

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Mid West Regional Authority held at 1.30. P.M. on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in the Council Chamber, North Tipperary County Council, Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh.**

Cllr. L. Walsh, Cathaoirleach presided.

Present:

**Clare County Council:**

Cllrs. G. Flynn, O. Garry, P. Keane, P.J. Kelly, P. McMahon and B. Meaney.

**Limerick City Council:**

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

**Limerick County Council:**

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

**North Tipperary County Council:**

Cllrs. P. Bugler, G. Darcy, S. Hanafin, M. Lowry and V.O'Dowd.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Cllr. C. Crowe and M. Ryan.

**Absent:** Cllrs. R. Butler, M. Donegan, D. McCarthy and S. Scanlon.

**Also Present.**

Mr. L. Conneally, Director.

Mr. S. Treacy, Staff Officer.

Mr. R. Tobin, RPG Project Manager.

Ms. M. Collins, E.U. Project Manager.

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

**1. Minutes.**

(A) The Minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were proposed by Cllr. J. Leddin, seconded by Cllr. G. Flynn and agreed as presented.

(B) The Minutes of the Special meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were proposed by Cllr. G. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. P. McMahon and agreed as presented.

**2 Matters Arising-** None.

**3. Correspondence.**

The Members noted the following correspondence:

(A) Letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 from Limerick County Council re: Variation to Limerick County Development Plan 2005-2011.

(B) Letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 from Clare County Council re: Notice of proposal to make a Variation to the 2005-2011 Clare County Development Plan.

(C) Letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 from Clare County Council re: Pre-Draft Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

(D) Press Release issued by the Cathaoirligh/Mayors in the Mid West region in relation to the proposed withdrawal of its transatlantic base at Shannon Airport by Aer Lingus.

(E) Letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 from Mr. Tony Killeen T.D., Minister of State regarding request to attend November monthly re Aer Lingus/Shannon Airport.

(F) Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009 from Mr. Noel Dempsey T.D. re withdrawal of Transatlantic Base at Shannon Airport by Aer Lingus.

(G) Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009 from Mr. Peter Power T.D., Minister of State regarding request to attend November monthly re Aer Lingus/Shannon Airport.

The Director also advised the meeting that Minister W. O'Dea's office had telephoned on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 stating that he would be unable to attend the monthly meeting as it clashes with Dáil business.

#### **4. Estimates 2010 (copy circulated with the agenda).**

The Director informed the meeting that the Finance/Conference Sub Committee had examined in detail the Draft Estimates 2010 Expenditure/Receipts under each heading at a meeting held prior to the monthly meeting and had agreed to recommend their adoption to the monthly meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. McMahon, seconded by Cllr. G. Fahy and agreed unanimously that the Draft Estimates 2010 be accepted as presented and recommended by the Finance/Conference Sub Committee.

#### **5. Shannon Airport/Aer Lingus-Update Report.**

Cllr. J. Leddin complimented the Cathaoirleach for promptly calling the Special Meeting of Regional Authority on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and then bringing the Cathaoirligh/Mayors in the Mid West region together and jointly issuing a Press Release. He stated that the situation at Shannon Airport had become even more serious in the meantime with the failure of the Shannon Airport Authority to reach agreement with Ryanair which may result in just one Ryanair aircraft based in Shannon from April 2010. There was a general discussion during which the following points were raised:

- Need for national Aviation Policy
- €10 Government Travel Tax is having an adverse effect on Tourism and should be withdrawn by Government.

- Need for strengthening of links between the Regional Authority and Shannon Airport Authority-Regional Authority should lead in the support of Shannon Airport.
- Parking costs and ease of access should be an incentive to use Shannon rather than Dublin Airport.
- Need for the catchment area of Shannon Airport to be enlarged-not currently being promoted/advertised in North Tipperary/Portlaoise area.
- Need for support from the West of Ireland in general.
- Proliferation of airports on the West Coast –Shannon Airport only one subject to €10 Travel Tax.
- Consideration should be given to the idea of the Mid West Regional Authority, the Local Authorities and Shannon Development leasing aircraft for transatlantic service to smaller airports in the US and also providing the marketing for this(similar to Cork/Swansea Ferry service).
- The need for freight pre-clearance at Shannon Airport is urgent.

