

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30. P. M. on Tuesday 2nd December 2008 in the Council Chamber, Clare Co. Co., New road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Cllr. M. Ryan, presided.

In attendance:

Clare County Council.

Cllrs. P. Considine, J. Crowe, M. Kelly, M. Lafferty, P. McMahon and M. Taylor-Quinn.

Limerick City Council:

Cllrs. M. Byrne, J. Cronin, G. Fahy, J. Houlihan, P. Kennedy.

Limerick County Council:

Cllrs. R. Brennan, E. Creighton, L. Enright, J. Houlihan, and L. Walsh.

North Tipperary County Council:

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

Absent:

Cllrs. C. Crowe, J. Ryan, M. Smith and L. Wallace.

Apologies:

Cllrs. B. Hanrahan, C. Hurley, E. Wade

Also Present:

Mr. L. Conneally, Director.

Mr. A. Fleming, Designated Manager.

Mr. S. Treacy, Staff Officer.

As both, the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Hanrahan, and the Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. E. Wade, had sent their apologies for their inability to attend the meeting it was proposed by Cllr. W. Kennedy and agreed unanimously that Cllr. M. Ryan would chair the meeting.

1. Minutes.

The Minutes of (A) the Monthly Meeting held on 4th November 2008 and (B) the Finance/Conference Sub Committee held on 4th November 2008 were proposed by Cllr. J. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. E. Creighton and agreed as presented.

2. Correspondence.

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

(A) Letter dated 30th October 2008 from Tullamore Town Council re: Variation No. 4 to Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010.

(B) Letter dated 17th October 2008 from Clare Co. Co. re Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002, Draft South Clare Local Area Plan 2009-2015.

(C) Letter dated 10th November 2008 from Clare Co. Co. Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002 (as amended)- Planning and Development Regulations 2004 –Draft West Clare Local Area Plan 2009-2015.

(D) Letter dated 11th November 2008 from Templemore Town Council regarding Draft Development Contributions Scheme 2009.

(E) Reply dated 13th November 2008 from the Minister for Transport to request for meeting of deputation from the Regional Authority in relation to Aer Lingus issues at Shannon Airport.

The Members also noted the following correspondence which had been received after the agenda had been sent out.

(A) Letter dated 27th November 2008 from Tralee Town Council re: Tralee Town Draft Development Plan 2009-2015.

(B) Letter dated 25th November 2008 from Cork Co. Co. re proposed Cork Airport special Local Area Plan.

(C) Letter received on 24th November 2008 from Carlow Co. Co. re: Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 – Proposed variation to County Carlow Development Plan 2003- Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans.

(D) Reply dated 19th November 2008 from Ms. Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Health and Children to letter from the Mid West Regional Authority regarding attendance of HSE Officials at Mid West Regional Authority meetings.

(E) Acknowledgement dated 25th November 2008 from Mr. Peter Power. T. D., Minister of State, Department of Foreign Affairs to letter in relation to Aer Lingus issues at Shannon Airport.

(F) Acknowledgement dated 26th November 2008 from Mr. Tony Killeen T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to letter in relation to Aer Lingus issues at Shannon Airport.

(G) Acknowledgement dated 1st December 2008 from Ms. Maura Hocht T.D., Minister of State, Department of Health and Children to letter in relation to Aer Lingus issues at Shannon Airport.

3. Aer Lingus –Update developments at Shannon Airport.

The Director informed the meeting that negotiations were at an advanced stage between Unions and Aer Lingus Management regarding reducing costs at Shannon Airport. He stated that Aer Lingus management wanted to outsource baggage handling facilities and use American based Cabin Crew on transatlantic flights. He stated that the negotiations, if agreed, would result in redundancies, new work practices and new terms and conditions of employment. The agreement may result in about 60 job losses in Shannon Airport.

He pointed out that any final agreement reached between management and unions will have to be approved by the Board of Aer Lingus, which meets on Friday 5th December 2008.

The Members complimented all concerned in reaching a solution to the problem at Shannon Airport in particular Aer Lingus Staff at Shannon.

The Members expressed concern at the announcement of 150 job losses at Element Six and once again expressed concern at the impact of the loss of connectivity, by the withdrawal of the Shannon/Heathrow service by Aer Lingus, for jobs in the region.

It was agreed to monitor the situation and place Aer Lingus developments at Shannon Airport as an agenda item for the January monthly meeting.

