

DUBLIN REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ÚDARÁS RÉIGIÚNDA ÁTHA CLIATH
and
MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ÚDARÁS RÉIGIÚNACH AN MHEÁNOIRTHIR

MINUTES JOINT MEETING

OF THE DUBLIN REGIONAL AUTHORITY
AND
MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

HELD ON

TUESDAY 20 JANUARY 2009

IN

CITY HALL, DUBLIN

MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING OF THE DUBLIN REGIONAL AUTHORITY AND THE MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY HELD ON TUESDAY 20 JANUARY 2009 IN CITY HALL, DUBLIN 2 AT 6.00 P.M.

Present:

Dublin Regional Authority:

Cllr. Pat Hand, Cathaoirleach

Cllr. Maurice Ahern

Cllr. Marie Baker

Cllr. Tom Brabazon

Cllr. Christy Burke

Cllr. Pat Crimmins

Cllr. Dessie Ellis

Cllr. Mary Freehill

Cllr. Peggy Hamill

Cllr. Ruairi Holohan

Cllr. Gerry Horkan

Cllr. Vincent Jackson

Cllr. Dermot Lacey

Cllr. Paddy McCartan

Cllr. Lettie McCarthy

Cllr. Bronwen Maher

Cllr. Larry O'Toole

Mid-East Regional Authority:

Cllr. Tommy Reilly, Cathaoirleach

Cllr. Jimmy Fegan

Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald

Cllr. Rainsford Hendy

Cllr. Jim Holloway

Cllr. Conal Kavanagh

Cllr. Kathleen Kelleher

Cllr. Paul Kelly

Cllr. Tony McEvoy

Cllr. John McGinley

Cllr. Martin Miley

Cllr. Seamus Murray

Cllr. Michael Nolan

Cllr. Patsy O'Neill

Cllr. John Ryan

Cllr. Pat Vance

Apologies:

Cllr. Sylvester Bourke

Cllr. George Jones

Cllr. Michael Lynch

In attendance:

Mr. Joe Horan, Designated Manager DRA

Mr. Eddie Sheehy, Designated Manager WCC

Ms. Patricia Potter, Director Dublin Regional Authority

Mr. John Byrne, Director Mid-East Regional Authority

Ms. Deirdre Scully, DRA, Regional Planning Guidelines Officer

Mr. Walter Foley, Economics Research Officer DRA RPG Office

The meeting was chaired by the Cathaoirleach of the Mid-East Regional Authority, Cllr. Tommy Reilly.

Item 1

Minutes of Joint Meeting 17 July 2008

The Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Regional Authorities held on 17 July 2008, which had been circulated with the agenda, were agreed. The Minutes were amended to include Cllr. Gerry Horkan, representing Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, and not Dublin City Council as on the Minutes.

Item 2

Educational Accommodation within the GDA (Mr. Tony Dalton, P.O. Dept. Education & Science).

A Presentation on the Educational Accommodation in the GDA was made by Mr. Tony Dalton, P.O., Department of Education & Science.

Mr. Dalton indicated that there were significant developments in the planning of schools in the Greater Dublin Area over the recent past. This included the publication of a Code of Practice for new schools, and Guidelines for sustainable development of schools in growing Regions. He mentioned that the problems of school provision are very varied across the Greater Dublin Area in their application. There was a range of severe pressures in some areas, and in others there were issues of spare capacity in schools. The Region included Balbriggan to Dublin 15 and South Dublin, South Louth and Kildare. This Region has shown extremely high levels of population growth over the past five years with the resulting need to plan for increasing school provision. This explosion of population has meant that the Department of Education cannot build schools fast enough to keep pace with the oncoming numbers of children. For example in the year 2007 there were 70,620 births, which is the highest since 1982. These children will all be entering into the school system in the years 2011 / 2012 / 2013, and later into post primary education. This requires a much more proactive forward planning of schools provision on behalf of the Department and the Local Authorities, and much progress has been made in strategic forward planning with the County Councils in this regard.

During the discussions, which followed, Members raised the issues of the connectedness of Central and Local Government, which needs to be improved, particularly in relation to schools planning and provision at Local level. Also discussed was the usage of school buildings and playing grounds which could be better utilised, especially in Summer months. More investment was also needed in building permanent structures, as it was obvious that the practice of providing prefabs was not a long-term sustainable measure.

The large number of Local Area Plans being adopted throughout the Region showed the need for a greater involvement of the Planning Unit of the Department with Local Authorities at County Development Plan level.

In responding to the points raised, Mr. Dalton said it was clear that it was necessary to have improved interaction and communication between the Department and Local Authorities. A Regional office structure is being developed in the Department and there has been more contact with County Managers to discuss these and other issues.

He mentioned some successful outcomes, which included the coordinated development of facilities in Adamstown and Fingal County Council. The Summer Works Scheme has also been a huge success and will continue. These works are all very necessary but the background was a decade of under investment in schools infrastructure. In relation to the usage of facilities, this is influenced by the ownership of schools, which are mostly private institutions.

An Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Dalton for his attendance and presentation and he expressed the wish that the contacts and communication with the Department and County Managers and Councils will continue into the future.

Item 3

FORFAS Review

Ms. Patricia Potter, Director of the Dublin Regional Authority, informed the Members that FORFAS had made a Presentation to the National Steering Committee for the Regional Planning Guidelines Review Process, and the intention is that FORFAS

would undertake a Review of Enterprise Strategy on a Regional approach, which will link into the ongoing Review process. It is hoped to have more information on the Strategy for the next joint meeting of the two Regional Authorities.

Item 4

RPG Review

Ms. Deirdre Scully, Regional Planning Guidelines Officer, introduced the 4 papers, which had been circulated with the agenda. These were:

- a) The Issues Paper
- b) The Update on the Tender Selection for the Strategic Environmental Assessment
- c) The Public Consultation Approach Paper
- d) The Public Consultation Publicity Document

a) The Issues Paper

The Issues Paper is a consultation document issued prior to the drafting of New Regional Planning Guidelines. It provides the public and all interested parties with an overview of some of the main Regional planning issues and the opportunity to submit their comments and suggestions. Submissions are being invited from the 2 February 2009 up to the 30 March 2009, and further submissions will be invited when the draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010/2022 are made in late 2009.

b) Strategic Environmental Assessments

The Regional Planning Guidelines are required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment, alongside the process of writing the new Regional Planning Guidelines. This is a legal requirement under E.U. Directive, and obliges Authorities to undergo a systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt a plan. "Appropriate Assessment" is also required under the E.U. Habitats Directive, and this involves a screening process of plans to see if it would have significant effect on Natura 2000 sites. It was recommended and agreed at the June 2008 Steering Committee that the best approach for undertaking the SEA was to engage Consultants, and tenders were advertised on the 27 November 2008, which closed on the 19 December 2008. A total of 8 tenders were received and were short listed down to 3.

The selected consultants are ARUP and Natura as joint bidders for the two processes, and it is considered that the competitive price by the recommended consultants offers very good value for money for the standard of personnel working on the project.

The experience of both ARUP and Natura staff in previous projects will assist the RPG office in ensuring that the SEA and the AA are robust and meet all the legal requirements and are fully defensible against challenges from outside interests.

The consultants have already set to work and have met the Parks and Wildlife Services, and the Regional Planning Guidelines Officers nationally. A circular is being issued to all the Local Authorities outlining the method in which the "Appropriate Assessment" is to be done.

c) Public Consultation Approach Paper

This short paper set out an agreed approach for consultation on the Review of the Regional Planning Guidelines. There are 2 public consultation phases required as

part of the Review, at pre-draft and draft stages, with a minimum of 8 weeks for the pre-draft stage and 10 weeks for the draft, and the strategy for engagement for this is to be formulated.

The paper also sets out the approach for consultation with the Local Authorities, both at Executive level and at elected Members level. Also detailed was the process involved in the consultation with the Statutory Authorities and the Regional Planning Guidelines Steering Committee Members.

Ms. Scully informed the Members that she had written to the 7 Cathaoirliog of the Local Authorities in the Region offering to meet all Local Authorities and Councillors to set the scene for the draft Review process. It is also intended to go to some Strategic Policy Committee meetings and County Development Boards if requested by the Counties. Talks will also be held with the National Roads Authority, Department of Transport, Department of Education and any other interested Public Bodies.

d) Public Consultation Publicity Document

Circulated with the agenda was a 3-page Publicity Document, which will be issued as a public information leaflet. This leaflet takes a question and answer format, and asks the general questions of:

- What are the Regional Planning Guidelines?
- What areas they cover?
- Why are they being reviewed?
- What do they do?
- What does the National Spatial Strategy have to do with the Regional Planning Guidelines?
- What issues will be looked at in the new Regional Planning Guidelines?
- What is the role of the different Organisations?
- What is the Public Submission Process?

Ms. Scully also indicated that new population targets for each Region had been issued from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and will be turned into housing targets and fed into the Development Plan process for the County Councils.

The Review process now continues with the 1st Stage, which will be an examination of the population trends in all counties, and the 2nd Stage will consist of meeting the Councillors, the SPCs, Statutory Bodies and Regional Bodies. A report will then be prepared on the pre-draft and brought to the Members of both Regional Authorities in late April.

Following discussions, the documents were noted by the Members.

Item 5

Any Other Business

No business arose under this heading.

Item 6

Date of next meeting.

The date of the next Joint Meeting of the 2 Regional Authorities will be determined by the time necessary for public consultation and meetings of the Technical Working Group and the Regional Planning Guidelines Steering Committee. It is hoped to have a joint meeting before the end of April 2009.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Pat Hand
Dublin Regional Authority

Cllr. Tommy Reilly
Mid-East Regional Authority

Patricia Potter, Director
Dublin Regional Authority

John Byrne, Director
Mid-East Regional Authority

Date: _____