

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30 P.M. on Wednesday 3rd March 2010 in the Council Chamber, North Tipperary County Council, Civic Offices, Nenagh.

Cllr. L. Walsh, Cathaoirleach presided.

Present:

Clare County Council:

Cllrs. G. Flynn, O. Garry, P. Keane, P.J. Kelly, P. McMahon, and S. Scanlon.

Limerick City Council:

Cllrs. G. Fahy, M. Hourigan, J. Leddin. K. Leddin and S. Scully.

Limerick County Council:

Cllrs. M. Donegan, J. Egan, N. Gleeson, S. Keary, W. O'Donnell and L. Walsh.

North Tipperary County Council:

G. Darcy, S. Hanafin, M. Lowry, V. O'Dowd and M. Ryan.

Absent: Cllrs. R. Butler, P. Bugler, D. Mc Carthy and B. Meaney

Also Present:

Mr. L. Conneally, Director.

Ms. M. O'Brien, Clerical Officer.

Apology:

Mr. T. Mackey, Designated Manager.

Cllr. L. Walsh opened meeting and expressed condolences to Seamus Treacy on the death of his brother Willie Treacy. The Cathaoirleach proposed a 10 minute adjournment and Cllr. Mattie Ryan seconded this proposal.

1. Minutes.

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on the 3rd February 2010 were proposed by Cllr. John Egan, seconded by Cllr. Ger Darcy and agreed as presented.

2. Matters Arising. None

3. Correspondence.

The Members noted the following correspondence, copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda:

- (A) Letter dated 4th February 2010 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government re: Review and Upgrade of Regional Planning Guidelines (copy attached).
- (B) Letter dated 4th February 2010 from Cork Co. Co. re: Cork Airport Special Local Area Plan 2010-Public Consultation Draft.
- (C) Letter dated 10th February 2010 from Kerry Co. Co. re: Killorglin Functional Area Draft Local Area Plan.
- (D) Letter of thanks from Cllr. Cathal Crowe, former C.O.R. delegate.
- (E) Letter dated 18th February 2010 from the Midlands Regional Authority re: Draft Regional Planning Guidelines, Draft Environmental Report, Draft Screening Report and Draft Regional Flood Risk Appraisal.
- (F) Letter dated 18th February 2010 from Waterford Co. Co. re: Notice of preparation of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Members also noted the following correspondence:

- (A) Letter dated 29th January 2010 from the State Aid Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment re: Possible midterm revision of Irelands 2007 – 2013 Regional Aid Map. The Members agreed that the MWRA should make a submission.
- (B) Letter dated 24th February 2010 from Kerry County Council re: Notice of Variation No. 2 of Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015.
- (C) Letter dated 26th February 2010 from Westport Town Council re: Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.
- (D) Letter dated 18th February 2010 from Waterford County Council re: Notice of preparation of the Waterford County Draft Development Plan 2011-2017.
- (D) Letter dated 24th February 2010 from Cork County Council re: Cork

County Council re: Cork County Council M20 Cork-Limerick Motorway Scheme 2010.

(E) Letter dated 26th February 2010 from the Border Regional Authority re:Preparation of Draft Regional Planning Guidelines.

4. Finance.

(A) Auditors Report on Accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2008.

The Members noted the Auditors Report on the Accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2008, copy of which was circulated with the Agenda.

The Director stated that the Finance/Conference Sub Committee had examined the Accounts in detail prior to the monthly meeting on the 7th April 2009 and the Accounts were unanimously adopted, as recommended by the Sub Committee, at the monthly meeting.

(B) Statement of Accounts year ended 31st December 2009.

The Director stated that the Finance/Conference Sub Committee had met prior to the Monthly Meeting and had examined in detail the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2009 under each heading under Expenditure and Receipts and had recommended that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2009 be accepted as presented.

It was proposed by Cllr. Ger Fahy, seconded by Cllr. Stephen Keary and agreed unanimously that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2009 be accepted as presented.

5. Results of recent Regional Planning Study-Presentation by Merrit Bucholz, Professor of Architecture, University of Limerick.

The Cathaoirleach then introduced Merrit Bucholz, Professor of Architecture, University of Limerick and Merrit made a power point presentation under the following headings-

- UL Pilot Planning Study of Limerick Metropolitan area – deliberately ignored boundaries and legislation
- Urbanisation
- Housing/House Building
- Planning policy for developing “neighbourhoods” rather than “places”

- Retail Development
- A policy of shared identity – recreation & sport/culture
- Natural infrastructure – nature as a “partner in life”
- Population
- Regeneration Process
- Tourism
- Land Use Planning
- The Vision for the Mid West region
- Groundwater/surface water quality

Professor Bucholz encouraged the use of the University of Limerick as a space where independent research can be done and as a space where new insights into problem solving can happen.

