



# Mid-West Regional Authority

*Údarás Réigiúnach an Mheán Iarthair*

## *Annual Report 2006*





# MID-WEST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Údarás Réigiúnach an Mheán Iarthair

Annual Report

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil

2006

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## **Cathaoirleach's Statement**

It was a great honour for me to serve as Cathaoirleach of the Mid West Regional Authority during 2006 and I would like to record my appreciation of my predecessor, Cllr. Mattie Ryan.

Shannon Airport continues to play an important part in the Economic Development of the Mid West Region and the West of Ireland in general. The MWRA set up a committee to prepare a Tourism and Economic Development Plan for Shannon Airport in the context of Open Skies. This committee consisted of representatives from the MWRA, Local Authorities, Shannon Airport Authority, Shannon Development, IBEC Mid-West, SIGNAL, Shannon Chamber of Commerce, American Chamber of Commerce, BIWI, Western Regions Tourism and Tourism Ireland. The Plan was presented to Mr. Martin Cullen, T.D., Minister for Transport on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and the Authority is pursuing the key objectives outlined in the Plan. The Authority continues to campaign with Clare Co. Co. for the establishment of a rail link to Shannon Airport.

The MWRA made a submission to the Department of Finance on the NDP 2007-2013 and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the next ESF Programme. The Authority continues to pursue the objectives set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines/Regional Economic Strategy through the three sub-groups that have been established. The Authority is also involved in the preparation of the Lough Derg Marketing Strategy 2006-2009. The objective of the Strategy is to bring a coherent marketing focus to the Lough Derg Catchment area and to establish the Lough Derg Brand both Nationally and Internationally.

The principle activities of the Regional Authority are outlined in the main body of the Annual Report.

On behalf of the members of the Regional Authority and on my own behalf, I wish to acknowledge the work and dedication of the Director and staff of the Regional Authority. I would like also to thank Mr. Alec Fleming Designated Manager and his predecessor Mr. Terry O'Niadh for their help and co-operation.

***Cllr. Eddie Wade,  
Cathaoirleach.***



## **MID WEST REGIONAL AUTHORITY:**

**Headquarters:** *Friar Court, Abbey Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary*

**Tel. No:** *067 / 33197*

**Fax. No:** *067 /34401*

**E-mail:** *mwra@eircom.net*

**Web address:** *www.mwra.ie*

### **Establishment**

The Mid-West Regional Authority was established with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994 under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order, 1993. This Establishment Order was made by the Minister for the Environment with the consent of the Minister for Finance under Sections 3 and 43 of the Local Government Act, 1991.

### **Powers, Functions and Duties**

Regional Authorities have been given a general competence to do all things necessary and expedient for the effective performance of their functions, including wide consultation with local, regional and other public authorities, engagement of consultants and advisers, participating in or promoting research, borrowing, purchase and leasing of land and property, requesting information and attendance at a meeting of representatives from any local or public authority.



**The principle functions include:**

- Promotion of co-ordination in the provision of public services in the region
- Promotion of co-operation, joint action etc. between local authorities, public authorities and /or others
- Reviewing the overall development needs of the region and the making of statements on them as appropriate, and keeping under review the provision of public services in the region
- Reviewing the Development Plans of local authorities in the region and in adjoining regions
- Preparation of a Regional Report (Plan) covering development needs, review of local authority development plans and the provision of public services in the region
- Provision of proposals, advice, recommendations or information to Government in relation to applications for E.U. assistance
- Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of measures for which E.U. assistance is made available
- Preparation of Programme of Work, estimate of Expenditure and Receipts, Statement of Accounts and Annual Report
- Preparation of Regional Planning Guidelines/ (Planning and Development Act 2000)
- Preparation of Regional Economic Strategy (Establishment Order)

## **REGIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Mid-West Region of Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary is one of eight statutory regions comprising of about 10% of the national land area and population of the country. The Region faces the Atlantic Sea Board with considerable maritime influences; the Shannon passes through the Mid-West forming a distinctive corridor and unifying force in the character of the area. Much of the rural areas are grown in pasturelands with uplands particularly around the fringes of the Region. The whole of the region is covered for Economic development purposes by Shannon Development whose remit also covers South Offaly and North-Kerry. Figure 1 illustrates this with the Mid West region in colour and the additional Shannon Development areas in outline.

