



Houses of the
Oireachtas
Tithe an Oireachtais

**AN COMHCHOISTE UM FHIONTAR, TRÁDÁIL AGUS
FOSTAÍOCHT**

CEANTAR CHRÍOS COMAITÉIREACHTA BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

(IÚIL GO DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2008)

BEALTAINÉ 2008

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND
EMPLOYMENT**

DUBLIN COMMUTER BELT ZONE

(JULY TO OCTOBER 2008)

MAY 2009

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. PROPOSALS FROM COMMITTEE	7
3. TOWNS.....	9
3.1 ATHY.....	10
3.2 BALBRIGGAN.....	11
3.3 CARLOW.....	12
3.4 DROGHEDA	13
3.5 GOREY	14
3.6 MULLINGAR.....	15
3.7 NAAS.....	16
3.8 NAVAN	17
3.9 PORTARLINGTON	18
3.10 PORT LAOISE	19
4. ORGANISATIONS	21
4.1 CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.....	22
4.2 COUNTY ENTERPRISE BOARDS	22
4.3 ENTERPRISE IRELAND.....	24
4.4 FORAS ÁISEANNA SAOTHAIR	24
4.5 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IRELAND	25
4.6 JOBS CLUBS ETC	27
4.7 SERVICES, INDUSTRIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL UNION	28
4.8 BALBRIGGAN ENTERPRISE AND TRAINING.....	29
4.9 COUNTY WEXFORD PARTNERSHIP.....	29
5. REPORT LAID BEFORE HOUSES	31
6. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE.....	33
7. MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE	37

1. INTRODUCTION

Between July and October 2008 various members of the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment met with representatives of the administrative, business and employment sectors from the towns of Athy, Balbriggan, Carlow, Drogheda, Gorey, Mullingar, Naas, Navan, Portarlington and Port Laoise.

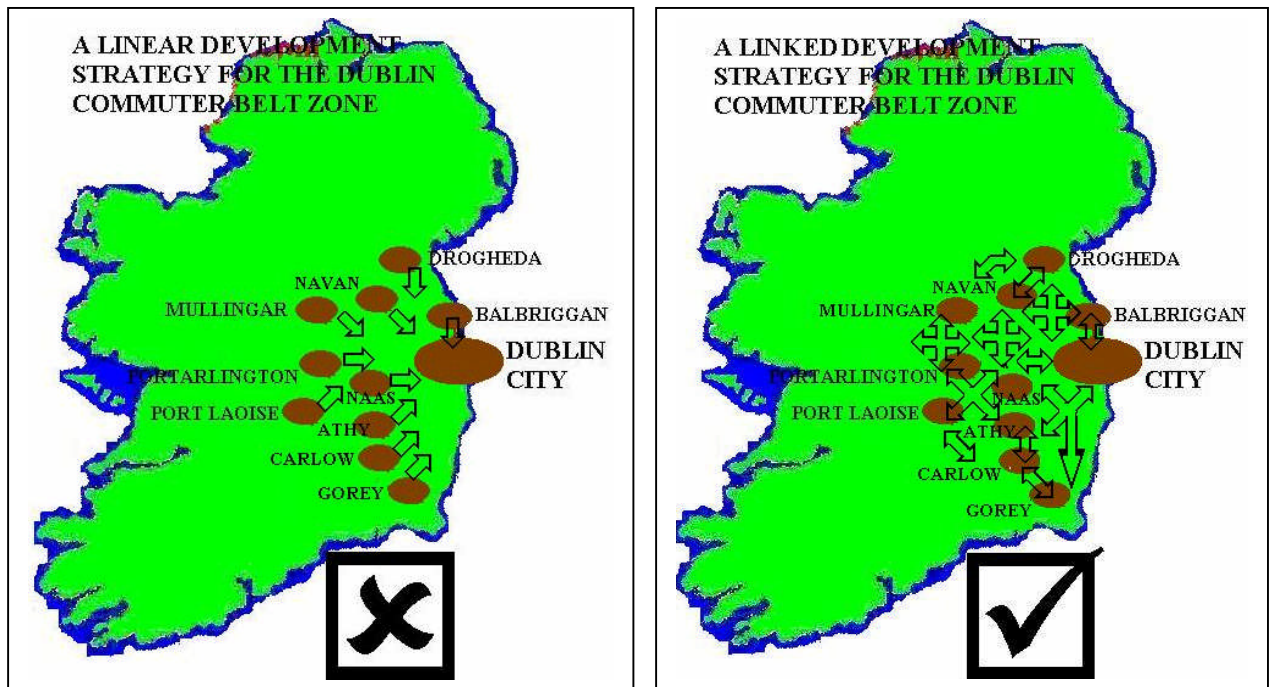
In each case they met with local Oireachtas representatives, officials and elected representatives of the local authorities, representatives of the local County Enterprise Board, Chamber of Commerce, Jobs Club or equivalent organisation and local representatives of Enterprise Ireland, Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS), the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Ireland and the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU). After each meeting they visited a site of relevant interest such as a local company, a site that needed to be developed or a business park. During these visits they engaged with local workers.

The representatives of the Committee discussed the enterprise, trade and employment issues that are relevant to the continuing development of each town. They noted the increasing unemployment levels throughout the region and compared and evaluated how these towns are dealing with the common challenges facing them.

The purpose of these meetings, site visits and deliberations was to gather the necessary facts. From these the members of the delegation identified a number of common characteristics:-

1. Towns have suffered major job losses in their traditional industries;
2. The sharp decline in the construction industry has created widespread unemployment – workers who are laid off are not easily re-employable outside this sector and there is a particular problem with apprentices who are not finishing their apprenticeship – this leaves them partly-trained but unable to use their skills as they are not fully qualified;
3. There is dissatisfaction with IDA Ireland for concentrating its activities in the larger towns;
4. There is dissatisfaction that certain towns have been omitted from the Spatial Strategy;
5. There is dissatisfaction with the multi-agency system for dealing with enterprise, development and employment – each Government agency has its own regional structure – towns are assigned to different geographical areas by different agencies and are being cut-off from their natural hinterlands or other towns with which they have traditional links;
6. There is a lack of incubation centres where new enterprises can be nurtured;
7. There is a lack of adequate education, training and development facilities;
8. Due to the recession and the closure of many business the rates bases for the towns are falling – there is also a loss of rates when businesses locate or relocate outside the towns – different rates and service charges are applicable throughout the region thereby disadvantaging those towns where rates and service charges are highest;
9. Each town has a large commuter population travelling to and from Dublin City and one of the ways of developing the towns is to retain these commuters as workers in these towns rather than as migrant workers travelling to Dublin City each day and returning to overnight in the towns;
10. The public transport facilities in many towns do not meet the needs of commuters and the availability of public transport from town to town and within the towns is inadequate.

