

**Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30 P.M. on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 in the Council Chamber, Clare County Council.**

Cllr. B. Hanrahan, Cathaoirleach presided.

In attendance:

**Clare Co. Co.**

Cllrs. P. Considine, J. Crowe, B. Hanrahan and P. McMahon.

**Limerick City Co.**

Cllr. M. Byrne, G. Fahy, J. Houlihan, P. Kennedy, and L. Wallace.

**Limerick Co. Co.**

Cllrs. R. Brennan, L. Enright, J. Houlihan, C. Hurley, E. Wade and L. Walsh.

**North Tipperary Co. Co.**

Cllrs. T. Berkery, W. Kennedy, J. Ryan, M. Ryan, J. Sheehy and M. Smith.

**Apologies:** Cllr. C. Crowe.

**Absent:** Cllrs. E. Creighton, J. Cronin, M. Kelly, M. Lafferty and M. Taylor-Quinn

**Also Present.**

Mr. L. Conneally, Director.

Mr. S. Treacy, Staff Officer

**Apology:** Mr. T. Mackey, Designated Manager.

At the outset it was agreed that Martin Leahy, University of Limerick, would make a presentation on the "Shannon Energy Valley" concept.

Martin Leahy then addressed the meeting.

He stated that the University of Limerick, Shannon Development, NUI Galway, ITLG (Irish Technology Leadership Group) in consultation with the Local Authorities and industry in the region over the past several months have developed a strategy for a 'Shannon Energy Valley' as a succession strategy in anticipation of the demise of computer manufacturing. The Energy Valley will provide a National hub for Energy R&D, Industry and Commerce which will attract mobile international investment and generate high end employment.

He said that the strategy will assist in driving the long term competitiveness and sustainability of the region's electricity generation requirements. He stated that being at the forefront of international research in this area will, together with state agency support, drive the creation of start up companies in the Mid West Region.

Mr. Leahy stated that the immediate future for sustainable energy generation in Ireland is the construction of €10Bn worth of windfarms, the majority of which will be located within one hour of the Shannon Valley. Shannon Development has committed to provide a 214 acre Energy Park in Tarbert. He stated that the the third level education sector in the region is fully supportive of the proposed commercial activities and plan to launch a number of complementary undergraduate Energy programmes.

He said that the following themes of industrial, commercial and research activities can form the basis of sustainable long-term employment and wealth creation in the Shannon Energy Valley:

- Energy and carbon emissions trading and Energy management services
- Renewable Electricity Generation and Storage
- Second generation Biorefining
- Engineering and Servicing the €10Bln investment in Irish wind energy planned to 2020, half of which is within 1 hour of Limerick
- Re-training and advanced training for the sustainable energy sector

He said the strategy is to have the Shannon Valley at the heart of an internationally significant Research and Commercial Development in the area of Energy Supply and CO<sub>2</sub> abatement.

He then answered questions from the Members. Among the issues raised were:

- The delay in getting access for Renewable Energy projects to the national grid from the ESB.
- Planning permissions have often expired before work has been completed due to delay in the provision of access to the electricity grid and the supply of Wind Turbines machines.
- National grid needs to be upgraded.
- Capacity for Energy storage.

Cllr. P. Kennedy suggested that a sub-committee of the Regional Authority be established to examine the potential of renewable and other forms of energy creation. The Director stated that one of the sub groups established to implement the Regional Planning Guidelines was sub-group 2 i. e. To develop a common approach to Renewable Energy. He stated that this sub group has prepared an Energy Balance and a Climate Change Strategy and a Climate

Change Strategy Action Plan and that the Group has the capacity to support the Shannon Energy Valley concept.

It was agreed that the Regional Authority fully supported the "Shannon Energy Valley" concept. The Director stated that this issue will be incorporated into the RPG Review process. He also invited Martin Leahy to become a member of the RPG/RES Sub Group 2.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Martin Leahy for his presentation.

## **1. Minutes.**

The Minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 were proposed by Cllr. P. McMahon, seconded by Cllr. M. Smith and agreed as presented.

## **2. Correspondence.**

The Members noted the following correspondence copy of which was circulated with the agenda:

(A) Letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from Limerick Co. Co. re Limerick Co. Development Plan 2010-2016.

(B) Letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009 from Clare Co. Co. re: Ennis and Environs development Plan 2008-2014.

(C) Letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from Kerry Co. Co. re: Proposed Amendments to Draft Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015.

(D) Letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from Westport Town Council re: Westport Town and Environs Draft Development Plan 2009.

(E) Letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from Cork County Council re: Notice of Making the 2009 Cork County Development Plan.

