

**Minutes of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 in Roscommon  
County Council Chamber at 11am**

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**Present:**

Cllr. Declan Bree	Cllr. Frank McBrearty	Cllr. Justin Warnock
Cllr. Donal Lyons	Cllr. Donal Gilroy	Cllr. Jack Murray
Cllr. Jarlath Munnally	Cllr. Enda Stenson	Cllr. Joe Sheridan
Cllr. John Naughten	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn	Cllr. Enda McGloin
Cllr. David Maxwell	Cllr. Declan McDonnell	Cllr. David Collins
Cllr. Brian McKenna	Cllr. Niall McNelis	

Cllr. Christy Hyland **PRESIDED**

**Apologies:** Cllr. Michael Crowe, Cllr. Orla Leyden, Cllr. Craig Lovett, Cllr. Patrick McGowan, Cllr. Sean Smith, Cllr. Tim Broderick, Cllr. John Caulfield

Mr Brendan McGrath, Chief Executive Galway City Council  
Mr David Minton (Director)

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

Mr Denis Kelly (Assistant Director & Senior Planner)  
Mr Gerry Doyle (Assistant Director)  
Mr Conall McGettigan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Mr Frank Flanagan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Mr John Daly (Economic and Sustainable Development Officer)  
Ms Catriona Meehan (Clerical Officer)

**1) Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on the 17th of September 2021 (circulated):**

Mr Denis Kelly highlighted an error on point 4c and recommended that it should read:

*“That the Northern and Western and Regional Assembly agree the circulated report and decide to make a submission in accordance with the recommendations/ observations contained therein.”*

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Enda Stenson

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Donal Lyons

**Resolved:**

*“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be adopted subject to amendment proposed at the Meeting”.*

**2) Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**3) Directors Update**

Mr Gerry Doyle Assistant Director advised that although the Director David Minton was unable to attend, he had furnished them the Directors update by email prior to this meeting.

#### 4) Planning and Economic Development

##### a) **Two Year Progress Review of Regional Spatial Economic Strategy**

Mr Denis Kelly, Assistant Director & Senior Planner, advised that a RSES Implementation Group meeting was held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October. He advised that at that meeting one item highlighted was the need to complete a two-year review of the RSES and he asked Mr Conall McGettigan, Senior Executive Planner, to provide a presentation in respect of it. Mr McGettigan provided a detailed presentation and outlined the review process and the methodology which will be used in completing the review. He also summarised actions taken by each of the Council's to bring their Development Plans into alignment with the objectives of the RSES. He advised that each Local Authority will be required to send an evaluation to the Assembly of how well the respective Councils development plans align with the RSES. Mr McGettigan discussed the breakdown of the evaluation and what areas will be focussed on. Mr Kelly stated that he will be in touch with each County Council to discuss this review and to answer any questions that may arise.

##### b) **Update on the recently published National Development Plan**

Denis Kelly reminded Members of the submission made as part of the consultation on the Draft NDP 'Review to Renew'. He advised that the new NDP had now been published and it has been examined to see how it addressed our submission. He asked that Mr John Daly, Economic and Sustainable Development Officer, give a presentation on the findings. Mr Daly gave a presentation to Members and in it he presented a breakdown of the National Development Plan with a focus on proposed investment in the Northern and Western Region. In the course of the presentation, he summarised the aims of the NDP and highlighted that it is the largest package from an NDP in the history of the state. Mr Daly stated the NDP aligns with the overall objectives of the National Planning Framework and also the RSES. He also commented that for the first time 'Climate and Environmental Assessments' have been undertaken. These assessments are used to assess the potential environmental impact of projects, the impacts are broken down into three categories:

Category A projects found to have a favourable impact on the environment  
Category B projects found to have no significant impact on the environment  
Category C projects that have a net unfavourable impact on the environment

Mr. Daly outlined the projects in the region that have been committed to in the NDP and emphasized that the projects shown were just a sample of projects and did not represent the complete list.

Mr Daly also explained the "Investment Projects and Programme Tracker" which outlines the projects that either have been completed or that will be undertaken as part of Project Ireland 2040. He highlighted how the projects are categorised and broken down. Mr Daly stated that this tracker did not show all the projects to be delivered but did show the significant projects.

Mr Daly provided evidence which showed that the region's share of regional projects of scale were lower than the region's corresponding share of Ireland's population as of 2021.