Among the issues raised by the Members were as follows –

- Impact of Limerick Regeneration and questioned relocation of housing to rural areas of the region in the light of no independent research being carried out on potential effects on the rural areas of the region
- Need to attract long term sustainable development and employment opportunities to the region
- Transport – need for lateral thinking
- Planning legislation & planning problems in the region
- Pollution and sewerage problems by farming communities over exaggerated
- Waste Management
- Flooding issues
- The need for improved road network to rural areas
- Looking at building a tourism relationship between UL and LA's in the region
- Need for a strong core in the region and the rest of the region will benefit
- Over concentration on academic presentation while providing no real solutions to planning in the Mid West region
- Fascinating presentation and challenges what we take for granted

Professor Bucholz replied to the issues raised by Members and stressed that local farming knowledge in rural landscapes was needed now more than ever. He stressed that the Built Environment has consequences in

how we live and that we need to build up knowledge to understand it and highlighted his architectural experience in Ireland since 1996.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Merrit Bucholz for his presentation and answering questions from the Members. He said the Regional Authority would like to invite Merrit back in the future to give another presentation on the progress of his Study.

**6. Deputation from the Mid West Regional Authority to Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D. Minister for Transport.
Report from Cathaoirleach, Cllr. L. Walsh.**

The Cathaoirleach referred to the meeting of the deputation with Minister Dempsey on the 24th February 2010. He said the deputation consisted of the Cathaoirleach, Director and the four Mayors/Cathaoirleach of the region.

Among the issues raised with the Minister were -

- Shannon Airport is a key economic driver for the Mid-West region and the West of Ireland in general in terms of jobs and international business connectivity
- Shannon Airport requires good regular feeder service to the Dublin Hub Airport and needs to rebuild UK/EU market activity
- Importance of Aer Lingus to Shannon Airport
- The future of Shannon Airport is dependent on the retention of existing airlines, attraction of new airlines and the development of new routes
- Important that the necessary funding is provided to deliver the Lynx Cargo Hub to Shannon
- The influence of Ryanair's presence at Shannon Airport for other airlines
- The need for funding to market the CBP facility at Shannon Airport
- The need for a Tourism Marketing Fund to assist in dealing with the impact of 'Open Skies'. The fund should be managed by Shannon Airport Authority/Shannon Development (not Tourism Ireland)
- Costs to Local Authorities associated to recent severe weather conditions also raised

The Cathaoirleach stated that the meeting with Minister Dempsey had been very positive and the Members would be updated on the future developments in particular the follow up on the development of a Cargo US pre-clearance facility at Shannon Airport.

7. Combating Antisocial Behaviour

Cllr. Hourigan commented on Antisocial Behaviour and stated that crime had dropped by 33% over the last 3 months in Limerick city. He spoke on joint policing meetings and how they were very beneficial.

There was a brief discussion on the problem of antisocial behaviour and amongst the issues raised were:

- If you don't deal with antisocial behaviour early on it will turn into a serious crime situation
- Need for community work to be used as a punishment for antisocial behaviour and Cllr. O'Dowd gave Nenagh Reparation project as an example of this
- A lot of Garda stations are not recording antisocial complaints

As this was an important issue the Members agreed to leave this item on the agenda for the next meeting for further debate.

It was agreed by the Members that the MWRA would invite a Mid West Chief Superintendent to attend the next meeting of the Regional Authority.

8. Waste Management in the Mid West Region.

Director Liam Conneally stated that no response has been received as of yet from their letter to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government requesting that the Regional Waste Plan areas under the Waste Management Act 1996 should coincide with the Regional Authority areas.

Cllr. Egan stated that there is a lot of illegal dumping in rural areas and queried why people were doing this. Cllr. Egan also commented on the cost of collecting waste.

It was agreed by the Members that dumping would be an agenda item for the next Regional Authority meeting.

9. Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's)/Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – Update Report

A copy of letter dated 4th February 2010 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government re: Review and Update of Regional Planning Guidelines was brought to the attention of the Members by Director, Liam Conneally.

Director L. Conneally stated that the closing date for receipt of submissions to the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines was 1st March 2010 and he stated that the MWRA had received 41 submissions to date.

10. Nomination of representative to attend and vote at the Ordinary General Meeting of the Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd to be held on Thursday 27th May 2010.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gerry Flynn, seconded by Cllr. Mattie Ryan and agreed that the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Leo Walsh would be the representative from the Mid West Regional Authority at the meeting on the 27th May 2010.

11. Conferences:

(A) Report on Annual Conference held on 4th & 5th February 2010.

The Director informed the meeting that the conference numbers were down dramatically compared to other years and the MWRA will have to look at the issue of holding conferences in the future.

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

(B) Attendance at Conferences:

The attendance of Members at the following Conferences was noted and approved –

Cllr. PJ Kelly - 'Public Liability, Health and Safety issues in Local Government Seminar, The Carlton Millrace Hotel, Bunclody, Co. Wexford – 12th to 14th March 2010

Cllr. Kathleen Leddin – RDS Energy Lecture Series: Ireland on the Edge: Energy Security, RDS Foundation Department, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 – 25th March 2010

12. A.O.B.

Cllr. John Egan referred to the Mid West Taskforce Report and its implication for the Mid West Region. It was agreed to circulate a copy of the Report with the Agenda for the next meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.