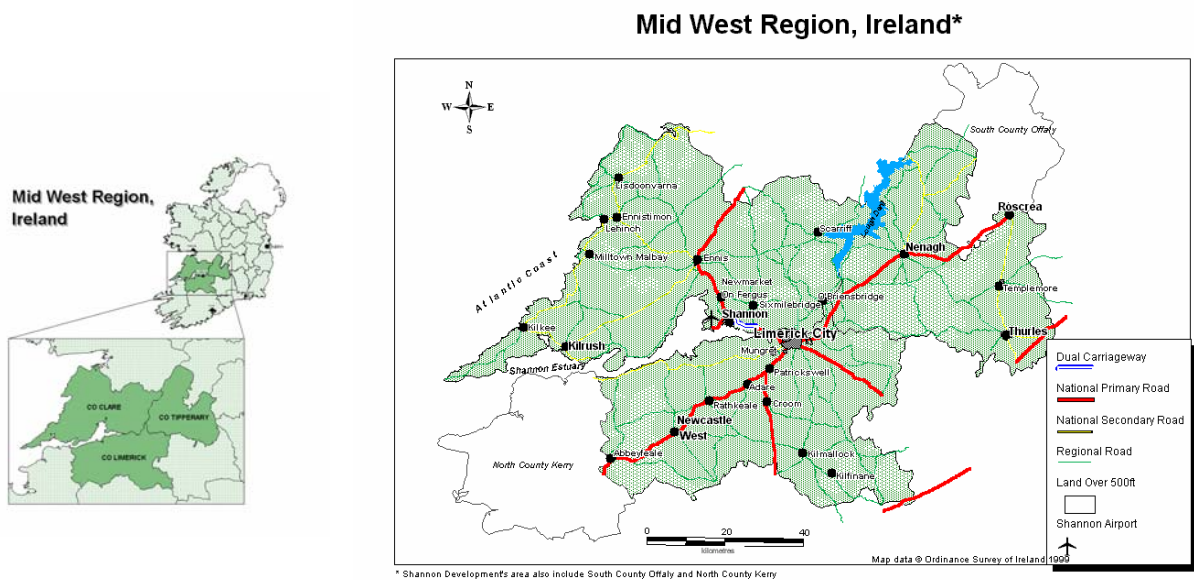


Figure 1. Mid West Region, Ireland

The Mid-West Region is a relatively diverse entity, encompassing areas of strong urban growth particularly the Limerick/Ennis/Shannon triangle, including the regional capital of Limerick City, Shannon Airport, Ennis Information Age Town and third-level education institutions in Limerick and Thurles.



However the region also contains a number of rural areas with significant population loss and decline, such as the West

Clare seaboard and parts of West Limerick. This internal diversity militates against a strong sense of regional consciousness. In addition, several parts of the region display a significant orientation outside the area, and often look to other centres elsewhere. For example, parts of North Tipperary would tend to look eastwards rather than towards the hub of the Shannon Region.

In 2002 the region was home to 360,651 people, 8.62 per cent of the national population. Close to half the regional population live in Limerick City and County. The current population level represents an increase of 6.20% on the 2002 level, compared to a 7.10% increase in the 1996/2002 period. This reflects the continued improved economic performance of the region, which has provided increasing job opportunities and thus reduced out-migration as well as encouraging return migration. Though the Region is mainly rural, in recent years it has had a continued decline in agricultural employment. Industry has shown considerable growth, with an equivalent increase in services employment.

Industry in the region is centred on the urban core of Limerick, Ennis and Shannon Town where the industrial base is dominated by light industry such as electronics, instruments, metals and engineering. Food processing is particularly important in North Tipperary, where pharmaceuticals and healthcare also have a presence.

The region has a number of features that are attractive to industry, including the Shannon Industrial Estate, the Shannon Free Trade Zone, Limerick University, and the National Technological Park located at Plassey, beside the University. Shannon Airport is a major gateway for the western seaboard with terminal traffic of over 3.5 million passengers annually. The deep water of the Shannon Estuary rivals Dublin and Cork with over 8 million tonnes of cargo annually. Limerick is a vibrant, modern city and, combined with the rural hinterland, the region offers an excellent quality of life.



The attractiveness of the Mid West as a location for industry is demonstrated by the large number of foreign-owned plants that have been established in the region. Indeed, employment resulting from foreign direct investment now accounts for more than half the regions total manufacturing base.

A key weakness of the region, and one that features strongly in this report, is that it suffers from peripheral location within a country that is itself on the periphery of Europe. Ireland is the only member state of the Union without a road or rail link directly to the European Continent. This is a particular constraint in the Mid West. Almost three-quarters of the manufacturing and tradable services firms export to Continental Europe. It is not, therefore surprising that transport and telecommunications issues feature strongly among the investment priorities identified by industry and a wide range of other organisations in the Mid West.

Counties:

**County Clare:**

The population of this area was 110,800 in 2006. This accounts for 30.72 percent of the total regional population. Between 2002 and 2006 the county had a growth rate of 7.28 per cent. There are four distinct growth centres in the county namely the Ennis-Shannon area; the Western Coastal area; the Lough Derg area; and the South East of the county an in particular areas bordering Limerick

**North Tipperary:**

The population of this area was 65,988 in 2006, which is 18.30 per cent of the regional population. The population of the county increased by 8.16 per cent between 2002 and 2006. The four main towns are Nenagh (7,429), Thurles (7,174), Roscrea and Templemore.



**County Limerick:**

The population of this area was 131,303 in 2006. This is over a third of the population in the region (36.41 per cent). Apart from the environs of Limerick City, County Limerick is predominantly rural. The principle towns are Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale.

**City of Limerick:**

The population of the city of Limerick accounts for 52,560 inhabitants. The major problem facing the inner city is declining population rate. Between 1981 and 1991 over 8,600 persons emigrated out of Limerick City. Between 1991 and 1996 the population of Limerick City fell slightly from 52,083 to 52,040. It increased to 54,023 persons in 2002 but decreased again in 2006 to 52,560.



**Brief Profile of the Region:**

Counties:	Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary
Area:	8,248.64 Sq. Km.
Population:	360,651
Population Density:	43.72 persons per Sq. Km.
Principal Population Centres:	Ennis, Shannon, Ennistymon, Kilrush, Kilkee, Limerick, Newcastle West, Adare, Nenagh, Roscrea, Thurles.
Principal Economic Sectors:	Agriculture, Professional Services & Manufacturing
Physical Geography:	The Region is one of considerable geographic diversity, comprising coastal and central plains, mountains, bog land, and drained by the river Shannon, Lough Derg and Shannon Estuary. The western half of County Clare is dominated by the Atlantic coastline and includes the distinctive karst landscape of the Burren in North Clare. Much of Limerick county as well as part of North Tipperary North is characterised by the rolling hills and dairy land of the Golden Vale.