Having visited a number of the larger towns throughout the region it is quite obvious to the members of this Committee that the Dublin Commuter Belt Zone needs to be developed as a unit rather than as a group of towns, each an independent satellite of and linked separately to Dublin City. It is a fact that each town is linked to and heavily dependent on Dublin City but they also have economic, social and communications links with each other. These need to be strengthened and built upon. What is required when planning education, employment, technology and transport initiatives is the adoption of an integrated approach for the region rather than a series of discreet corridors of interaction leading to and from Dublin City.



In all towns the councillors and town management had a very positive attitude and spoke of the need to attract businesses to their area and the need to have adequate land banks in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people we met during our visits and the members and staff of the Committee who participated in and assisted the work of the Delegation.

Willie Penrose

Willie Penrose TD
Chairman

27 May 2009

2. PROPOSALS FROM COMMITTEE

1. The Dublin Commuter Belt Zone should be developed as an interconnected region crisscrossed by links throughout it. Towns should be connected not only with Dublin City but with each other, especially where they are in close proximity or where they have traditional administrative, economic and social ties. These new links will not replace their interaction with Dublin City but will complement it by facilitating the connections between expanding growth areas.
2. The increasing number of job losses needs to be tackled. A sustainable manufacturing base needs to be nurtured and the number of indigenous exporting firms needs to grow. Every effort should be made to attract manufacturing to the towns especially in the food and drinks sector. There are opportunities to develop the biotechnology, high-value engineering, information and communications technology, internationally traded services, medical devices and pharmaceuticals sectors. Skills that are not being utilised need to be identified and made available for new industries or revitalised traditional industries.
3. A vigorous approach should be adopted to create indigenous micro industries in agri-tourism and farm diversification. Bog lands, forest lands and small farm units should be utilised in innovative ways to provide new options in education, tourism and adventure sports. Community Enterprise schemes, which are good for training and local communities, should be expanded to cater for new categories of employment and the new available talents. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should be asked to review the planning laws to better facilitate the establishment of small business initiatives in rural areas. The possibility of issuing permits in lieu of requiring a change in the planning conditions to allow such ventures to be based in farm buildings, rural halls, etc should be considered.
4. The number of apprenticeships not being completed should be tackled. Apprentices should be allowed to move from one employer to another, to finish their apprenticeships under the direct stewardship of FÁS and to complete their apprenticeships abroad.
5. There is a need to provide efficient and effective business, finance and marketing services.
6. The strategic regions for the various government agencies and strategies should be aligned to correspond with each other in so far as possible. New structures need to be created on an area basis that will allow the various agencies and the local elected representatives to work together. Towns should be aligned with their rural hinterlands and with neighbouring towns with whom they have traditional economic links. The agencies for each town should meet regularly together. The various systems of grants, loans, etc should be brought together and administered by one body to facilitate cohesion, prevent gaps in meeting needs and ensure maximum coordination and targeting. Cohesion and Leader funds and capital and employment grants for companies who wish to expand need to be improved.
7. IDA Ireland lands which are currently lying unused and or underdeveloped should be put to immediate use. If IDA Ireland is not in a position to do this immediately they should make these lands available to the local authority in which they are situated or to any other Government body or agency which can make economic use of them. IDA Ireland should pass these lands on without seeking to make a profit for its organisation from them but should rather seek to ensure that the Irish economy and the local community in which they are based profit from them in terms of availability, investment and job creation.

8. The remit of County Enterprise Boards should be expanded so that they can continue to support businesses as they grow. Upper employment limits to qualify for support should be abolished and individual Boards should have greater discretion in deciding on the support they give and on the percentage of loans / grants they require companies to refund to them.
9. Training centres should be strategically located throughout the area so that no potential trainee is prevented from participating in training due to distance or local disadvantage. There should be a greater emphasis on and encouragement of subjects such as applied mathematics, biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. The study of enterprise and engaging in establishing small business ventures should be included as a module in transition year. Government funding for upskilling and workplace learning should be increased and there should be agreement on the negotiation of workplace training and upskilling. Businesses should be encouraged to avail of the facilities and services offered by the Institutes of Technology and the Vocational Education Committees in providing training to employees and potential employees.
10. Unnecessary costs should be eliminated and other costs reduced. While allowing for the individual discretion of local authorities, they should be aware that higher rates in their specific areas reduce local competitiveness and they should coordinate their charge regimes with each other in line with best practice. The phased payment of development levies and a moratorium on commercial rates for start-up businesses for a given period of time should be considered.
11. There should be greater transport linkages between the different areas and towns in the region rather than all transport leading to Dublin. There should be an adequate network rather than a series of straight lines culminating at one point. This should include public transport to third level colleges. Efficient internal bus services need to be provided within the larger towns.
12. The Standard Cost Model measures the administrative burdens businesses are subject to in complying with various regulations. It facilitates the simplification of these burdens by identifying regulations and aspects of regulations that are particularly onerous. This Model should be used to measure the effectiveness and necessity of all local and central government regulations effecting business. It should be used to measure the necessity of the forms businesses are required to complete and the need for various licences to engage in particular activities. Businesses and their representatives should have the right to question the legitimacy of a regulation they consider ineffective, unfair, unnecessary or causing undue expense in comparison to its usefulness. Responsibility for scrutinising regulations should be assigned to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and where such challenges are upheld the regulation in question should be abolished or amended as appropriate. This process should have specified targets and should be completed within as short a time frame as possible.
13. Approximately two million people live in the counties the Delegation visited. This large population offers opportunities and economies of scale, but quick and easy access to the general public is required to harness these. Although broadband is currently the most effective and popular means of mass communication its provision across the region is extremely patchy. This should be tackled immediately with especial emphasis on providing broadband in rural areas. From Borris in County Carlow to the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth and from Finea in County Westmeath to Fethard in County Wexford people should be able to communicate effectively and speedily, both with each other and with the rest of Ireland and the world.

3. TOWNS



3.1 BAILE ÁTHA Í

3.1 ATHY

Athy is a heritage and market town in the south of County Kildare. It was a location for the textile and other industries. It is designated a secondary growth area under the Greater Dublin Development Plan and is considered a crucial element of the 2002 - 2020 National Spatial Strategy, linking the existing gateway of Dublin to its 'hub' Kilkenny. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs grew from 12,098 in 2002 to 16,161 in 2006, an increase of 33.6%.

Athy is located on the main arterial road linking Dublin City, Kilkenny City and Waterford City (N78 National Secondary Road). With no undue delays Dublin Airport and City can each be reached within 1 hour. There is a daily provincial public bus service to Dublin City and commuters may also travel to Dublin City and Waterford City by train. Athy railway station closed for goods traffic in 1976. However a disused siding for the Tegral Slate factory remains.

Athy has experienced significant job losses in the last 2 years. During 2008 unemployment rose from 1,147 in January to 1,760 in December, an increase of 53.4%.