4. Committee of the Regions (C.O.R.)- Update Report –Cllr. C. Crowe.

A copy of Cllr. C. Crowe's report was circulated at the meeting. As Cllr. Crowe was not present it was agreed that the Members would read the report and if they had any queries these could be raised at the January monthly meeting.

5. Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) preparation and Mid West Strategic Plan (MWASP)- Update reports- L. Conneally, Director.

L. Conneally informed the meeting that the 8 Regional Authority Directors are in discussion with the D.O.E. H. & L.G. and their respective Local Authorities

regarding arrangements for the preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines. Resources are to be provided from within the region's Local Authorities.

A Commencement Notice is expected to be issued by the Minister in the coming weeks. The Regional Authority will then publish the first statutory consultation notice inviting submissions. An Issues Paper will be prepared to assist those wishing to make submissions.

Submissions received will be considered by the Members and a Draft Report will be prepared for public display (April 2009 approx).

There will be a statutory public consultation period of about 3 months following which the Director prepares a report on submissions received and the Members may make amendments arising from these submissions. (October/December 2009)

The Members will consider Draft RPG Report and consider RPG's for adoption, with or without amendments (January/February 2009 approx.)

The Director stated that the above dates are indicative and will be finalised when the commencement order is signed by the Minister. He stated that RPG's will have to be adopted by May 2010 otherwise in accordance with Section 27(5) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 "a planning authority may have, but shall not be obliged to have, regard to any regional planning guidelines after 6 years from the making of such guidelines."

He pointed out that the RPG Review process will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) from the outset.

He stated that as soon as the Commencement Notice is issued by the Minister he will give the Members the dates for each stage of the process.

It was agreed that RPG's would be an Agenda item for each meeting until they have been adopted.

Some Members referred to the need to provide proper Water and Sewerage Systems in towns and villages throughout the region as in many cases the current facilities were borderline compliant with E.U. legislation. It was agreed that this will be an important issue to be dealt with in the RPG's review process.

The Director informed the meeting that the region's major regional/national infrastructural requirements will be identified in the RPG's which should assist An Bórd Pleanála under the Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006.

The Designated Manager stated that Water and Sewerage facilities will be an important part of the Strategic Regional Planning Guidelines.

MWASP: The Director stated that Limerick City Council is the lead authority for MWASP. Tenders were sought and the cost of the successful Tenderer was €2.5M. Discussions with the D.O.E.H. & L.G. and the Department of Transport resulted in the requirement to revisit the Brief to help reduce the cost. Suggestions that existing traffic models for the region (currently in use by the NRA) could reduce the cost of the work. The Department of Transport have confirmed that they have a monetary allocation to carry out the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) aspects of the study. Discussions will now take place with the original successful Tenderer regarding price under amended Brief.

6. Agree date for January 2009 monthly meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th January 2009.

7. Conferences.

(A) Annual Conference 19/20 February 2009.

The Director stated that the theme of the conference will be "Ireland's Water" - What is the real cost? He outlined the Speakers and their theme for the conference:

Mr. Sean O'Neachtain M.E.P.-Water Framework Directive-EU perspective on Water Policy.

Mr. Terry Allen, Principal Officer, DOE&LG-National Investment in Water and Waste Water Infrastructure including Funding and Pricing.

Mr. Declan Hughes, Forfás-The Necessity to invest in Water Infrastructure from an Enterprise perspective.

Mr. Enda Thompson/Dr. Alan Barr, Shannon River Basin District-River Basin Management Planning-Impact on Landuse Planning.

Mr. Alec Fleming, Co. Manager, Clare Co. Co.- The Cost of Water-A Local Government Perspective.

Mr. T. Mackey, incoming Designated Manager MWRA, Mr. T. Kirby, Secretary WSNTG and Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager, Galway Co. Co. will chair the sessions.

He requested the support of the Members in ensuring a good attendance at the conference.

He stated that a meeting of the Conference Sub Committee will be held on Monday 12th January 2009 and he thanked the Sub Committee for their input in ensuring the good attendance at last year's conference.

(a) Attendance at Conferences.

There were no nominations for attendance at Conferences at this meeting.

8. A.O.B.

Cllr. M. Ryan, Cathaoirleach for the meeting wished a Happy Christmas to the Members and Staff on behalf of Cllr. B. Hanrahan, Cathaoirleach, who was unavoidably absent from the meeting.

The Director and the Members thanked Mr. A. Fleming, who was attending his last meeting as Designated Manager, for his assistance and guidance.

The Designated Manager thanked the Members and Staff for their help and co-operation and wished them well in their review of the Regional Planning Guidelines.