

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30 P.M. on Tuesday 2nd September 2008 in the Council Chamber, Limerick City Council.

Cllr. B. Hanrahan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

In attendance:

Clare Co. Co.

Cllrs. P. Considine, B. Hanrahan, M. Kelly, M. Lafferty, P. McMahon and M. Taylor/Quinn.

Limerick City Co.

Cllrs. M. Byrne, J. Cronin, G. Fahey, J. Houlihan, and L. Wallace.

Limerick Co. Co.

Cllrs. R. Brennan, E. Creighton, 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.

Committee of the Regions.

Cllr. C. Crowe.

Absent.

Cllrs. J. Crowe, L. Enright and P. Kennedy.

Also Present.

Mr. L. Conneally, Director.

Mr. A Fleming, Designated Manager.

Mr. S. Treacy, Staff Officer.

1. Minutes (A) Monthly Meeting and (B) Finance/Conference Sub Committee held on 1st July 2008.

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 1st July 2008 were proposed by Cllr. E. Creighton, seconded by Cllr. M. Ryan and agreed as presented.

The Minutes of the Finance/Conference Sub Committee held on the 1st July 2008 were proposed by Cllr. P. Considine, seconded by Cllr. M. Lafferty and agreed as presented.

2. Correspondence.

The Members noted the following correspondence copy of which was circulated with the Agenda.

(A) Letter dated 18-08-08 from Halcrow Barry re: NRA Service Area at Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

(B) Letter dated 9th July 2008 from Carlow Co. Co. re: Carlow Town Environs Local Area Plan (11th July 2008-2014)

(C) Letter dated 14th July 2008 from Carlow Co. Co. re: Carlow Town Environs Local Area Plan (11th July 2008-2014)

(D) Letter dated 7th July 2008 from Roscommon Co. Co. re: Roscommon County Development Plan 2008-2014.

(E) Letter dated 4th July 2008 from Athlone Town Council re: Town Development Plan- Variation No. 1-Building Heights Policy.

(F) Email and attached resolution from West Regional Authority regarding consultation with the Regional Authority.

The Members unanimously adopted the following resolution proposed by Cllr. M. Lafferty and seconded by Cllr. M. Kelly:

" To request the Minister for Health and Children to ensure that in implementing consultative arrangements under S 41-44 of the Health Act 2004, an arrangement whereby senior member(s) of the HSE would attend three/four meetings per year of the Mid West Regional Authority in order to outline overall developments and to hear members comments/views/questions on health matters in the Mid West Region (counties Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary)."

The Members also noted the following:

(A) Email dated 17th July from Robert Collins, Irish Regions Office, Brussels regarding the holding of a cultural event in Brussels to showcase the tourism and industrial potential and unique culture of the Mid West region. The Director pointed out that the event the Dublin Regional Authority was involved with was part of the "Celtic Cultural Connections" programme. He informed the meeting that Robert Collins stated that a new Celtic Cultural Connections programme will take place in 2008-2009 and he will revert to the MWRA when a decision has been made on the matter.

(B) Letter dated 18th July 2008 from Limerick Chamber and the attached report to the Minister for Transport regarding the need to upgrade the N 69.

The Members unanimously resolved to support the prioritisation of the N 69 Limerick/Foynes road in roads investment programmes.

(C) Brochures on the Mid Shannon Tourism Investment Scheme were circulated at the meeting. The Director informed the meeting that John Crowe, Shannon Development would give a presentation on the scheme at the October monthly meeting. Cllr. J. Sheehy referred to the need for standardisation in dealing with planning applications that could benefit under this scheme in order to minimise the possibility of inconsistencies in dealing with planning applications. The Director stated that he would raise this issue at the next MWRA Senior Planners meeting.

(D) Letter dated 8th August 2008 from Thurles Town Council regarding Review of Thurles and Environs Development Plan.

(E) Letter dated 14th August 2008 from Thurles Town Council regarding Review of Thurles and Environs Development Plan.

(F) Letter dated 13th August 2008 from Laois County Council re: Variation No 1 of Laois County Development Plan-Car parking Standards for office developments.

(G) Letter dated 13th August 2008 from Laois County Council re: Variation No1 of Graiguecullen Local Area Plan- Car parking Standards for office developments.

(H) G) Letter dated 13th August 2008 from Laois County Council re: Variation No1 of Graiguecullen Local Area Plan- Car parking Standards for office developments.

(I) Letter dated 13th August 2008 from Laois County Council re: Variation No1 of Mountmellick Local Area Plan- Car parking Standards for office developments.

(J) Letter dated 14th August 2008 from Clonakilty Town Council re preparation of Draft Clonakilty Development Plan 2009-2015.

(K) Letter dated 5th August 2008 from Kerry County Council regarding East Dingle Peninsula Settlements Local Area Plan, The West Iveragh Settlements Local area Plan and Variation No. s 14,15,16,17, and 18 to the County Development Plan.

3. Limerick City Regeneration-Presentation by Mr. Brendan Kenny.

The Cathaoirleach introduced Mr. Brendan Kenny, Chief Executive, Limerick Regeneration Project who addressed the meeting.

Mr. Kenny outlined the background to the problems in the Limerick City Regeneration areas as highlighted in the 2007 John Fitzgerald report : Unemployment, dependency culture, inadequate facilities, dysfunctional families, school truancy and drop out, failure of social inclusion strategies, failure of state agencies etc. were highlighted as symptoms of the problems facing Limerick City.

He highlighted Fitzgerald's three pronged approach to regeneration to tackle security and policing, economic decline and social exclusion in the regeneration

Masterplan areas. He outlined the policy areas to be addressed to tackle the problem: strategic plan for education, early intervention for children, integrated youth services, new employment, community employment, community safety strategy, training, shopping/retail, provision of broadband, enterprise promotion, provision of recreation/sports facilities etc.