Athy Community College offers Post Leaving Certificate and further education courses. Carlow Institute of Technology offers a wide range of third level certificate, diploma and degree courses including Business Studies, Computing, Mechanical and Electronic Engineering and Management Accounting. There is relatively easy access to the various third level colleges in Dublin.

The Revenue Commissioners employ 44 staff in Athy.

One of the sites visited by the Delegation from the Committee was the Tegral Company, one of the largest employers in Athy. It employs 369 people. It manufactures fibre current plates and contributes €20 million to the town. It is comprised of Tegral Building Products and Tegral Metal Forming Ltd. It produces mainly for the home market. 80% of its product is cement and this uses a lot of electricity. It needs to expand and is moving to a new 38 acre site 2 miles outside the town. Completion is scheduled for 2010.

Athy Community Enterprise Centre is a development of 20 commercial units for let. It is designed to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses. There are 8 dedicated offices and twelve workshop units to let in this managed campus.

The Carlow – Port Laoise fibre ring, which forms part of the resilient national fibre ring network, passes through Athy. The town has a fully digital exchange, which meets European ISDN standards and the signal strength for all mobile networks is more than adequate throughout the town. It is also suitable for Wireless Local Loop technology.

Approximate road distances from Athy in kilometres are – Carlow Town 24, Dublin Airport 82, Dublin City 70, Kilkenny City 47, Monasterevin 19, Naas 37, Port Laoise 25 and Waterford City 97.



3.2 BAILE BRIGÍN

3.2 BALBRIGGAN

Balbriggan is a vibrant sea-side town with a busy fishing harbour in the north of County Dublin (Fingal). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the town was renowned for the manufacture of cotton and hosiery and even had a type of hosiery, Balbriggan Hose, name after it. It was also the location of the nineteenth century Smith's Stocking Mill, which manufactured stockings and long johns, the latter being known as Balbriggans. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs increased from 10,294 in 2002 to 15,559 in 2006 an increase of 51.2%.

During 2008 unemployment in Balbriggan rose from 1,595 in January to 2,760 in December, an increase of 73%.

Balbriggan is located just off the M1 Dublin to Belfast Motorway. With no undue delays both Dublin Airport and City can be reached within half an hour. Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus and Irish Rail provide regular public transport to Dublin City. It is estimated that 2,200 commuters use the Arrow rail service.

Balbriggan Enterprise Development Group was established as an educational facility for the local community. Its goal is to expand opportunities for those who wish to gain employment or further their career. It provides certified training in Accounts, Computer Applications and Customer Care and also provides a FETAC certified Entrepreneurship Development Program. The town also has relatively easy access to a wide range of third level institutions in Dublin City.

A number of large corporations are based at the IDA Ireland Industrial Estate in Stephenstown. These include a compact disc manufacturer, a fish processing factory, a serviced office facilities company and a clothes manufacturer. The local Passport Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs is also located here. This industrial estate is approximately 4 hectares in size.

Approximate road distances from Balbriggan in kilometres are – Dublin Airport 25, Dublin City 34 and Belfast 141.



3.3 CEATHARLACH

3.3 CARLOW

The town of Carlow was famous for its sugar factory which opened in 1926 but was closed in 2005 by its then parent company Greencore as it was no longer considered to be economically viable. One of the largest inland towns in Ireland its population, including the population of its environs, grew from 26,436 to 27,246 people between 2002 and 2006 according to the Census figures of those years, an increase of 3%.

Unemployment in Carlow rose during 2008 from 1,473 in January to 2,385 in December, an increase of 61.9%.

Carlow lies adjacent to the Dublin City to Waterford City road which bypassed the town in 2008. With good traffic conditions Dublin Airport and Dublin City can be reached in 1 hour and 1 quarter. There is a daily commuter train service to Dublin City.

Carlow Institute of Technology caters for up to 5,000 students. It provides National Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications in a variety of courses including Applied Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computing and Engineering. It offers a range of specialised training courses through its Computer Integrated Manufacturing Production Centre. These are offered on-campus or on-site. The Centre has particular expertise in Business Process Re-Engineering, Information Technology, Manufacturing Engineering, Production Inventory Management and Supply Chain Management. A second college in Carlow, Saint Patrick's, provides Diploma and Degree level courses in Business Studies, Humanities and Social Care.

OralB Braun, primarily producing electric toothbrushes and hair dryers, is now one of the major employers in Carlow. Other significant employers include Burnside, producing hydraulic cylinders, Braun Ireland Ltd, manufacturing electrical appliances, and Lapple Ireland Ltd engineering specialists. The Teagasc National Research facility is located in Carlow.

The Carlow Enterprise Centre, managed by the Carlow County Enterprise Board, is located approximately 2 kilometres from the town centre. It provides 5,500 square feet of letting space accommodating units ranging in size from 500 to 1,000 square feet. Tenants can avail of access to training and conference facilities on-site.

Carlow is connected to the Carlow – Port Laoise fibre ring, which forms part of the resilient national fibre ring network. The town also provides technology support to industry through the Computer Integrated Manufacturing Centre and the Institute of Technology Carlow.

Approximate road distances from Carlow Town in kilometres are – Dublin Airport 96, Dublin City 84, Port Laoise 38 and Waterford City 76.



3.4 DROICHEAD ÁTHA

3.4 DROGHEDA

Drogheda is situated on the border between counties Louth and Meath. It was traditionally an industrial town with a large port on the River Boyne. However its former brewing, linen and textile, manufacturing and shipping industries have been decimated. The Meath environs of Drogheda to the south of the town are recognised as a primary growth centre in the Meath County Development Plan for 2007 to 2013 and this together with plans for growth to the north of the town by Louth County Council will sustain future growth, despite the town not obtaining Gateway status in the Irish government's National Spatial Strategy. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs increased from 57,220 in 2002 to 59,276 in 2006 an increase of 3.6%.

During 2008 unemployment in Drogheda increased by 55.9% from 3,468 in January to 5,406 in December.

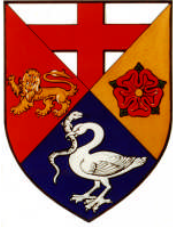
Drogheda is located beside the main Dublin to Belfast motorway (M1). With no undue delays Dublin City can be reached in 40 minutes and Dublin Airport in just over half an hour. It has a rail link to Dublin and Belfast. It is estimated that 20,000 commuters travel to Dublin each day. The town has a rail link for freight to Navan but the passenger service to Navan ended in 1958.

Access to the many third level educational facilities in Dublin City is relatively easy.

Employers in Drogheda include Becton Dickinson manufacturing medical syringes and related equipment, Boyne Valley Foods producing honey and jams, Hilton Foods processing meat, International Flavours & Fragrances producing food fragrances and perfumes, Irish Cement, (Ireland's largest cement works is located in Drogheda) and Natures Best processing fresh food.

