

**Minutes of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 in Roscommon  
County Council Chamber at 11am**

---

**Present:**

Cllr. Declan Bree	Cllr. Frank McBrearty	Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. David Collins	Cllr. Patrick McGowan	Cllr. Niall McNelis
Cllr. Jarlath Munnely	Cllr. Enda Stenson	Cllr. Jack Murray
Cllr. John Naughten	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn	Cllr. Enda McGloin
Cllr. Christy Hyland	Cllr. Declan McDonnell	Cllr. Joe Sheridan
Cllr. Tim Broderick	Cllr. Donal Gilroy	Cllr. John Caulfield
Cllr. Orla Leyden		

Cllr. David Maxwell **PRESIDED**

**Apologies:** Cllr. Craig Lovett, Cllr. Michael Crowe, Cllr. Sean Smith, Cllr. Justin Warnock, Cllr. Donal Lyons.  
Mr Brendan McGrath, Chief Executive Galway City Council

**Officials: Northern & Western Regional Assembly:**

Mr David Minton (Director)  
Mr Denis Kelly (Assistant Director & Senior Planner)  
Mr Gerry Doyle (Assistant Director)  
Mr Conall McGettigan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Mr Frank Flanagan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Ms Catriona Meehan (Clerical Officer)

**1) Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on the 18th of June 2021 (circulated):**

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Declan Donnelly

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Enda Stenson

**Resolved:**

*“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 be adopted”.*

**2) Any Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**3) Directors Update**

Mr David Minton gave details of an initiative whereby each Local Authority in our region would be given assistance by the NWRA to develop an EU funding Strategy bespoke to their needs. He added that he hoped that this would be an opportunity for those Local Authorities to avail of EU funding to a much greater degree. Members requested that a summary of the project be sent to each of them, and they also enquired when the initiative would be up and running. Mr Minton advised that a summary would be sent around when details are finalised and that this would probably be around late September

**4) Planning and Economic Development**

**a) Bio Connect Innovation Centre (Monaghan) – Presentation from David McCauley, CEO.**

Cathaoirleach David Maxwell introduced and welcomed David McCauley CEO Bio Connect. The Cathaoirleach outlined the importance of the Bio Connect Innovation Centre to the entire region and not

just for Monaghan. He highlighted the benefit of attracting high skilled jobs to the region and the importance of the agri-food sector to the region.

Mr David McCauley, CEO of the Bio Connect Innovation Centre advised that their mission is to engage with local, regional and international food businesses and agricultural producers to drive the agri-food sector forward, creating world class opportunities. He gave an in-depth presentation covering the details of the processes which are carried out at the plant whose primary objective is to add value to waste products from the food and agricultural industry. He said that they were lifting the bonnet of businesses and applying science to it. Mr McCauley used the example of waste from chicken farms to outline what can be achieved. He added that any suggestions of businesses or projects that would like to engage with Bio Connect across the country were also very welcome – it is there for the benefit of all. Mr McCauley showed a video outlining that building and amenities at the facility.

Cllr. Orla Leyden questioned whether links had been established between local food hubs or Local Enterprise Offices.

Cllr. Patrick McGowan welcomed the project and highlighted the issue of ammonia in Donegal and stated that this initiative would benefit beyond Monaghan.

Cllr. Brian McKenna emphasized the huge support for this project in Monaghan especially due to the high level of food producers in the area. He highlighted that there have been issues with the EPA and that this project would help in this regard. Cllr. McKenna also stated that the facility would allow highly qualified graduates remain in the region. He said that this was a great opportunity for the entire region and that he was looking forward to the official opening.

Mr David McCauley replied that links were being established and encouraged members again to recommend connections and links to local businesses or organisations. He highlighted the public consultation platform which was being used to gather opinions to build a discussion around the needs of the community.

There was unanimous support of the venture.

## **b) Review of County Development Plans**

### **i. Draft Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028**

Mr Denis Kelly advised members that new legislation has been enacted, which enables a planning authority to take an additional period of up to 1 year to complete the preparation of a new development plan and where applicable to extend the duration of the existing development plan to enable the new plan to be adopted. He advised that there are several stages to this process and that a copy of the amending legislation would be circulated (Planning and Development (Amendment)(No.3) Act 2021).

Mr Denis Kelly advised members that they had been circulated the previous night with a report on the Draft Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. He apologised for the late issuing of the report and invited Frank Flanagan to give a brief synopsis of the report.

Mr Frank Flanagan outlined the Draft Galway County Development Plan. He stated that in the most part the plan was consistent with the RSES but there were some issues with consistency and began to highlight some of them. Due to time constraints on the meeting, Members asked to raise a few issues of concern.

- The report should have been issued well in advance of the meeting to enable Members more time to evaluate it – acknowledging the amount of time that goes into examining these plans and preparing the reports.
- Concern that the establishment of a greenway on the Western Rail Corridor (WRC) was inconsistent with the RSES.

- The Airport site did not include the lands across the road and was not consistent with the RSES
- Need to ensure that all plans are fully compliant with the RSES – in some plans there appears to be an effort being made to rewrite the RSES.
- Query on the role of the NWRA on requiring compliance with the RSES

Mr Denis Kelly acknowledged the concern raised that Members have sufficient time to consider reports and said this would be reviewed going forward so that it issued a few days in advance. He also clarified that the role of the Assembly was to prepare the RSES and report back to Councils regarding the consistency of their Development Plans in relation to the RSES. The Minister ultimately has authority to issue directions to a Local Authority. Mr Kelly advised that the issue raised in respect of the 'Airport' had been picked up and addressed in the report. Members were advised that the draft plan was supporting the development of the Western Rail Corridor in a manner consistent with the RSES and referenced Policy Objective PT7 – which supported the opening of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry, Tuam, Claremorris to Collooney as an option for passenger and cargo transportation in the event that the Government decides to proceed with this project following the review of the All Ireland Rail Review outcome.

Mr David Minton suggested that perhaps it could be highlighted in the conclusion to the submission that in making this submission that Members directed that the importance of achieving consistency between the Draft Plan and the RSES be emphasised.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

**Seconded:** Cllr John Caulfield

Resolved

*'That the Northern and Western and Regional Assembly agree to the submission, as presented in the circulated report, but to add that in making this submission that Members directed that the importance of achieving consistency between the Draft Plan and the RSES be emphasised.'*

## ii. **Draft Cavan County Development Plan incorporating a Local Area Plan for Cavan Town, 2022-2028**

The report circulated was noted and Cllr. Niall McNelis acknowledged the level of effort by officials in carrying out the assessment and preparing detailed reports for Members on plans that are now getting longer.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Declan McDonnell

**Seconded:** Cllr. Donal Gilroy

*'That the Northern and Western Regional Assembly agree to make the submission to the Draft Cavan County incorporating a Local Area Plan for Cavan town as presented in the circulated report.'*

## 5) **Defective Block Grant Scheme: Agree a date for the Special Meeting**

A Special virtual meeting was proposed to be held on Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.

**Proposed:** Cllr Frank McBrearty

**Seconded:** Cllr Patrick McGowan

Agreed

*'That a Special Meeting to discuss the Defective Block Grant Scheme will be held online on Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.'*

**6) Correspondence**

Mr Gerry Doyle stated that consultation on the proposed National Smart Specialisation Strategy has opened with a closing date of 10<sup>th</sup> August for submissions. He also referred to notification of the Planning and Development (Amendment)(No.3) Act 2021, which would be circulated.

**7) Any other Business**

There was no other business

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach

Date: \_\_\_\_\_