The Cathaoirleach invited questions or comments from Members

The following points were raised by members

- There was unanimous praise for Mr Daly's presentation, which clearly stated the issues with the NDP in relation to investment in the Region.
- The Region is once again being left behind in terms of investment when compared with the other two Regions. Members expressed disappointment in the NDP as they were promised more investment than is being delivered. The view was that the Region was not being treated as an equal with the other Regions.

- Members expressed concern that if costs of projects increased then some projects might be left out altogether. The cost of the National Children Hospital was given as an example of project costs increasing significantly.
- Members questioned whether the Knock to Collooney project and the Western Rail Corridor had been included in the projects approved.
- Some Members expressed concern that there is sometimes a focus on bypassing towns on bus routes which can be detrimental to the development of the towns in question.
- Members were disappointed at the lack of the use of the term 'Region in Transition' in the NDP document and urged the use of the term when talking to anyone who can influence investment in the region
- It was suggested that this matter could be put on the Agenda for November's Assembly meeting with a view to putting together a detailed motion to be sent to the Department.

### **Response**

Mr Daly agreed with Members that the region was being left behind. He stated that there was a risk of projects not being delivered due to rising costs of other projects or projects not going ahead due to this rise in costs. Mr Daly stated that there could be a more detailed breakdown of projects prepared for analysis at the next meeting. He added that the projects can be broken down by sector also in order to compare the number of projects allocated in this region compared with the other two regions.

A detailed discussion on what strategy should be adopted to highlight the dissatisfaction of Members with the NDP ensued and ultimately it was agreed to bring the matter back to the November meeting of the Assembly. Members asked that the NDP be examined to see what priority projects were not apparent in the NDP and that consideration be given to highlighting the key issue that the region was not receiving sufficient investment to address its designation as a 'Region in Transition'; a 'Lagging Region' and the only region in Ireland to be classified as a 'Moderate Innovator'.

There was unanimous agreement that a further discussion for the NDP would be placed on November's agenda to facilitate a more detailed analysis and with the view to putting forward a motion to the Department.

### **5) Adoption of Annual Report 2020**

Mr Gerry Doyle Assistant Director outlined some of the key achievements included in the Annual Report for 2020. These included:

- The adoption and publication of the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.
- Publications that were completed during the year, included the COVID-19 Regional Economic Analysis, A region in transition - the Way Forward, Smart Specialisation- Position Paper and Regional Co-Working Analysis.
- The 'Let's be More' campaign which was led by the previous Cathairleach David Maxwell. The campaign assisting in ensuring that the title of Managing Authority stayed with the NWRA for the 21 - 27 Operational Programme.
- The €38m brought into the region under the Health Support scheme,
- The ongoing progress relating to ETC projects and First Level Control with the consequent increase in support requested and claims received.

Mr Doyle thanked all those who had helped to put the report together and all the staff at the Assembly who achieved much during what was a challenging year.

It was proposed by Cllr Maxwell that a specific picture featured in the report should be replaced with a more suitable one.

Mr Doyle agreed that the image in question would be replaced.

**Proposed:** Cllr. David Maxwell

**Seconded:** Cllr. Declan McDonnell

**Resolved that:**

*'the Annual Report 2020 as circulated with one amendment proposed be adopted'*

## 6) Correspondence

Mr Denis Kelly drew Member's attention to the upcoming NPA 2021 Annual conference on 27<sup>th</sup> October. He told members that this event was open to online registrations, but it was also being held in the Model in Sligo. Mr Kelly explained the title of the conference was 'Redefining Peripherality'. He emphasized the importance of such an event and the significance of it being held in the Region. He urged members to attend and to spread the word to their constituent local authorities. He advised that an email detailing the event would be sent to all members.

## 7) Any other Business

### **Vote of Sympathy:**

On the proposal of Cathaoirleach Christy Hyland it was agreed to extend sincere condolences to Cllr. Jarlath Munnely on the passing of his father.

### **Future Meetings**

It was agreed that the remaining monthly meetings to be held this year would be held on 19<sup>th</sup> November and 10<sup>th</sup> December. The venue for these meetings would be decided closer to the dates of these Meetings taking into account prevailing public health restrictions and in consultation with the Cathaoirleach.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

Cathaoirleach

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