There is a 25 hectare IDA Ireland Business and Technology Park located in Drogheda. There are 8 enterprise incubation units for high technical startup companies at the Milmount complex.

Approximate road distances from Drogheda in kilometres are – Belfast 121, Dublin Airport 41, Dublin City 50 and Navan 27.



3.5 GUAIRE

3.5 GOREY

Gorey is situated on the coast of County Wexford. The town and its environs have become a location for commuters travelling to work in Dublin and the population has risen by 45.9% between 2002 and 2006, from 7,474 to 10,907 according to the Census figures for those years.

During 2008 unemployment in Gorey rose from 1,459 in January to 2,607 in December, an increase of 78.7%.

Gorey is located beside the Dublin to Rosslare Road (N11). A by-pass for the town was opened in 2007. Given good traffic conditions Dublin Airport and Dublin City can be reached within 90 minutes. The town has bus routes to Dublin Airport, Dublin City, Rosslare Harbour and Waterford City. It also has a train service to Dublin and Rosslare Harbour via the Dublin to Rosslare Europort line.

Gorey Adult Education offers courses such as Arts and Media, Construction and Engineering, IATI (Institute of Accounting Technicians in Ireland) Accounting, Institute of Public Administration Business Diplomas and Special Needs Training. The town also has access to the many third level educational facilities in Dublin City and to Waterford Institute of Technology.

Gorey has a number of Business Parks and large areas of zoned industrial land which offer opportunities for development. Gorey Business Park and Micro Enterprise Centre provides a number of modern industrial, commercial, enterprise and office units.

Approximate road distances from Gorey in kilometres are – Dublin Airport 113, Dublin City 96, Rosslare Harbour 69 and Waterford City 87.



3.6 AN MUILEANN gCEARR

3.6 MULLINGAR

Mullingar is the administrative and commercial centre for County Westmeath. Cattle-trading was an important part of the town's economy up until 2003 when the cattle market was closed and this along with the closure, in recent years, of Penn (tennis balls) and Tarkett (flooring) were blows to the local economy. Tourism is important to the town given its proximity to Lough Derravaragh, Lough Ennel and Lough Owel. Along with Athlone and Tullamore, Mullingar forms part of the Midland Gateway and is recognised as a Linked Gateway under the National Spatial Strategy. A Linked Gateway requires two or more strong towns to work in partnership to promote economic and social development in their region. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs increased from 22,418 in 2002 to 27,892 in 2006 an increase of 24.4%.

During 2008 unemployment in Mullingar and its environs rose from 2,194 in January to 3,516 in December, an increase of 60.3%.

Mullingar is located on the main Dublin to Sligo road (N4). With no undue delays Dublin Airport and City can each be reached within 1 hour. There is a daily provincial public bus service to Dublin City and commuters may also travel to Dublin City on the Arrow Commuter Train Service. However there is no direct train connection to Athlone.

Mullingar Community College provides FETAC accredited Certificate courses for adults and Foras Training, Lir Business School and the Belvedere Institute offer a wide selection of courses for individuals and companies at all levels. There is access to the range of third level colleges in Dublin City and also to the National University of Ireland Maynooth and Athlone Institute of Technology.

Important employers in the town include Genesis Fine Art, Iralco Ltd (automotive components), GMAC – a subsidiary of General Motors (financial shared services centre and software development facility), Van Nelle Ireland – a subsidiary of Imperial Tobacco, Lidl (warehouse and distribution centre), the Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar Pewter, Oakley Optical Ireland (prescription sunglasses), PEM Engineering and Taconic International (Teflon coated fabrics).

IDA Ireland has a 70 acre Business Park in Marlinstown and a new Enterprise Centre is planned for Mullingar Business Park offering incubation units to the micro-enterprise sector. Other industrial estates in the area include Lough Sheever Corporate Park and the Lynn Industrial Estate.

Approximate road distances from Mullingar in kilometres are – Athlone 46, Dublin Airport 87, Dublin City 79, Maynooth 57, Tullamore 41 and Sligo 132.



3.7 NÁS NA RÍ

3.7 NAAS

Naas is the largest town in County Kildare located at the heart of the Irish thoroughbred equine industry. The town has undergone rapid commercial development and growth in recent years and is an important service centre for the county. In conjunction with Kilcullen and Newbridge, it has been identified as a primary growth centre under the National Spatial Strategy. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs rose from 18,288 in 2002 to 20,044 in 2006, an increase of 9.6%.

During 2008 unemployment in County Kildare rose from 6,606 in January to 11,533 in December, an increase of 74.6%.

Naas is located beside one of the main arteries connecting Dublin City to Cork City, Limerick City and Waterford City (N7). This is one of the busiest roads in Ireland. With no undue delays Dublin Airport and Dublin City can be reached within 3 quarters of an hour. There are commuter rail and bus services to Dublin with up to 23 trains running daily. However the train station in Naas was closed in 1959 and there is now a commuter bus service to and from the nearest railway station in Sallins.

The nearest third level college is the National University of Ireland Maynooth to which there is a daily bus service. In addition, access to the many third level educational facilities in Dublin City is relatively easy.

On completion of the Millennium Park at Oberstown in Naas, it is estimated that the 400 acre development will provide work for 12,000 people. There are a number of elements to this development including a base for Irish and international businesses from many corporate and service sectors, locations for technologically advanced start-up and expanding micro-enterprises. One of the largest employers operating in Oberstown is Queallys, a cold storage food company. Located close to the Dublin market, it provides 800 jobs on a good day. It has state of the art food processing facilities and has diversified and added value to its beef and pork products. The primary slaughtering is done in Waterford and the secondary processing in Naas. Dawn Farm Foods is its largest processor. It is due to open the first meat science and innovation centre in Ireland. Oberstown is one of the sites visited by the Delegation from the Committee.

Other employers in Naas include Aldi Supermarkets Headquarters, Amvic Ireland, Dennison Trailers, Green Isle Foods, Granning Axles, Hewlett Packard, Intel, Omos Street Furniture, Pasta Concepts, Phamapac, QK Meats, Readymix, Redlen, Simply Soups, Taravale Foods and Xilinx.

Approximate road distances from Naas in kilometres are – Cork 229, Dublin Airport 45, Dublin City 33, Kilcullen 22, Limerick 169, Maynooth 22, Newbridge 11, Sallins 4 and Waterford 132.



3.8 AN UAIMH

3.8 NAVAN

Navan is the administrative centre and principal town of County Meath. It was traditionally famous for manufacturing carpets but Navan Carpets closed in 2003. It also had a thriving furniture industry which is now in decline. The location for the new Regional Hospital here, which it is estimated will employ 3,000 people, is a major economic boost for the town. The Government has identified Navan as a Primary Growth Centre.

During 2008 unemployment in Navan rose from 2,027 in January to 3,636 in December, an increase of 79.4%.