The Members also noted the following correspondence:

(A) Medical Certificate from Cllr. Martin Lafferty's Medical Practitioner regarding his inability to attend Regional Authority meetings since 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

(B) Letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from Cork Co. Co. re: Proposed Cork Science, Innovation AND Technology Park.

(C) Letter dated from Cllr. Kevin Kiely, Limerick City Council re: Mid West Retail Strategy Review/Coonagh Cross Shopping Centre. (copy of this letter had also been sent to each Member of the Regional Authority by Cllr. Kiely).

(D) Letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from the Western Development Commission –Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region.

(E) Letter from K. Lehane, Project Co-ordinator M20 Cork-Limerick Motorway Scheme.

Some Members stated that the NRA seem to have a monopoly on the provision of Motorway Service Stations. They also referred to the potential conflict of interest as the NRA would be involved in the provision of Service Areas on motorways and at the same time making observations as a statutory body on planning applications from the private sector.

### **3. Draft Shannon River Basin District Plan.-presentation by enda Thompston, S.R.B.D.**

The Cathaoirleach then introduced Enda Thompston, Project Co-ordinator, Shannon River Basin District (SRBD). E. Thompstone stated that the SRBD comprises of 18 Local Authorities and was established to achieve good water standards by 2015 in order to comply with the Water Framework Directive.

He then made a power point presentation on the Draft Shannon River Basin District Plan under the following headings:

1. What causes our water problems?
2. Current status of our waters.
3. What do we plan to achieve?
4. What measures must be taken?
5. What will basic measures achieve?
6. What further actions can we take.
7. What will supplementary measures achieve?
8. Objectives in Shannon River Basin District.
9. What is the River Basin plan for Shannon District?

He pointed out that River Basin Management Plans are subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process.

He outlined the timeframe for the completion of the SRBD Management Plan which will be published on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

He then answered questions from the Members which included issues relation to Waste Water Treatment Plants at maximum capacity and unable to accept additional connections which is serious constraint on local development. The proposal to extract water from Lough Derg to augment the Dublin Water Supply Scheme was also raised. The Director indicated that the Dublin City Council Consultants will address the April monthly meeting.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Enda Thompston for his presentation and answering the queries from the Members.

#### **4. Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's).**

(A) RPG's Preparation-update report-L. Conneally, Director.

The Director informed the Members that the Issues Paper had been circulated to the Prescribed Bodies in accordance with Section 24 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. He stated that the latest date for receipt of submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009. He also stated the Circular from the D.O.E.H. & L. G. regarding the review of the RPG's is expected to be issued in the coming weeks.

(B) Nomination of Members to the RPG/RES Steering Committee.

It was agreed that the following would be members of the RPG/RES Steering Committee:

Cllr. B. Hanrahan, Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. E. Wade, Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. M. Ryan, North Tipperary County Council.

Cllr. P. McMahon, Clare County Council.

Cllr. M. Byrne, Limerick City Council.

Cllr. R. Brennan, Limerick County Council.

Cllr. M. Ryan referred to the need to upgrade the Thurles/Limerick road (R503). He stated that he had raised this issue when the RPG's were being prepared in 2004 and expressed disappointment at the failure to upgrade the road.

#### **5. Nomination of representative to attend and vote at the Ordinary General Meeting of the Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. To be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009.**

It was proposed by Cllr. B. Hanrahan, seconded by Cllr. M. Ryan and agreed that the Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. E. Wade, would be the representative from this Authority at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

#### **6. Conferences.**

(A) Report on Annual Conference held on 19<sup>/20</sup> February 2009.

The Director informed the meeting that 125 delegates had attended the conference. He stated that he would have a full report at the April meeting when all Invoice costs had been received.

He thanked all the Members, particularly the conference sub-committee, for their work in ensuring the excellent attendance at the conference.

(B) Attendance at Conferences:

The attendance of Members at the following conferences was noted and approved.

Combat Poverty Agency Research Seminar in the Combat Poverty Agency Boardroom on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009-Cllr. J. Sheehy.

Kadenza Consultancies, Training Seminar for Cllrs. in the Green Isle Hotel, Dublin on the 27/28 February 2009- Cllr. W. Kennedy.

Mid West Regional Authority Annual Conference on the 19/20 February 2009 in the Woodlands Hotel, Adare-Cllrs. W. Kennedy, M. Ryan, J. Sheehy, M. Smith, B. Hanrahan, E. Wade, L. Walsh, G. Fahy, P. McMahon, M. Byrne and M. Taylor-Quinn.

Rattoo Heritage Society in the Golf Hotel, Ballybunion on the 4/8<sup>th</sup> March 2009-Cllr. L. Enright.

**7. A.O.B. - None.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Cathaoirleach	Director	Date
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