It was agreed that the Minister for Transport be requested to meet a delegation from the Mid West Regional Authority/Mayors and that the Oireachtas Members from the region also be invited to attend this meeting. It was also suggested that a meeting with Aer Lingus management was necessary to clarify exactly the Company's proposals for Shannon.

It was also agreed to invite Martin Moroney, Director, Shannon Airport Authority, to address the December 2009 meeting to outline the needs and priorities of Shannon Airport and the Shannon Airport Authority.

## **6. Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's)/Regional Economic Strategy (RES).**

The Members noted the Report on Members Feedback at the October monthly meeting, copy of which was circulated with the agenda.

The Director stated that any further feedback from the Members would be incorporated into the Draft Guidelines being prepared for the December monthly meeting.

He also stated that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report and the Habitats Directive Assessment report would be circulated with the December meeting agenda.

During the discussion the following issues were raised by the Members:

- Lack of balanced regional development within the region-peripheral parts of the region not attracting investment-more balanced regional development should be aspiration of RPG's.

- Need for consistent approach to Planning in Local Authorities- different approach to one-off housing, wind turbines, designations etc.
- Inconsistency between Local Authorities in dealing with applications for development by Waterways Ireland.
- Impact of candidate SAC's on assessment of planning applications.
- Who decided the cSAC/SPA and proposed NHA designations.
- SACs/SPA's/NHAs are candidate SACs/proposed NHAs, i.e. not finalised.
- Impact of cSAC status for development of the Shannon Estuary.
- Section of Planning Act under which the RPG's were being reviewed.

In reply R. Tobin again stressed that the RPG's are **Guidelines** and not **Plans** that set out the planning policy context for County/City Development Plans. He said the Guidelines will give guidance as to the strategic development objectives for the mid west region. He outlined the implications of interfering with a cSAC status and stated that the Regional Authority/Local Authorities cannot ignore and should take into account the EU designations that the Government has signed up to in relation to cSAC's/SPA's. He stated that the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) was the body that had informed the designation the cSAC's/SPA's and proposed NHA areas. He also stated that queries in relation to the potential impacts of strategic development proposals on the environment would be dealt with in the Strategic Environmental (SEA) Report and HDA report currently being prepared for the Members.

The Director confirmed that the RPG's were being reviewed under Section 26 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and involved other sections of this Act and the Planning and Development Regulations S.I. 100 of 2009

## **7. Planning and Development Bill 2009-Submission to the Department.**

The Director stated that a Draft submission had been circulated with the agenda for the September 2009 monthly meeting. Discussion was deferred to the October monthly meeting when it was decided that a sub-committee consisting of Cllrs. L. Walsh (Cathaoirleach), D. Scully, S. Keary, M. Ryan and P.J. Kelly would meet on the 14<sup>th</sup> October to agree a submission. However, agreement could not be reached on the submission by the sub-committee and it was agreed to place it as an agenda item for the November monthly meeting.

Cllr. P. J. Kelly again reiterated his opposition to the wording of the Draft Submission and also suggested that no submission should be made. However, other Members referred to additional roles, powers and responsibilities that Planning and Development Bill 2009 proposed to give to Regional Authorities and stated that a submission should be made.

It was agreed to place the Draft Submission as an agenda item for the December monthly meeting. It was also agreed to send out the Draft Submission and Department Explanatory Notes on the Bill with agenda.

### **8. Combating Antisocial Behaviour.**

It was agreed to defer this item to the December meeting.

### **9. Conferences.**

(A) Annual Conference 2010.

The Director informed the meeting the Finance/Conference Sub Committee had discussed the location of the 2010 Conference at the meeting held prior to the monthly and requested the executive to seek quotations from hotels in the four Local Authority areas. The conference will be held in early February.

(B) Attendance at Conferences.

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

Shannon Development conference "Dynamic Regions-Future Directions in Regional Development" in Thomond Park Stadium, Limerick on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009-Cllr. J. Egan.

Esperanza Enterprises conference "Local Government Ethics in public life-Your Responsibility" in the Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Sligo on the 13/15 November 2009-Cllr. G. Fahy.

"All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum for a Nuclear Clear Future" seminar in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray, Co. Wicklow on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009-Cllr. M. Hourigan.

### **10. A.O.B.**

It was agreed to put co-ordination of Waste Management in the Mid West region as an Agenda item for the January 2010 meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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