Navan is located in the centre of County Meath. Given no undue traffic delays, people can travel by road from Navan to Dublin Airport and to Dublin City in less than one hour. There is a daily bus service to Dublin. Originally Navan was a railway crossroads, but the passenger lines were closed in 1963. Currently the town has a freight rail service only with a spur line to Tara Mines, reinstated in 1977, being used to bring freight from the mine. The line from Kingscourt was used, until recently, to transport gypsum to Dublin but is not now in use. A rail commuter service to Dublin is required and the Transport 21 Plan envisages this happening in two stages by 2015.

The nearest third-level educational institute is the Dundalk Institute of Technology. There is also access to a wide range of third level institutions in Dublin City. Meath Education and Training Forum provides research, training and education initiatives in the county. Its database provides information on educational opportunities available in the county. There are over 500 courses on the website including Bookkeeping and the European Computer Driving Licence.

One of the largest employers is Tara Mines which is the largest lead and zinc mine in Europe. Other companies providing employment in Navan include Europ Assistance, the Generali Group and Welch Allyn while IDA Ireland client companies adjacent to Navan include DeRoyal and Trimfold.

The Economic Development and Innovation Unit of Meath County Council offers a professional service in a range of complementary areas aimed at facilitating and encouraging business investment in County Meath.

Approximate road distances from Navan in kilometres are –Dublin Airport 52, Dublin City 48, Dundalk 56 and Kingscourt 40.



3.9 CÚIL AN tSÚDAIRE

3.9 PORTARLINGTON

Portarlington is a 2-county town situated in both Laois and Offaly. In recent years the town has grown considerably with the influx of large numbers of commuters living here and travelling to Dublin. However, the provision of extra services has not kept pace with population growth and the local business sector needs to be developed. According to Census figures the population of the town and its environs grew from 2,756 in 2002 to 4,395 in 2006, an increase of 59.5%.

During 2008 unemployment in Portarlington increased from 1,228 in January to 2,094 in December, an increase of 70.5%.

Portarlington has a good daily commuter service to Dublin City. However its bus services, which are operated by private operators, are limited. There is a local-link service connecting the town to Port Laoise and Tullamore. The local road network is also limited. The town is located on the N7 three miles off the main Cork Dublin Limerick road. Dublin airport and Dublin city can be reached by road within 75 minutes given good traffic conditions.

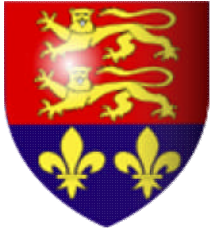
The Laois Third Level Centre provides national recognised undergraduate courses in County Laois. It was established by Laois County Council, the County Enterprise Board and the County Vocational Education Committee as a response to the low levels of third level attainment in the county. It works with a number of universities and educational institutes throughout the country as an outreach centre. Students attend classes in Portarlington while receiving their tuition and certification from the respective universities and educational institutes. The courses it provides include Accounts Technician, Business Studies and First Line Management. The nearest third level institutions to Portarlington are Athlone and Carlow. There is also relatively easy access to a wide range of third level institutions in Dublin City.

Agriculture has always been important to Portarlington. Flour is still milled at the Odlums Mill, owned by Origin Enterprises plc. The Odlums Company originated in Port Laoise in the nineteenth century and has a long tradition in the county. It had nine mills nationwide at one time but now has only three, in Portarlington, Cork and Dublin, along with an oatmeal mill in Naas.

Peat production was another important industry to Portarlington but this has been decimated. The local power station closed in the 1990s and Bord na Móna substantially reduced its local workforce.

The closure of Butler's Engineering, also in the 1990's, was a devastating blow for the town with the loss of 130 jobs out of a population of approximately 3500 people at the time.

Approximate road distances from Portarlington in kilometres are – Athlone 74, Carlow 51, Dublin Airport 85, Dublin City 73 110, Port Laoise 22 and Tullamore 35.



3.10 PORT LAOISE

Port Laoise is one of the major arts, commercial and retail centres of the Midlands. Previously its main industries were Flour Milling and Worsted Fabric Manufacturing. These industries have declined and the Government is now one of the major employers here. The National Spatial Strategy has identified Port Laoise as an ideal location for an inland port. This designation encourages the town to focus on the growth of distribution, logistics and warehouse uses, which ties in well with its strong transport connections. According to Census figures the population in the town and its environs increased from 20,772 in 2002 to 25,945 in 2006 an increase of 24.9%.

During 2008 unemployment in Port Laoise rose from 1,336 in January to 2,550 in December, an increase of 90.9%.

Port Laoise is located at the junction of the Cork / Dublin (N8) and Dublin / Limerick (N7) roads. With no undue traffic delays Dublin Airport and City can be reached by road in little over 1 hour. There is also a daily rail commuter service to Dublin and the town is on the rail route from Dublin to Cork, Galway and Limerick.

The nearest third level institutions to Port Laoise are Athlone and Carlow Institutes of Technology. There is also relatively easy access to a wide range of third level institutions in Dublin City. Within the county the Laois Third Level Centre provides national recognised undergraduate courses in Portarlington which include Accounts Technician, Business Studies and First Line Management.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Irish Prison Service employ large numbers of people in the town.

Port Laoise Business & Technology Park is a 16-hectare park adjacent to the N7 National Primary Route connecting Cork, Dublin and Limerick.

Approximate road distances from Port Laoise in kilometres are – Athlone 72, Carlow 38, Cork City 172, Dublin Airport 101, Dublin City 89, Galway City 150, Limerick City 110 and Portarlington 22.

ATHY, CO KILDARE



PORT LAOISE



4. ORGANISATIONS

4.1 CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The Chambers of Commerce work to improve their local economies and communities. They support local businesses and opportunities for employment. They promote commercial, industrial and retail development and encourage local enterprise. They represent local businesses and bring various interest groups together.

The Chambers of Commerce believe that enterprise skills and knowledge need to be fostered. They also advised that the number of business incubation centres needs to be increased. There are many vacant IDA Ireland sites throughout the region and every effort should be made to utilise them in providing jobs. If IDA Ireland is not using them they should sell them to the local authorities at reasonable prices (i.e. IDA Ireland obtained a site in Gorey for free and now it is believed that they will only sell it back for €1 million an acre).

There is a very low industrial base throughout the regions and this has been accentuated by the sharp decline in agri-based industries (i.e. the loss of sugar production in Carlow). The jobs that have been lost need to be replaced and the manufacturing sector needs to be developed. In this respect craft type businesses are suitable for rural areas.

The population in the Dublin Commuter Belt zone has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. However most of the new residents in the commuter towns are commuting daily to Dublin and so are not being fully integrated into the communities in which they have settled. It is important that they and their families are integrated into these communities and this can only be fully achieved by providing employment for them in the towns in which they live and ending the daily commute which is disruptive of family and community life.