## **MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION**

There are 27 Members of the Authority representing the area of administrative counties of Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and Limerick City Council. Authority meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except August) at 1.30 p.m. and the venue is rotated between the four constituent Local Authorities.

The members are:

### **Clare Co. Co.**

Councillors Michael Kelly  
Peter Considine  
Martin Lafferty  
Bernard Hanrahan  
Pat McMahon  
Joe Carey  
John Crowe  
Cathal Crowe (C.O.R.)

### **North Tipperary Co. Co.**

Councillors Jim Ryan,  
Tom Berkery  
Willie Kennedy  
John Sheehy  
Mattie Ryan  
Michael Smith

### **Limerick City Council**

Councillors Maria Byrne  
Ger Fahey  
Pat Kennedy  
James Houlihan  
Lily Wallace  
John Cronin

### **Limerick Co. Co.**

Councillors Kieran O'Donnell  
Noel Gleeson(Leas Cathaoirleach)  
James Houlihan  
Eddie Wade (Cathaoirleach)  
Leonard Enright  
Eddie Creighton  
Cormac Hurley



## **Staff**

Director	- Mr. Tom Kirby
Staff Officer	- Mr. Seamus Treacy
Ass. Staff Officer	- Ms. Marian O'Donoghue
Project Manager	- Ms. Marie Collins
Clerical Officer	- Ms. Marion Cahill

## **Designated County Manager:**

Better Local Government - A Programme for Change provided for the designation of a City/County Manager in each region to be responsible for relations with the Regional Authority and to improve co-ordination and linkage with the Local Authorities.

Mr. Alec Flemming, Clare County Manager is the designated Manager for 2007/2008.



The Authority is assisted by two Committees, namely the **Operational Committee** and the **E.U. Operational Committee**.

There are 19 Members of the Operational Committee, which assists and advises the Authority on matters relating to its functions. The Committee is chaired by the Authority's Cathaoirleach and its membership is drawn from Senior Management of Local Authorities, and other Public Service Agencies in the Region.

The Members of the **Operational Committee** are:

**Cllr. Eddie Wade**

Mr. Terry O'Niadh

Mr. Edmond Gleeson

Mr. Alec Fleming

Mr. Tom Mackey

Dr. Brian Callanan

Mr. Denis McMonicle

Prof. Donal Dineen

Mr. Chris Delaney

Mr. Eamon Cusack

Mr. Adrian Gordan

Ms. Miriam Flynn

Mr. Brian Punch

Mr. Fachtna O'Driscoll

Mr. Gerry Murphy

Mr. Martin Morrissey

Mr. Colin McClean

Mr. Martin Moroney

Mr. Jim Gallivan

**Cathaoirleach.**

North Tipperary County Council

Limerick County Council

Clare County Council

Limerick City Council

Shannon Development

Mid Western Health Board

University of Limerick

FÁS

Shannon Regional Fisheries Board

An Post

Bus Éireann

E.S.B.

Teagasc

Coillte

Shannon/Foynes Port Company

Limerick I.T.

Aer Rianta

Iánróid Eireann



The **E.U. Operational Committee** assists the Authority on matters relating to E.U. Assistance, such as its responsibility to review the implementation **in the Region** of the various E.U. Operational Programmes and making recommendations in relation thereto to the various monitoring committees.

The 42 Members of the **E.U. Operational Committee** are:

<b>Cathaoirleach:</b>	<b>Eddie Wade</b>
<b>Managers:</b>	Terry O'Niadh, North Tipperary Co.Co. Edmond Gleeson, Limerick Co.Co. Alec Fleming, Clare Co.Co. Tom Mackey Limerick City Co.
<b>FÁS:</b>	Chris Delaney, Manager – Services to Business Mid West
<b>Shannon Development:</b>	Dr. Brian Callanan, Planning Officer
<b>Clare County Council:</b>	Flan Garvey, Martin Lafferty
<b>Limerick County Council:</b>	Leonard Enright, Eddie Creighton
<b>Limerick City Council:</b>	Joe Leddin, Maria Byrne
<b>NorthTipperary Co. Co.:</b>	Jim Ryan, Tom Berkery
<b>Ennis Town Council:</b>	Peter Considine
<b>Dept. of Public Service:</b>	Maeve Nic Lochlainn
<b>Dept. Arts, Sport and Tourism:</b>	Seamus MacGearailt, Stuirthoir
<b>Dept. of Finance:</b>	Jim Higgins
<b>Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Food:</b>	Deirdre O'Reilly
<b>Dept. of the Environment &amp; Local Government:</b>	Philip Hopkins
<b>Dept. of Tourism and Trade:</b>	Caoimhin O'Ciaruain
<b>Dept. of Enterprise, Trade &amp; Employment:</b>	Dominic McBride
<b>Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association:</b>	Frank Allen
<b>Construction Industry Federation:</b>	Paddy Hoare



**Irish Business & Employers**

**Federation:** Chris O'Donovan

**Committee of the Regions:** Cathal Crowe

**Irish Co-Operative Organisation**

**Society Ltd.:** Seamus Lynch

**Amicus MSF Section** Dermot Mahon, Tony Kenny

**Macra na Feirme:** Philip Heenan

**Chambers of Commerce Of**

**Ireland:** Paddy O'Sullivan

**Voluntary Groups:** John Hanafin

**Dept. of Communications**

**Marine & Natural Resources:** Tom McGrath

**County Enterprise Boards:** Eamon Ryan

**Irish Farmers Association:** Seamus Murphy

**Dept. of Education & Science:** Paul Ryan

**E.U. Commission:** Manfred Beschel

**E.U. Office, Dublin:** Myles McSweeney

**Dept. of Finance**

**(Information Unit):** Alva O'Clerigh, David Hegarty



The Cathaoirleach and the Director of each Regional Authority represent their Authority on the various CSF National Monitoring Committees for 2000/2006 on a rotational basis as outlined below:

**Representation on Monitoring Committees:**

**Appointments for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the period are as follows:**

Community Support Framework	West Regional Authority
Economic Infrastructure OPMC	Mid-East Regional Authority
Productive Sector OPMC	South West Regional Authority
Human Resources OPMC	Dublin Regional Authority
Technical Assistance OPMC	South East Regional Authority
PEACE Programme	Border Regional Authority

**Appointments for the 2nd half of the period are as follows:**

Community Support Framework	South East Regional Authority
Economic Infrastructure OPMC	Midland Regional Authority
Productive Sector OPMC	Mid East Regional Authority
Human Resources OPMC	Mid-West Regional Authority
Technical Assistance OPMC	South West Regional Authority
PEACE Programme	Border Regional Authority



## **Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly**

The Authority is entitled to be represented on the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly by six members. The Authority representation on the Assembly at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 was as follows:

Cllr. P. Considine	Cllr. M. Lafferty
Cllr. M. Ryan,	Cllr. L. Enright
Cllr. E. Creighton	Cllr. K. O'Hanlon

## **Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly Operational Committee:**

The following are members of the Assembly's Operational Committee at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006:

Mr. Tom Kirby, Director  
Mr. T. O'Niadh, Designated County Manager  
Cllr. Eddie Wade, Cathaoirleach

## **Committee of the Regions (C.O.R.)**

One of the Authority's functions is the provision of research and administrative support to the region's representative on the E.U. Committee of the Regions. The Mid West's representative on the Committee of the Regions at 31<sup>st</sup>. December 2006 was Cllr.Cathal Crowe, a Member of this Authority and Clare County Council.

The Committee of the Regions (C.O.R.) is a consultative institution, which was established under the Maastricht Treaty. The emergence of the Committee of the



Regions can be seen as a direct response to the insistent demands of several Member States that regional and local authorities should be directly involved in deliberations and policy making at Community level.

### **Membership of the Committee of the Regions:**

The 222 members with an equal number of alternates, are appointed by the Council for a four-year term on the basis of nominations from Member States. Members are completely independent in the performance of their duties and are not bound by any mandatory instructions.

Under the terms of the Nice Treaty, CoR members must be members of a local or regional authority or be politically accountable to an elected assembly. Following enlargement, the Treaty provides for CoR membership of up to 350 members in this case, Ireland will retain its nine members.

### **The Structure of the Committee of the Regions**

The 40 member **Bureau** is the executive body of the CoR. The Bureau establishes and monitors the CoR policy programme and it also co-ordinates the work of the Plenary Assembly and the Commissions.

The Committee meets in **Plenary Assembly**, normally 5 times a year to discuss and adopt opinions, reports and resolutions. The Plenary Assembly elects the President, 1<sup>st</sup>. Vice-President and other Bureau members and also establishes the Commissions.

### **The detailed work of the CoR is carried out in six Commissions:**

#### **Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER)**

Economic and Social Cohesion, Structural Funds

Transport, Trans-European Networks, Urban Policy and Tourism



**Economic and Social Policy (ECOS)**

Enterprise and the Internal Market, Employment Policy, Social Policy, Equal Opportunities, Health

**Sustainable Development (DEVE)**

Environment and Natural Resources, Agriculture and Fisheries, Consumer Policy and Energy.

**Education and Culture (EDUC)**

Education, Training, Youth, Culture, Research and Information Society.

**Constitutional Affairs and European Governance (CONST)**

European Integration, Subsidiarity, Governance, EU Citizenship

**External Relations (RELEX)**

Enlargement, Relations with all other bodies, Immigration.

## Annual Conference 16<sup>th</sup>-17th February 2006

### Templegate Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare



L to R: T.J. Fleming (Dept. of Finance), Cllr. Mattie Ryan (Cathaoirleach), Terry O'Niadh (Designated Manager) & Ciaran Lynch (Tipperary Institute).

