



Southern Regional Assembly

14th July 2023, 12:30pm
Assembly House, Waterford and via MS Teams

Minutes

Presiding: Cllr. Terry Shannon, Cathaoirleach.

Present: Cllr. Siobhán Ambrose, Cllr. Robert Beasley, Cllr. Dan Boyle, Cllr. Pip Breen, Cllr. Joe Carroll, Cllr. Noel Coonan, Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan, Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Gerard Murphy, Cllr. Michael Murphy, Cllr. Deirdre O'Brien, Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan, Cllr. Michael O'Shea and Cllr. Oliver Walsh.

Remote Attendance via MS Teams: Cllr. Maura Bell, Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Michael Collins, Cllr. Frankie Daly, Cllr. Deirdre Forde, Cllr. Garret Kelleher, Cllr. PJ Kelly, Cllr. Thomas Kinsella, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Conor D McGuinness, Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan, Cllr. Thomas Phelan, Cllr. Sean O'Connor and Cllr. John Sheahan.

Apologies: None.

Officials Present: David Kelly, Kevin Lynch, Karen Coughlan, Marie Harnett, Breda Curran, Samantha Richardson, Catherine Connaughton, Maria Murphy, Omer Sunguroglu, Anna Higgins and Claire Breen.

Officials Remote Attendance via MS Teams: Brigh Ryan, Vincent Dunphy, Michael Buckley, Sarah Davoren, Áine Whelan, Rebecca Walsh, Elayne McDonnell and Róisín Slattery.

External Presenters Present: Michael Flood – Policy Analyst, OECD, Karen Kenny – Senior Adviser, National, Regional and Urban Planning Policy, DHLGH and Jack McDermot – Assistant Principal, Offshore Wind Strategy Unit, DETE.

External Remote Attendance via MS Teams: Michelle Breslin – Planning Adviser, DHLGH.

A record of attendance was taken by means of roll call.

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 9th June

The Members adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June, proposed by Cllr. Beasley and seconded by Cllr. Walsh.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Update on OECD study - Towards More Balanced Regional Attractiveness in Ireland: Michael Flood, OECD & Karen Kenny, DHLGH

Karen Kenny advised that the Department requested the OECD to expand on the recent work on the three Assemblies – *Towards More Balanced Regional Attractiveness in Ireland* to assist the NPF review by reference to improving effectiveness of implementation.

This is in the context of:

- The continuance of the Eastern & Midland Region's imbalance in relation to the Northern & Western and Southern Regions,
- Enhanced NPF delivery through multi-level governance, spatial planning and funding arrangements,
- Cross comparison of international examples, and their techniques regarding how these examples can help with Regional Balance.

Michael Flood advised that the study:

- Cross-examined Ireland's three regions and another 12 regions across Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Italy,
- Regional Attractiveness includes factors such as Infrastructure and Well Being and not just competitiveness with other Regions for funding,
- Implementation for plans at local and regional level can be difficult despite robust Planning Frameworks such as the NPF being in place,
- various stakeholders, representatives and authorities were met during site visits and round tables to discuss challenges,
- Regional Imbalance is directly linked to Regional Attractiveness. E.g., Housing and Physical Infrastructure can deter regional investment if it's not at a standard seen elsewhere,
- Co-design and co-participation between Local Authorities can help alleviate time and policy based constraints on projects,
- Project Ireland 2040 and its linked works in the NPF and NDP is a robust document. However, it needs a better approach to foster the co-operation needed to get its objectives fulfilled,
- Alignment of National Agencies policies needed,
- Recognition of Historical Imbalances in Irish Regions and how this could be addressed by looking at it from non-financial benefit lens,
- Metropolitan Area Plans must still take into consideration Rural Areas adjacent and to not be too centralised.

David Kelly advised that this was a critical study in terms of future mechanisms to address regional imbalance and address the key issues raised in the RSES Monitoring Report.

4. National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind – DETE

Jack McDermot, Assistant Principal of the Offshore Wind Strategy Unit to give a presentation on the National Industry Strategy for Offshore Wind.

A discussion followed with topics raised by Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan, Cllr. Carroll, Cllr. Boyle, Cllr. O'Shea, Cllr. Kelly and Cllr. Murnane. Topics raised included:

- The establishment of Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) on July 17th and how this will help co-ordinate the planning and development of the Offshore Wind Strategy Unit,
- The co-operation with Fishing Industries and Communities with the Offshore Wind Strategy Unit,
- Lifespan of the Offshore Wind Structures and whether these structures could be recycled in future,
- Feasibility of delivering 37 GW of Offshore Wind Energy by 2050, and the infrastructure development surrounding the strategy.

David Kelly concluded by mentioning how this topic will become of greater focus going forward which the Assembly will be playing a part in developing the strategy, and that it has significant implications in areas such as Climate Targets, Energy Security and Economic Benefits.

5. Any Other Business

Cllr. Carroll referred to the financial difficulties of Barryroe Offshore Energy and the fact they did not get a licence for oil exploration. Cllr. Boyle noted that only Latvia and Malta in the EU have had worse emission reduction than Ireland in this timeframe.

Cllr. Carroll queried whether there was a mechanism to change Special Areas of Conservations (SAC) as they impacted on harbours. Cllr. Gerard Murphy advised that SACs are governed within the framework of EU legislation.

Cllr. Kelly raised an issue whether the Commercial Rates for Local Authorities could be collected on the offshore developments due to the distance from the shore.

Cllr. Michael Murphy referred to a previous motion regarding the need to Empower Local Government and welcomed the increased presence of Government Agencies in the Southern Regional Assembly meetings.

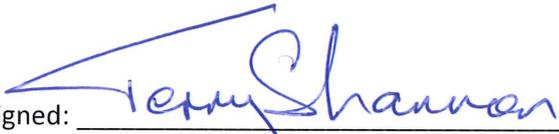
Cllr. Coughlan agreed and stated that there should be an item on each Local Authority's agenda quarterly from the Southern Regional Assembly.

Cllr. Ambrose referenced how the N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction route will assist regional development.

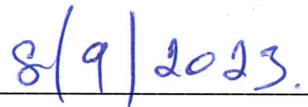
6. Date of Next Meeting

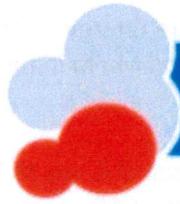
Friday, 8th September 2023 in-person and online.

Signed: _____


Cllr. Terry Shannon
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____





Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

AGENDA

14th July 2023

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 9th June 2023
2. Matters Arising
3. Update on OECD study - Towards More Balanced Regional Attractiveness in Ireland:
Michael Flood, OECD & Karen Kenny, DHLGH
4. National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind – DETE: TBC
5. Any Other Business
6. Date for next meeting