4.2 COUNTY ENTERPRISE BOARDS

The County Enterprise Boards deal with small businesses who employ up to but not more than 10 people (Micro enterprises). They cannot deal with businesses that employ 10+ people or with non-export companies. The companies they support are involved in manufacturing, internationally traded services and innovative local services. They help develop the entrepreneurial capabilities of companies within an enterprise culture and provide mentoring, training and financial assistance.

The initiatives they support must have the capacity to create new direct employment. They must be backed with sufficient finance and have the necessary management skills and technical capacity to achieve their aims. They must be capable of maintaining themselves without ongoing exchequer or European Union (EU) assistance.

Proposals are not grant aided if they result in job displacement elsewhere, if they relate to enterprises that are contrary to national policy, if they are on the EU and National Sensitive Lists, if they are covered by other schemes, if they involve primary agricultural production, investment in mobile assets or if they are purely sales and distribution (retail outlets are not assisted).

The County Enterprise Boards provide the following grants to businesses up to a maximum of:-

1. € 75,000 in Capital Grants (50% of eligible expenditure);
2. € 75,000 for full-time jobs created in a project (up to €7,500 for each job);
3. € 5,080 for feasibility studies (50% of eligible expenditure);
4. € 3,000 for export marketing covering the cost of travel and subsistence, attending and exhibiting at trade fairs and creating marketing material specifically for overseas markets (50% of eligible costs);
5. € 2,500 for website development (50% of eligible costs excluding VAT).

Their budgets are limited and do not meet their needs or the demands placed upon them. The grants they provide are low and are 50% refundable by the businesses. These are loans not grants.

They support the Women in Business initiative and would like a national ring-fenced fund to be introduced to assist female entrepreneurship. They involve students in business projects. They would also like to support innovation from the farming sector. They administer the Empower Project.

About 5% of the companies the County Enterprise Boards support fail.

The Meath County Enterprise Board has recommended that:-

1. The maximum grant level should be increased to €160,000 per project over a three year period at 60% intervention with the first €50,000 non-refundable.
2. The Feasibility / Innovation Development Grant should be increased to €20,000
3. The Quotas on employment grants of 20% of total cash approval capacity should be lifted and the Employment Grant level should be increased to a maximum of €13,200
4. Individual County Enterprise Boards should have the discretion to decide on the percentage of the loan / grant that a company is obliged to refund to them
5. The upper employment limit for projects to qualify for support should be abolished
6. Funding of enterprise space provision and enterprise centres should be at the discretion of the Board and not 50% of that provided by Enterprise Ireland's Community Enterprise Centre Programme.
7. A national ring-fenced fund should be provided to assist female entrepreneurship.

4.3 ENTERPRISE IRELAND

Enterprise Ireland works with existing industries employing 10 or more people. Its mission is to accelerate the development of world-class Irish companies to achieve strong positions in global markets resulting in increased national and regional prosperity.

Enterprise Ireland is committed to promoting the growth of enterprise throughout the region. It works closely with the County Enterprise Boards, with third level institutions and with the various commercial and industrial organisations and networks to encourage and promote start-ups, spin-off enterprises, and business expansions. It co-invests with the private sector in the development of venture capital funding and 4 venture capital funds now have specific regional mandates.

Enterprise Ireland develops and promotes the indigenous business sector. Its primary focus is to assist companies in competing internationally and it has 31 overseas offices to assist it in this. It provides high potential start-up companies with finance and assists them with the provision of development, innovation, management, marketing and operations services. It supports innovation and research in businesses by providing links with third level institutions and by providing commercialisation funding for research.

Enterprise Ireland also assists international companies to establish food and drink manufacturing operations in Ireland and to link up with world-class Irish suppliers. It has a special interest in high-technology products such as baby foods and food ingredients.

Enterprise Ireland believes that small industries employing skilled workers in niche areas need to be assisted and developed. More incubation centres are needed for start-ups and more enterprise centres are needed to which they can locate as they grow.

4.4 FORAS ÁISEANNA SAOTHAIR

FÁS funds over 40 Community Training Centres around the country which are run by independent community-based organisations. The priority group for these Centres is young people, aged sixteen to twenty-one, who have left school without a formal qualification and as a result are finding it difficult to obtain employment. The Centres help them to gain a qualification.

With the agreement of FÁS the Centres can also provide assistance to people under the age of twenty-five who are disadvantaged and unemployed.

FÁS provides various financial supports in the form of allowances to assist participants of training courses, and grants or subventions to encourage employers to support training programmes.

FÁS Community Services has developed three FETAC major awards, two at level 3 and one at level 4, designed to meet the training needs of learners participating on Community Services programmes. They provide certification for learners who may progress to higher levels and also for those whose principal achievements may rest at these levels. The new major awards, at levels 3 and 4, were developed by a working group and involved extensive consultation with staff, management and second providers in the regions.

Community development programmes also benefit from grants, while FÁS encourages equality through the various programmes it supports which are focused on promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion.

Given the economic downturn the demand for FÁS services have risen dramatically. Representatives in all towns recognise that the primary emphasis on training must be on up-skilling and multi-skilling especially for those workers who have lost employment in what were special skills areas.

4.5 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IRELAND

The IDA Ireland strategy has changed over the last 15 years. The organisation is committed to developing the Gateway towns and is concentrating on specific locations. It believes that it is not practicable to have investment in every town and that the region needs to work as a unit. It is rationalising its land holdings to where it is targeting investments.

IDA Ireland is focusing on helping to reverse the commute to Dublin from throughout the region by getting companies to relocate outside Dublin. Foreign Direct Investment is more attracted to large urban areas where it can access Information and Communications Technology, infrastructural facilities and skilled workers. This leaves smaller towns and rural areas at a disadvantage.

IDA Ireland hopes to create a cluster for live sciences in the midlands.

A schedule of IDA Ireland lands in the Counties of Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Laois, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath and Wexford is given on the next page.

