argument.

7. Business Online Banking

- Fiona McCormack briefed the members on the efforts to modernise the Regional Authorities accounts and payments system and to make the authority more efficient as a result of these changes banking online is being introduced to all suppliers. This change in practice and modernisation programme is also to bring the MWRA in line with other local authorities & government agencies and on recommendations by the audit service it will be a more effective way of managing the Authority's finances. This is a small step in the overall process of modernising the Authority's general accounts system. Banking online will prove to be;
- Efficient for the organisation and indeed the supplier reducing the amount of cheques (costs are currently .37c for each cheque, stamp duty .50c per cheque, and post .55c total €1.42 compared to .24c for each transaction online. Cross border payments cheaper also.
- Audit trail will be more secure method of payment and more transparent
- Greater control of our accounts and information at any one time

A remittance advice will be issued by email to all suppliers indicating the amount paid into their bank accounts and date on which it will be paid.

All suppliers will be written to seeking their banking details in order to process future payments including the elected members. All members were in agreement with banking

online and it was agreed that Fiona McCormack will contact all Members for their banking details.

8. Conferences – Members were nominated to attend the following conferences:

- Annual Kerry Environmental Conference & Training Seminar Rattoo Heritage Society Meadowlands Hotel, Oakpark, Tralee, Co. Kerry 7th – 10th April
- 15th – 17th April “The Good Friday Agreement – Local Government North & South” The Kingsvalley Hotel, Merlin Park, Dublin Road, Galway. Esperanza Enterprises
- 15th – 17th April “The Future of Local Politics” – Celtic Conferences Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, West Cork. Fee €100
- 29th April Féile Pan Cheilteach – Festival Symposium Forbairt Réigiúnach sna Ceantair Mionteagacha Regional Development in Minority Language areas Dingle Skellig Hotel, An Daingean, Co. Kerry.
- 29th – 30th April Local Authority Members’ Association (LAMA) Spring Seminar – run by Louth County Council Economic Revival: A Role for Local Government” Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
- 6th May 2011 BMW Regional Assembly Annual Conference “Innovation & Competitiveness – Restoring the Regional Economy” Sheraton Hotel, Athlone. No Fee. Keynote Speaker, Mr Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation
- 30th Sept – 2nd Oct 2011 La Touche Legacy Seminar – ‘Local Democracy A Vision for the Future Greystones Town Council in association with Ards Borough Council CHARlesland Golf & Country Club Hotel, Greystones, Co Wicklow
- 10th May Innovation in Delivering Public Services Seminar, Eolas magazine, Chartered Accountants House, Dublin.

9. AOB

Riverfest Launch;

Linda Newport, EU Projects Officer briefed the members on the launch of the Riverfest which is being held on April 14th in the Locke Bar, Limerick at 6pm. The Mid West Regional Authority is funding the water sports demonstration event on Sunday of the festival through the NEA2 EU Project. All Members are invited to attend the launch and the Riverfest weekend in Limerick. The Riverfest will be held on the May Bank Holiday weekend.

New York 2011;

Liam Conneally briefed the members on the recent business trip to New York. He informed the members of the following;

The Delegation met Mr Noel Kilkenny, Consul General at his residence on 39th Street - 15th March 2011 and the following items were discussed;

- illegal Irish
- Economic Status
- Irish Networking
- Successful business community – opportunities for Irish graduates.

The Delegation met Seamus Carroll & Kevin Elliott from IDA Ireland and the following items were discussed;

- Strategic Development Opportunities
- ICT/Dell Closure
- Negative media coverage of Economic Status of Ireland and antisocial issues in Limerick
- PR campaign for Mid West
- Success of Work Placement programme in UL
- Shannon airport flights to USA
- Retail Incentive Scheme in Limerick City Centre
- IT/technology sector want to be in towns & cities

The Delegation (along with Clare Co Co representatives) met Tourism Ireland's Joe Byrne and Alison Metcalfe and the following was discussed;

- Travel Sentiment/Consumer Confidence
- Visitor Numbers from North America
- Advertising and Target Market
- Flight availability
- Car Hire issues
- Value for Money in the Irish Tourism product

The Delegation met Brian Stack of CIE Tours International and the following items were discussed:

- Car Hire issues (Automatic Cars, cost and availability)
- Increased turnover for Irish visits.
- Shannon airport access (Dublin easier to get to)
- Advertising/Marketing in USA
- Value for Money

The Delegation met J Foley of Aer Lingus and the following was discussed:

- Improved web space for Shannon on Aer Lingus website.
- Struggle to make better use of Shannon.
- In flight Promos of Mid-West
- Lack of Irish travellers to USA
- Contact with Tourism Agencies
- Improving links to Shannon Development, Atlantic Way
- Partnership with Adare Manor

The Delegation met Elaine Brennan from Enterprise Ireland and discussed the following;

- US Economy Pick up
- Fear of Investment in Ireland – confidence being returned
- Message that Ireland now open for business
- Corporate Tax Rate
- Renewable Energy

- Shannon Estuary Integrated Framework Plan
- Partnership/Meetings with University of Limerick

The Delegation (along with Martin Daly, Director of Midlands Regional Authority) met Ann Marie Walsh CEO, Principal Government Relations and discussed the following:

- Midlands/Mid-West Regional Authorities partnership
- Renewable Energy
- Life Sciences/Healthcare/Software IT
- Bringing Companies Together

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach

Director

Date _____