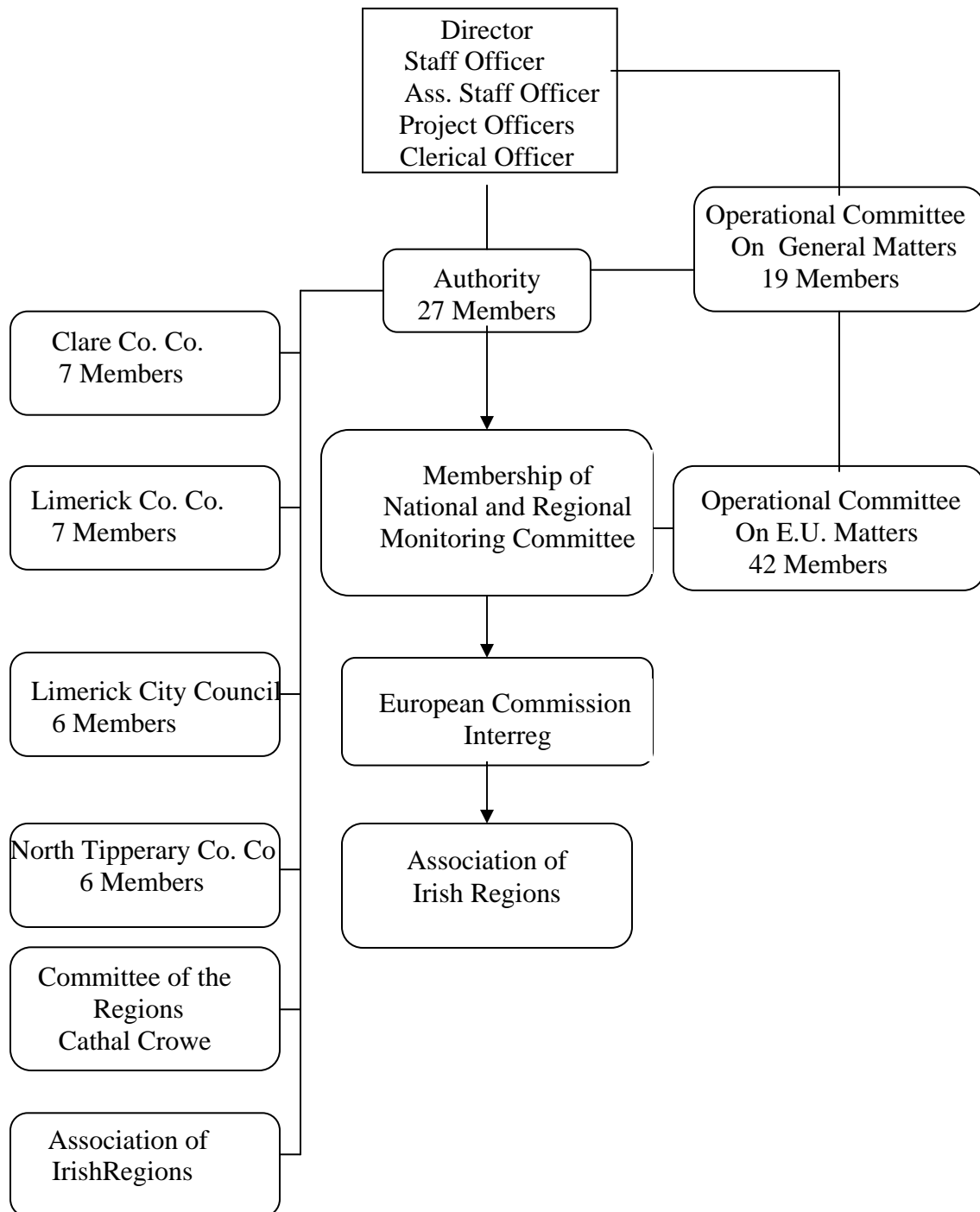


L to R: Mr. Eamon O'Cuiv, T.D., (Minister for Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs) addressing delegates. Also in picture: Mr. Alan Dukes (Institute of European Affairs), Cllr. Mattie Ryan (Cathaoirleach), Cllr. Pat McMahon & Cllr. Peter Considine.



## Structure

### Mid West Regional Authority 2006



The Mid West Regional Authority also provides:

- A. The Cathaoirleach and Secretariat to the Shannon Airport Marketing Consultative Committee.
- B. The Secretariat to the Water Services National Training Committee



### Mid West Regional Authority - Number of Meetings held in 2006:

A total of 12 meetings of the Authority and its Operational Committees were held in 2006. In addition several meetings have been held with the various bodies throughout the Mid-West Region, such as Shannon Development, University of Limerick, FÁS, and Chamber of Commerce. Consultations were held with the Department of the Environment, Department of Finance, Assembly of Chairpersons/Secretaries, Minister for the Environment and Local Government and Department of Social Community and Family Affairs.

Committee meetings were held in numerous venues and provided an opportunity to gain valuable insight in the various strengths in the region. On occasions the Meetings were addressed by representatives of Public and Local Authorities and by MEP's and the Authority will continue its policy of moving around the Region and holding its meetings in different areas of the Region so as to continue to give the Authority a valuable insight into areas within the Region.

<b>Meetings</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Venues</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Average Attendance Rate</b>
No. of Monthly Meetings	12	Shannon Airport	10-01-06	92%
		City Hall, Limerick	07-02-06	81%
		Clare Co. Co.	07-03-06	81%
		Limerick Co. Co.	04-04-06	96%
		Tipperary Institute	09-05-06	85%
		Limerick City Council	04-07-06	85%
		Clare Co. Co. (A.G.M.)	04-07-06	93%
		Clare Co. Co.	04-07-06	93%
		Limerick Co. Co.	05-09-06	70%
		North Tipperary Co. Co.	03-10-06	89%
		Limerick City Council	07-11-06	89%
		Dromineer Bay Hotel	06-12-06	78%
No. of Sub-Committee Meetings	2	Same Venues as Monthly Meeting.		