He stated that 3,200 houses would be demolished, 2540 would be replaced and 3,000 new private houses built within the three regeneration areas.

He stated that public and private investment was required to make the Masterplan areas work. He said the Master Plans for the Regeneration Projects would be on display within weeks.

He then answered questions from the Members.

Among the issues raised were.

- Antisocial behaviour of the minority needs to be tackled-need to deal with troublesome families (extra Gardai welcomed) for the good of the wider community. Members stressed that the majority of residents living within the Master Plan areas were law abiding and needed to be helped by the State.
- Lack of consultation with public representatives in the preparation of the Plan. Members requested early and often briefing sessions from Mr. Kenny and his team and did not want to hear about issues through local media and second hand sources.
- Need for new Garda Station in the area. Members stressed the requirement to provide proper security and policing throughout Limerick City.
- Failure of State Agencies caused problem.
- Need for change of attitude by the general public to residents from these areas. Again the Members stated that the ill informed perceptions of Regeneration Areas needed to be replaced with actual reality on the ground.
- 44% social housing in Limerick City (national average is in 15/20% range) is a regional housing issue and needs to be tackled as regional problem.
- Educational needs of these Communities should be focus of Master Plans.
- Need for co-ordination of the Master Plans into the Limerick City and Environs Statutory Plans. The Members committed to co-operation in implementing Master Plans-MWRA will assist when requested.

In reply Mr. Kenny stated that there was no policy to relocate regeneration area tenants throughout the region and that no funding was to be provided until the Master Plans were approved by Government. He stated that there is no

indication that funding will not be provided and that it was a matter for each Local Authority to vet housing applicants. He stated that a new Garda Station is being planned for Moyross as is an extension to Roxboro Garda Station.

He stated that a Mid West regional approach was necessary to implement the Limerick Regeneration Master Plans and sought the assistance of the Members and Director in achieving this task.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Kenny for addressing the meeting and answering the queries raised by the Members. The Designated Manager and Director did likewise and requested that Mr. Kenny return to a future MWRA meeting to brief members on progress.

4. Adoption of N24 Prioritisation Study.

The Director gave a report on the N24 Prioritisation Study at the July 2008 monthly meeting when it was agreed to place it as an agenda item for the September meeting and circulate a copy of the report with the agenda.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Ryan, seconded by Cllr. P. Considine and agreed unanimously to adopt the N24 Prioritisation Study as circulated.

5. Conferences.

(A) Annual Conference 2009.

The Director informed the meeting that the Finance/Conference Sub Committee had met prior to the monthly meeting and decided that the Conference would be held in the Woodlands Hotel, Adare on 5/6th February 2009.

(B) Attendance at Conferences.

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

Mid West Regional Authority-Citizen First Conference on 25/26TH September 2008 in the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis-Cllrs. P. Considine, B. Hanrahan, and G. Fahy.

Kadenza Consultancies Conference in the Lord Bagenal Hotel, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow-Cllr. P. Considine.

Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly Conference- Sheraton Hotel, Athlone on 29/30th September 2008-Cllr. P. Considine.

AMAI Annual Conference-11/13 September 2008 in the Sligo Park Hotel-Cllr. J. Houlihan(County).

(C) Citizen First Conference .

The Director gave details of the Citizen First Conference to be held in the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis on the 25/26th September 2009. He stated that the theme of the conference is "Citizen First ...using Technology to include ALL Citizens" and the keynote address will be given by Ms. Maura Hctor T. D. Minister of State with responsibility for the Elderly. The Cathaoirleach and the Director requested the Members to support the conference.

6. Regional Planning Guidelines Review-Staffing.

The Director informed the Members that he proposed to recruit a Planner at Senior Executive Planner Grade on a 20 months contract to assist in the preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines/Regional Economic Strategy. He stated that he hoped to recruit the Planner from within the Local Authorities in the region. He stated that the cost would be in the region of €180,000 and that it would cost twice that amount if Consultants were engaged to do this work. He also pointed out that it will be necessary to engage Consultants to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and that Tenders will be sought for this part of the work. It was recommended that C. Lynch, Tipperary Institute be invited to tender based on his experience of being involved in the preparation of the original RPG's.

The Director informed the meeting that Mr. Lynch had already been approached on this issue who indicated that he did not have time to do this work.

In reply to queries from the Members the Director stated that the D.O.E.H.& L.G. would be issuing a Circular setting out the criteria for the preparation of the RPG's/RES and that a Ministerial Order would issue for the MWRA to commence the RPG preparation process.

The Members recommended that the Regional Authority should pursue the least cost option to prepare the new RPG's.

7. A.O.B.

The Cathaoirleach gave a report on the attendance of the Cathaoirleach and Director at the Milwaulkee Irish Festival to showcase the Mid West Region's tourist attractions to over 150,000 festivalgoers. In particular he outlined the meetings with Aer Lingus in relation to availing of promotions to advertise on their website and the print media in major newspapers to promote the Mid West region. He said the main aim of their presence was to raise awareness of the many airlines operating flight services between Shannon and American cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago. This was done through attendance at workshops and promotional events, doing a number of radio interviews and manning the Irish Destinations Stand (Mid West region) at the festival.

Cllr. M. Ryan congratulated Ms. Aoife Kelly, Portroe on winning the Rose of Tralee 2008 contest.

Cllr. L. Wallace welcomed the opening of the Limerick/Ballybrophy commuter service and recommended the re-opening of the Limerick/Foynes line.

Cllr. P. McMahon referred to a recent article in the papers regarding the earnings of Aer Lingus workers. He pointed out that the workers in Shannon did not earn an average of €83,000 and stated that the article was biased against Aer Lingus workers.

This concluded the business of the meeting.