SCHEDULE OF IDA IRELAND LANDS IN COUNTIES CARLOW, DUBLIN, KILDARE, LAOIS, LOUTH, MEATH, OFFALY, WESTMEATH AND WEXFORD			
County	Name	Location	Hectares
Carlow	Carlow Ratnapish	Ratnapish	0.21
Dublin	Blanchardstown	Snugborough/Ballycoolen	8.75
Dublin	Blanchardstown Cruiserath	Cruiserath	27.19
Dublin	Dublin - South County Business Park	Sandyford	1.35
Dublin	Dublin 11 - Poppintree Industrial Estate	Finglas	3.18
Dublin	Dublin 24 - Whitestown Industrial Estate	Tallaght Newcastle S	0.60
Dublin	Dublin 5 – Belcamp	Clonshaugh	48.70
Dublin	Dublin 5 - Clonshaugh Industrial Estate	Clonshaugh	1.42
Dublin	Swords – Barrysparks	Barrysparks	0.28
Dublin	Swords Business Park, Greenfields	Greenfields	4.52
Kildare	Athy Woodstock	Woodstock	1.72
Kildare	Buncrana Lisfannin	Town park	2.19
Kildare	Castledermot	Woodlands East	1.40
Kildare	Monasterevin	Monasterevin	2.05
Kildare	Naas Tipper West	Tipper West	1.73
Kildare	Newbridge Business Park	Moorefield	3.58
Laois	Abbeyleix	Tullyroe	1.15
Laois	Port Laoise Business and Technology Park	Mountrath Road	10.99
Louth	Ardee	Ardee	2.67
Louth	Drogheda Business and Technology Park	Rathmullan	23.06
Louth	Dundalk Finnabair Business and Technology Park	Marshes Upper	12.56
Louth	Dundalk Mullagharlin (Strategic Site)	Ravensdale	44.18
Louth	Dundalk Mullagharlin East	Mullagharlin	16.12
Meath	Navan Business and Technology Park	Athlumney	26.40
Offaly	Clara	Lehinch	0.49
Offaly	Tullamore Business and Technology Park	Srah	3.31
Offaly	Tullamore Industrial Estate	Spollanstown	0.35
Westmeath	Athlone Business and Technology Park Garrycastle	Garrycastle	18.86
Westmeath	Mullingar Business & Technology Park	Ardmore	26.78
Westmeath	Mullingar Clonmore Industrial Estate	Clonmore	8.36
Wexford	Enniscorthy - Moyne Upper	Moyne Upper	1.92
Wexford	Gorey	Courtown Road	2.48
Wexford	Wexford Business and Technology Park	Sinnottstown2	6.48

4.6 JOBS CLUBS ETC

BALBRIGGAN JOBS CLUB

GOREY LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

NAVAN JOBS CLUB

KILDARE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE NETWORK

PORTARLINGTON COMMUNITY & DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PORT LAOISE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME

WESTMEATH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Jobs Clubs are funded by FÁS. Anyone, between ages 16 and 64 who is ready to work can participate in them. Each Club is supervised by a Job Club leader.

The Clubs emphasise the need to match individual skills and strengths with local employment opportunities and the trainees have access to facilities such as telephones, computer, email, newspapers etc. They provide training in skills that will help trainees obtain employment. The training usually lasts from 3 to 5 weeks but back-up services are offered for as long as it takes for the trainee to obtain employment.

The training provided by Job Clubs is geared towards improving the self awareness, self confidence and communication and relationship skills of the trainees. The training helps them understand how the application of simple techniques can greatly enhance their employability and use this understanding to secure employment. Training is provided in how to job hunt, prepare a *Curriculum Vitae* and application letter and how to prepare for and perform at an interview. More general training is provided in the rules and regulations of the workplace and in health and safety. In some areas progression rates have been as high as 69%. In some areas up to 50% of their clientele are non-nationals

The Jobs Clubs encounter problems such as low education levels and lack of English with non-nationals. The small differential between social welfare payments and low paid jobs discourages some unemployed from accepting low-paid employment.

4.7 SERVICES, INDUSTRIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL UNION

In recent years increasing numbers of SIPTU workers have been losing their jobs in this region. In Athy IBI, FEI, Pie Ma and Hibernian Meats have closed, in Drogheda there have been a large number of redundancies among low skilled manufacturing employees, in Naas 500 jobs have been lost in manufacturing and in Navan workers will lose their jobs when Tara Mines eventually close. Further to this those SIPTU workers who have retained their jobs in the services and manufacturing sectors have seen their average earnings collapse in recent years.

Agriculture and traditional manufacturing will continue to decline in the region and employability and competitiveness can best be enhanced by upskilling workers and facilitating learning in the workplace. It is essential that workers possess generic transferable skills as well as sector specific skills. It is essential that lower skilled workers in particular are upskilled as a matter of urgency and employers need to cooperate with the trade unions in achieving this.

A sustainable manufacturing base needs to be nurtured and the number of indigenous exporting firms needs to grow. There are good prospects in developing the biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, the food and drink, the high-value engineering, the information and communications technology and the medical devices sectors. Along with these there is a need to provide efficient and effective business, finance and marketing services.

SIPTU aims to have a highly skilled workforce producing high value goods and services. To this end it is encouraging its members to upskill and making them aware of the potential cost of not rising to the challenge of competing internationally and sustaining good employment. But a highly skilled workforce must be fairly rewarded for its contribution to a competitive, innovation-driven, knowledge-based enterprise.

SIPTU is committed to seeking Government funding for increased upskilling and workplace learning by its members and to securing agreement on the negotiation of workplace training and upskilling. Significant funding has been made available for the appointment of full-time Training Co-ordinators, the development of a significant number of Union Learning Representatives and the provision of a number of targeted training programmes covering the development of generic skills for workers in employment. These measures will lead to greater job security, greater opportunities for advancement, increased workplace mobility and greater job satisfaction. By working in partnership with management they will help to identify and meet learning and training needs. This will be more cost effective for businesses, improve competitiveness and sustain jobs.

This support could include:-

1. Increased State funding for training and paid day release for workers to attend training;
2. The establishment of recognised Trade Union Training Representatives who would have the right to initiate discussions with employers on skills and development training and who would be accredited as Trade Union Training Representatives through FÁS.
3. The disclosure of information on training programmes in companies' annual reports.

4.8 BALBRIGGAN ENTERPRISE AND TRAINING

Balbriggan Enterprise and Training (BEaT) was established in 2000 to support new and developing enterprises in the area. It provides mentoring, training and relevant workshops to encourage business development.

BEaT has 22 low cost units at its centre in Stephenstown. These vary in size up to nearly 2,000 square feet and are competitively priced. They are suitable for all types of businesses including manufacturing, offices and warehouse distribution. The centre provides binding, book keeping, faxing, photocopying and typing services on request. The centre has a number of training rooms which can facilitate up to 20 trainees. The total size of the centre is 22,000 square feet.

In partnership with the Balbriggan Enterprise Development Group, BEaT provides accredited training (City and Guilds, ECDL and FETAC) that includes Computer skills, Customer Care Manual and Computerised Accounts, Manual and Computerised Payroll and Start Your Own Business.

4.9 COUNTY WEXFORD PARTNERSHIP

The County Wexford Partnership supports access to education and training programmes for those who have left school without adequate education or qualifications, for those in low skilled or part-time employment and for students from disadvantaged families or communities who are trying to access third level education. It believes that people who have suffered from social exclusion are most vulnerable to unemployment.

Among others, it targets community groups, the long-term unemployed, lone parents, travellers, women returnees and specific residential groups.

It works in partnership with FÁS and other local organisations to maximise programmes such as the Jobs Initiative and the FÁS Social Economy Programme. One of its objectives is to develop social economy flagship projects, one each in a rural community, in an urban community and with travellers.