**The Authority was represented at the following conferences  
and seminars in 2006:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Members Attended</b>
28-01-06	Media Skills for Councillors, Galway.	1
3/4-02-06	Local Government Planning Service, Waterford.	1
4-02-06	Pathfinding Conference, Dublin.	1
10/11-02-06	AMAI Conference, Donegal.	1
16/17-02-06	MWRA Conference, Ennis	3
24/26-02-06	Colmcille Winter School, Letterkenny	1
9/11-03-06	Association of County & City Councils, Dundalk.	2
31/3-01/4-06	Opinion Polls, Roslare.	1
8-04-06	Law on Defamation and Libel, Tralee.	1
26/29-04-06	Kerry Environmental Conference	2
12-05-06	The Potential for Local & Regional Tourism, Letterkenny.	1
18/20-05-06	Who Owns Irish Healthcare, Ennis.	2
2/4-06-06	Michael Davitt Commemorative, Mayo.	1
15-06-06	CWC Conference, Dundalk.	4
6/8-07-06	Local Government Planning, Baltimore.	1
17/20-08-06	Humber Summer School, Mayo.	1
31/9-01/9-06	Kilkee Water World Conference	2
13-09-06	NFGWS, Cavan.	2
13/16-09-06	AMAI, Cavan.	2
28-09-06	Local Government Environment, Youghal.	1
06-10-06	A.I.R., Sligo.	3
11-11-06	LAMA, Wicklow.	2
14/15-11-06	Etowns Conference, Miltown-Malbay.	1
23/25-11-06	Clare Tourism, Ennistymon.	4



## **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Directions given by the Minister for the Environment pursuant to Section 3 of the Local Government Act, 1991 (Regional Authorities)(Establishment) Order, 1993.

### **Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31-12-2006**

<b><u>Expenditure:</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>
	€	€
Salary/Wages/PRSI	276,878.96	290,659.03
Office Expenses	13,181.81	15,250.59
Postal & Telephone Charges	15,249.14	14,385.10
Rent/Rates/Insurances	25,229.27	24,692.75
Annual Allowance Article 34(1)	48,837.55	44,051.62
Travel & Subsistence Article 34(2)(a)	16,913.20	14,603.12
Travel & Subsistence Article 34(2)(b)	Nil	Nil
Seminar/Courses (Fees only)	9,160.00	4,475.00
Cathaoirleach's Allowance	12,495.56	9,429.10
Conferences – Annual/W.S.N.T.G.	5,690.72	16,573.55
Shannon Airport Marketing Consultative Committee	5,761.68	7,463.34
Travel/Subsistence Regional Authority Staff	18,655.81	14,499.86
Study Visits/ Conferences Abroad	15,704.98	21,865.48
EU Projects	662,729.02	366,328.98
S & E Regional Assembly	7,449.90	6,427.67
Reg. Economic Strategy/Reg. Planning Guidelines	22,328.19	38,849.20
Miscellaneous	17,767.85	18,111.32
COR/AIR	9,541.30	9,458.58
Lough Derg Marketing	11,553.13	Nil
County/Community Broadband	36,839.92	Nil
Tourism & Economic Development Plan	3,976.00	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,235,943.99</b>	<b>€917,124.29</b>

Receipts:

<i>Local Authority Contributions</i>	413,986.01	313,644.00
<i>Recoupments from S &amp; E Regional Assembly</i>	9,674.77	33,018.64
<i>Conferences – Annual/WSNTG</i>	21,855.00	34,983.96
<i>Public Bodies Contributions</i>	14,514.35	15,844.60
<i>W.S.N.T.G.</i>	41,995.52	48,757.29
<i>SAMCC</i>	12,752.48	8,705.27
<i>EU Projects</i>	738,720.71	437,771.56
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	8,349.82	10,290.86
<i>Lough Derg Marketing</i>	50,000.00	Nil
<i>County/Community Broadband</i>	47,532.72	Nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€1,359,381.38</b>	<b>€903,016.18</b>
<i>Surplus (Deficit) for year</i>	123,437.39	(14,108.11)
<i>Opening Balance</i>	40,991.79	55,099.90
<b><i>Closing Balance at end of year</i></b>	<b>164,429.18</b>	<b>40,991.79</b>

See Notes to Accounts

Notes to Accounts year ending 31<sup>st</sup>. December, 2006.

(I) Recoupments outstanding as at 31 <sup>st</sup> . December, 2006.	€
(A) WSNTG	41,995.52
(B) SAMCC	12,752.48
(C) EU Projects - Watersports	50,000.00
Citizen First	32,042.00
Pegaso	5,000.00
ASDP	8,528.00
EST11C	4,459.00
(D) Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	25,560.69
(E) Local Authority Contributions	-16,473.00
	<b>Total = €163,864.69</b>

(2) Payments due to M.A.C in respect of Citizen First Project, €16,000.00



## **REVIEW OF PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES:**

### **Regional Economic Strategy/Regional Planning Guidelines:**

The National Spatial Strategy is being implemented through Regional Planning Guidelines which were prepared in accordance with Chapter (III) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and were launched in 2005.

The MWRA is implementing its RPG's/RES through three sub-groups:

Sub Group 1- Co-ordination of development of zone one area. This group consists of representatives from the MWRA, Local Authorities, IDA, Shannon Development, DOEHLG and the Department of Transport. This group has agreed the need for a more focused and structured approach to the development of Limerick/Ennis/Shannon.

Sub Group 2- Develop a common approach to Renewable Energy. This group consists of representatives from the MWRA, Local Authorities, Shannon Development, Tipperary Energy Agency, Limerick/Clare Energy Agency and the DOEHLG. Four areas have been identified that support development of Renewable Energy: 1) Regional Energy and Emissions Strategy 2) Wood Energy Development in Public Buildings 3) Planning Guidelines for small scale Renewable Energy Projects and 4) Biofuels for Public Service Vehicles.

A Regional Biomass working group was established. The purpose of the other group is to develop an indigenous heat energy market, utilising local resources for the Mid West Region.

Sub Group 3- The identification of a Strategic Development Zone or the criteria through which a zone should be developed. This group consists of representatives from the MWRA, Local Authorities, Shannon Development, Shannon Airport Authority, IDA, IBEC and the DOEHLG. The group is also examining the potential of an Iconic Project such as a Regional Convention Centre.



### **Shannon Airport Marketing Consultative Committee:**

The Regional Authority provides the Secretariat to this Government appointed committee which is comprised of members from the Public and Local Authorities, together with the Tourism interests such as hoteliers, travel agents etc. This committee supervises the marketing of Shannon Airport but it also looks at the contribution factors to a successful airport such as Transport, Tourism, product, industry etc. and as such, makes a valuable contribution to the preparation of the various tourism, industrial and transportation policies in the Mid West Region and the West of Ireland in general. The focus of the Airport is to maintain its share of the transatlantic traffic, post Open Skies.

### **The Shannon Rail Link Partnership Committee**

This committee was established under the joint Chairmanship of the Mid West Regional Authority and Clare Co. Co. The partnership consists of the Mid West Regional Authority, Aer Rianta, Bus Eireann, Clare Co. Co., Clare County Development Board, Iarnród Eireann, IBEC, Limerick City Council, Limerick Co. Co., Shannon and District Chamber of Commerce and Shannon Development. The objective of the partnership was to advance the case for the provision of a Rail Link between Shannon International Airport, Shannon Free Zone and Shannon Shannon Town with a national network. The National Development Plan identifies Shannon Airport as of critical importance to this country and described the airport as being of national and international importance. The National Spatial Strategy recognises the transatlantic role of Shannon Airport and suggests an enhanced role for it in serving a wide catchment in the West because of its strategic location between Limerick and Galway. It is quite specific when it stresses the need for improved public transport access including rail to Shannon Airport. Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultants were commissioned to examine options for providing a Rail Link from Shannon Airport and Shannon Industrial Zone to the national rail network including route options for such a link and likely construction costs. The partnership subsequently agreed on a route option recommended by the Consultants and this has been incorporated in the proposed South Clare Economic Corridor Area Plan. The University of Limerick based Marketing Centre for Small Businesses were commissioned to undertake a patronage study for a rail service to Shannon.



The results clearly show that a Shannon rail service would significantly contribute to a reduction in road traffic volumes on the main access routes to Shannon. The partnership had meetings with Booz Allen Hamilton Consultants for the Strategic Rail Review. A proposal was submitted to Minister Seamus Brennan, T.D. by a private developer Shannon Rail Company to build and operate the rail link to Shannon Airport. Shannon Rail Link Partnership held preliminary discussions with representatives of Shannon Rail Company with a view to have the full feasibility study jointly undertaken. A funding application was made to the Minister for Transport. MVA Consultants were appointed to conduct the Feasibility Study. The study will comprise of (a) an assessment of possible routes and evaluation of technical, engineering and operational aspects of the route options (b) preparation of basic scheme designs and capital cost estimates (c) projections of passenger demand and revenue yield for each option (d) evaluation of the financial and economical viability of the options and (e) analysis of funding options, both capital and subvention, for a preferred option should any option be financially or economically viable.

Work on the Study was ongoing at the end of 2006.

### **Lough Derg Marketing Strategy**

The marketing of Lough Derg was being carried out in a disjointed and co-ordinated manner, lacking focus and clear direction. It was agreed that the MWRA, Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary and Galway County Councils, Limerick City Council, Shannon Development and Waterways Ireland would commission a marketing strategy for Lough Derg. The objectives of the Plan are to bring a coherent marketing focus to the Lough Derg catchment area, to parallel the proposed capital investment programme with an integrated marketing strategy and to establish the Lough Derg Brand nationally and internationally. Consultants were engaged to prepare the marketing strategy. A number of Consultation Fora were held during the preparation of the Strategy.

A Lough Derg Marketing Strategy Implementation Group was established and the focus of the Group in 2007 will be on Website Development and Promotional Map and Brochure.



## **County and Group Broadband Schemes**

The Government has approved a national Group Broadband Scheme to address the needs in underserved areas. Experience suggests that broadband services have tended to focus mainly on cities and major towns, with smaller rural and more remote communities having to wait longer for broadband investment. This trend runs counter to the Governments objective of promoting balanced regional development.

The objective of the County and Group Broadband Schemes (C&GBS) is to promote the Rollout of Broadband access through the establishment of sustainable broadband services in towns, villages and rural hinterlands and underserved areas of larger towns on the basis of local /regional authority coordination and community driven initiatives. The role of the Regional Authority is to support the development of the project proposals for communities within their area of responsibility by promoting the programme within the area, providing advice to interested community groups, liaising with service providers in their area, aggregating small individual proposals to form regional, county and sub-county proposals, and assisting the preparation of aggregated project proposals.

### **Interreg:**

Interreg is a European Community Initiative intended to encourage harmonious and balanced development of the European Territory and has three strands.

Strand A concerns cross border co-operation with the aim of promoting integrated regional development between neighbouring border regions including external and certain maritime borders.

Strand B concerns the issue of larger co-operation, trans-national co-operation which contributes to a harmonious territorial integration throughout the community.

Strand C deals with inter regional co-operation, responds to the objective of improving the effectiveness of policies and tourism for regional development and cohesion.



### **CitizenFirst**

CitizenFirst Is a European Project funded by the INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme from December 2004 to September 2007. Partners in the project represent five regions in Ireland (Mid-West), UK (Cambridge), Netherlands (Eindhoven) and Belgium (Ieper & Kortrijk). The main aim of the CitizenFirst Project is to empower citizen interaction by improving public services delivery in the Information Society. The Mid-West Regional Authority is Lead Partner in the CitizenFirst Project. In 2006 the project was successful in securing a extension from the Programme Secretariat with the new end date of 31 March 2008.