It works with communities and individuals in identifying needs and in assisting them in re-engaging with education and training. It seeks to develop strategic programmes to address high unemployment by providing local programmes to help people re-enter the labour force.

In Gorey the boom in the construction industry has collapsed with the loss of employment in that sector. Many apprentices are now being let-go by their employers before they are fully qualified. There is a need for career path planning and the provision of work experience in order to get a qualification. There is a lack of transferable skills and in some cases there are literacy issues. There is a need to get people into groups with a view to building confidence, working on computer skills and encouraging ideas for small business.

5. REPORT LAID BEFORE HOUSES

At its meeting on Wednesday, 27 May 2009 the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment approved the Report on the Dublin Commuter Belt Zone and instructed the Clerk to the Committee to lay six copies of the Report before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Dáil Éireann on 23 October 2007 ordered:

- (1) (a) That a Select Committee, which shall be called the Select Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment consisting of 11 members of Dáil Éireann (of whom 4 shall constitute a quorum), be appointed to consider:-
 - (i) Such Bills the statute law in respect of which is dealt with by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment;
 - (ii) Such Estimates for Public Services within the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment;
 - (iii) Such proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 159, concerning the approval by Dáil Éireann of the terms of international agreements involving a charge on public funds; and
 - (iv) Such other matters as shall be referred to it by Dáil Éireann from time to time;
 - (v) Annual Output Statements produced by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment; and
 - (vi) Such Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted and commissioned by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as it may select.
 - (b) For the purpose of its consideration of matters under paragraphs (1)(a)(i), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi), the Select Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 83(1), (2) and (3).
 - (c) For the avoidance of doubt, by virtue of his or her *ex officio* membership of the Select Committee in accordance with Standing Order 92(1), the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (or a Minister or Minister of State nominated in his or her stead) shall be entitled to vote.
- (2) The Select Committee shall be joined with a Select Committee to be appointed by Seanad Éireann to form the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment to consider -
 - (i) such public affairs administered by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as it may select, including, in respect of Government policy, bodies under the aegis of that Department;
 - (ii) such matters of policy, including EU related matters, for which the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment is officially responsible as it may select;`
 - (iii) such matters across Departments which come within the remit of the Minister of State with special responsibility for Innovation Policy as it may select;
Provided that members of the Joint Committee on Education and Science shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the consideration of matters within this remit;
 - (iv) such related policy issues as it may select concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by Members of the Government or by the Oireachtas;
 - (v) such Statutory Instruments made by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas as it may select;
 - (vi) such proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues as may be referred to it from time to time, in accordance with Standing Order 83(4);
 - (vii) the strategy statement laid before each House of the Oireachtas by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment pursuant to section 5(2) of the Public Service Management Act 1997, and for which the Joint Committee is authorised for the purposes of section 10 of that Act;
 - (viii) such annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of bodies specified in paragraphs 2(i) and

(iv), and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of these bodies, as it may select;

Provided that the Joint Committee shall not, at any time, consider any matter relating to such a body which is, which has been, or which is, at that time, proposed to be considered by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to the Orders of Reference of that Committee and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993;

Provided further that the Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session, or publishing confidential information regarding, any such matter if so requested either by the body concerned or by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment; and

- (ix) Such other matters as may be jointly referred to it from time to time by both Houses of the Oireachtas,

And shall report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

- (3) The Joint Committee shall have the power to require that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (or a Minister or Minister of State nominated in his or her stead) shall attend before the Joint Committee and provide, in private session if so desired by the Minister or Minister of State, oral briefings in advance of EU Council meetings to enable the Joint Committee to make known its views.
- (4) The quorum of the Joint Committee shall be five, of whom at least one shall be a member of Dáil Éireann and one a member of Seanad Éireann.
- (5) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 83(1) to (9) inclusive.
- (6) The Chairman of the Joint Committee, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be Chairman of the Select Committee.”

Seanad Éireann on 24 October 2007 ordered:

- (1) That a Select Committee consisting of 4 members of Seanad Éireann shall be appointed to be joined with a Select Committee of Dáil Éireann to form the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment to consider –
- (i) such public affairs administered by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as it may select, including, in respect of Government policy, bodies under the aegis of that Department;
 - (ii) such matters of policy, including EU related matters, for which the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment is officially responsible as it may select;
 - (iii) such matters across Departments which come within the remit of the Minister of State with special responsibility for Innovation Policy as it may select;
- Provided that members of the Joint Committee on Education and Science shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the consideration of matters with this remit;
- (iv) such related policy issues as it may select concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by Members of the Government or by the Oireachtas;
 - (v) such Statutory Instruments made by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas as it may select;
 - (vi) such proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues as may be referred to it from time to time, in accordance with Standing Order 70(4);
 - (vii) the strategy statement laid before each House of the Oireachtas by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment pursuant to section 5(2) of the Public Service Management Act, 1997, and for which the Joint Committee is authorised for the purposes of section 10 of that Act;
 - (viii) such annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of bodies specified in paragraphs 1(i) and (iv), and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of these bodies, as it may select;
- Provided that the Joint Committee shall not, at any time, consider any matter relating to such a body which is, which has been, or which is, at that time, proposed to be considered by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to the Orders of Reference of that Committee and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993;
- Provided further that the Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session, or publishing confidential information regarding, any such matter if so requested either by the body or by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment; and
- (ix) Such other matters as may be jointly referred to it from time to time by both Houses of the Oireachtas,
- And shall report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.
- (2) The Joint Committee shall have the power to require that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (or a Minister or Minister of State nominated in his or her stead) shall attend before the Joint Committee and provide, in private session if so desired by the Minister or Minister of State, oral briefings in advance of EU Council meetings to enable the Joint Committee to make known its views.
- (3) The quorum of the Joint Committee shall be five, of whom at least one shall be a member of Dáil Éireann and one a member of Seanad Éireann.
- (4) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 70(1) to (9) inclusive.
- (5) The Chairman of the Joint Committee shall be a member of Dáil Éireann.”

7. MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE

MR CHRIS ANDREWS TD

MR CYPRIAN BRADY TD (VICE-CHAIRPERSON)*

MR DARA CALLEARY TD*

MS DEIRDRE CLUNE TD

MR DAMIEN ENGLISH TD*

MR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK TD*

MR ARTHUR MORGAN TD*

MR EDWARD O'KEEFFE TD*

MR WILLIE PENROSE TD (CHAIRPERSON)*

DR LEO VARADKAR TD*

MS MARY WHITE TD*

SENATOR IVOR CALLELY

SENATOR DONIE CASSIDY*

SENATOR JOHN PAUL PHELAN*

SENATOR BRENDAN RYAN*

* Members of the Delegation to the Dublin Commuter Belt Zone