CitizenFirst for eInclusion will address eInclusion in its many facets. The project builds directly on CitizenFirst and help pave the way for the "European Initiative on eInclusion" in 2008. In particular, the project will extend the citizen-centric local eGovernment services in the 5 NWE Regions of the Citizen First project, to socially-inclusive local eGovernment services addressing the local circumstances and objectives of each region, by building on the transnational cooperation, inter-regional best-practice and experience-sharing that has led to the success of the current CitizenFirst project.

### **Nautisme Espace Atlantique (NEA)/Water Sports in the Atlantic Area**

The NEA Project is a co-funded initiative under INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme comprising European Partners from Mid-West Ireland, Spain, France, Portugal and Wales. The project began implementation in November 2004 and will end in October 2007. The primary aim of the project is to promote and develop the overall water sports sector in the Atlantic Regions of Europe. Water sports is an important economic and tourism sector in these regions and an Interregional Network had been established to assist regions learn from best practice. As part of the Mid-West Project the Regional Authority are working closely with Lough Derg Yacht Club, Dromineer, Co. Tipperary who are assisting in the development of water sports in the area.



### **PEGASO**

The PEGASO project is an initiative fostered by a group of Atlantic territories with a great equestrian heritage in order to work jointly in a methodology to support the tourism of this sector, currently mainly devoted to the elite sport (reproduction or sport competitions). The project accomplishes two stages: a first one, dedicated to obtaining a planning model for the consolidation of these equestrian territories as model Atlantic tourist destinations; and a second one dedicated to implementing this model. PEGASO is co-funded under the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme and will run from September 2005 until December 2007.

### **CBExS**

The CBExS (City Broadband Exchange) Project comprises the European Regions of Mid-West and South-East Ireland, Cantabria in Spain and North Rhine Westphalia in Germany. The key objectives of the CBExS project are to exchange knowledge and expertise across the partner regions and to demonstrate the real opportunities presented by broadband technologies for the public and enterprise sector in each area.

The project will also introduce new methods/approaches to affordable broadband connectivity through pilot projects involving the combination of wired and wireless technology sources and will enhance development and availability of affordable broadband within the partner regions through increased access to a high quality service. It will also aim to develop a model of best practice that can be transferred to, and implemented in other EU Regions.

### **DQE**

The MWRA & Shannon Development represent the Mid-West Region in the DQE Project (Design Quality Environment). The overall objective of this co-operation is to exchange experience and jointly develop new instruments and tools for competitive and sustainable development at regional and SME level. The partners aim to test and apply the "DQE Method" as a tool for integrated SME development in all participating regions. The duration of the project is from January 2004 - December 2006.



### **Territorial Employment Pact:**

Four areas were nominated by the Government to develop Territorial Employment Pacts, Limerick City, Westmeath, Dublin and Dundalk/Drogheda. Territorial Employment Pacts bring together a range of local partners to develop and implement a coherent programme of job creating measures for their area. The Pacts draws both on business and local communities into a job creation process. The emphasis is very much on maximising the impact of existing resources as each Pact seeks to mobilise all the resources available to the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and to channel these resources into a coherent action plan. The Authority is represented on the Steering Committee of the Limerick Territorial Employment Pact together with representatives from Local Authorities, Chamber of Commerce, Shannon Development, Community Groups and a number of Public and other Bodies.

### **Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly:**

The Mid West Regional Authority is represented at official level on the Operational Committee, Economic and Social Infrastructure Sub-Committee and Monitoring Committee of the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly.



### **Water Services National Training Group:**

The year 2006 was another successful year for the Water Services National Training Group. The Programme of upgrading the Training Centres to provide Non National Roads Training continued, with all five Training Centres in operation.

Conferences held were an outstanding success with over 600 delegates attending Sligo and Cavan. The various speakers contributed enormously in ensuring the continued high standards of our Annual Conferences.

The numbers and courses at our Training Centres continued to increase and this was due to the hard work of the Management Committee and Training Centre Managers.

The Water Services National Training Group has been in operation since 1993 and now have a number of sub committees examining the future direction of the group, it's composition, new courses, Marketing, funding etc.

The group are constantly examining new courses and three new contracts were signed to provide the Water Services National Training Group with courseware in Project Control Systems, Employer Site Safety & Resident Supervisory staff for Water Services and Emergency Planning System for Drinking Water Supplies.

A total of 25 meetings were held during the year, which included meetings of the full group and Sub-Committees (Project Control Systems, Annual Conference, Employer Site Safety and Emergency Planning etc.).



## **Conferences:**

The Annual Conference was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2006 at the Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis.

The WSNTG Conference was held in Sligo on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

## **Freedom of Information Act 1997**

From 1<sup>st</sup>. October, 2001 the Regional Authority became subject to the provisions of FOI Act 1997 [FOI Act 1997(Prescribed Bodies) (4) Regulations 2001, SI 475 of 2001]. The Act was introduced to allow public access to records not already available under existing legislation. Any queries in relation to the Act may be directed to the Officer with responsibility for dealing with requests - Seamus Treacy.

## **Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997:**

The Authority has complied in full with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997. All payments were made well within the "prescribed payment date"

## **Insurance:**

The Authority insurances are dealt with by the Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance.

## **Legal Advisor:**

The Legal Advisor for the Authority is - Brian D. Casey and Associates, Solicitors, Thomond House, High Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.