

Present:

Cllr. Declan Bree	Cllr. Tim Broderick	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn
Cllr. Donal Lyons	Cllr. Donal Gilroy	Cllr. Jack Murray
Cllr. Orla Leyden	Cllr. Jarlath Munnely	Cllr. Joe Sheridan
Cllr. John Naughten	Cllr. Patrick McGowan	Cllr. Enda McGloin
Cllr. David Maxwell	Cllr. Declan McDonnell	Cllr. David Collins
Cllr. Brian McKenna	Cllr. Niall McNelis	Cllr. Justin Warnock
Cllr. Michael Crowe		

Cllr. Christy Hyland **PRESIDED**

Apologies: Cllr. Sean Smith, Cllr. John Caulfield, Cllr. Enda Stenson, Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cllr. Craig Lovett, 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)
Mr Patrick Devine (A/Senior Staff Officer)
Ms Catriona Meehan (Clerical Officer)

1) Adoption of the Draft Supplementary Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of the Assembly when holding remote meetings

Proposed: Cllr. Donal Lyons

Seconded: Cllr. David Maxwell

Resolved:

“That the Draft Supplementary Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of the Assembly when holding remote meetings be adopted for the holding of this meeting.”

2) Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on the 18th January 2022 (circulated):

Proposed by: Cllr. Donal Lyons

Seconded by: Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Resolved:

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 18th January 2022 be adopted”.

3) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4) Planning and Economic Development

a) Presentation on the National Marine Planning Framework – Tom Woolley Marine Planning Advisor DHLGH (Slides included in Appendix 1)

Mr Denis Kelly introduced Mr Tom Woolley and emphasized the high level of work being done by the Department on delivery of the National Marine Planning Framework. He added that the Marine Sector was of great importance to the region and referenced the provisions of the RSES that related to it and accordingly welcomed Mr Woolley’s attendance at this meeting to provide a detailed account of what is within the Framework.

Mr Tom Woolley welcomed the opportunity to present to the Assembly and introduced his colleague Karina Fitzgerald, Planning Advisor. He gave a detailed account of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) with particular focus on the Northern and Western Region. He confirmed that it is a successor to 'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth' and gives equal weighting to economic, social and environmental considerations – highlighting opportunities across a number of sectoral areas. He advised that local and sectoral plans will form part of the NMPF. He acknowledged that the Regional Assemblies do not currently have a forward planning role but that the Maritime Planning Act 2021 has provided for a forward planning role at sub-national level and that the exact nature of these have yet to be determined, prior to commencement of the Act. He set out the structure of the Framework and the Key Policy Areas contained within it, giving a short focus on:

- Employment
- Rural, Coastal and Island Communities
- Tourism
- Sport and Recreation

Under Next steps, Mr Woolley highlighted the extent of work now required to be rolled out, including the development of guidelines, digital tools, maritime plans, coastal partnerships (pilot may be in N & W Region), Seafood sector/ORE working groups and ongoing monitoring.

Members were invited by the Cathaoirleach to make comments or raise queries and points raised by Members included the following:

- Members thanked Mr Woolley for the presentation
- Questioned why was Galway Port the last Port able to apply for TEN-T funding, and the rest of ports up along the west coast to Donegal excluded?
- The impact of Covid and Brexit on tourism in the region was highlighted by members it was requested that more recovery funding be made available.
- The importance of promoting community involvement and ownership and regarding offshore and onshore renewable energy was highlighted, asking if this was anticipated offshore.
- It was noted that perhaps planning for tourism like surfing might be difficult due to it being dependent upon weather patterns, and surfers were low maintenance regarding facilities.
- The importance and regularity of tidal energy was noted as having huge potential for energy generation.
- The problem of abandoned boats in our harbours was highlighted, it was stated that there needed to be a procedure to discourage abandoning boats. The regulation for licencing boats on the Shannon was noted as being very successful.
- The issue of coastal erosion was raised it was stated that planning needs to be put in place to deal with the increasingly important area.
- It was also noted that heritage in these areas need to be protected and taken into account.
- Update on Foynes Port investment.

Response

Mr Woolley stated that the with regards to Community involvement in Offshore Renewable energy this would be more under the remit of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication. He added that community benefit funds are being considered by DECC. Mr Woolley stated that a key question is whether to administer these funds centrally or locally adding that perhaps now is a good time to put forward opinions on the administration of these funds to DECC. Reflecting on the point made regarding Galway Port he stated that their section has no direct involvement in EU Ten-T funding allocation – it would be the Dept of Transport. With regards to tourism, he stated that the NPF was a planning framework and not a funding document and that this would be a matter for the Dept of Tourism etc and its Minister. Mr Woolley advised that the designation of Foynes Port was informed by the availability of deep water, but its designation is something that the Dept of Transport could advise upon. Mr Woolley thanked members for their comments and questions and added that if there was any further questions or points that needed

elaboration, he welcomed members getting in contact with him either directly or through the Assembly.

b) Planning Reports

i. Proposed Material Alterations to Draft Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (report circulated) (Presentation - Appendix 2)

Mr Frank Flanagan took Members through the report and outlined a summary of the Material Alterations. He highlighted some points that had been noted. The recommendations outlined included:

- Population figures in the core strategy table reflect that the increase for key towns is 30% by 2040, and the 2028 figure takes into account.
- The core strategy table be revised to reflect balanced development between urban and rural areas and meet the requirements of NSO3 and RPO 7.17
- An objective to prepare a masterplan for the airport site and associated land (both sides of R339) to consider employment, community and residential uses.
- That more information be provided to explain the potential exclusion of the Tuam and Ballinasloe areas for the siting of waste infrastructure.

In addition, it was highlighted that MA 6.20 had not been captured within the report, but it suggested that an observation should be made that the wording reflect that it relates to New Accesses directly onto National Roads.

Members were invited by the Cathaoirleach to make comments or queries and points raised by Members included the following:

- Members welcomed the presentation.
- The level of work that goes into forming development plans and the increasing difficulty of this work in analysing and assessing it was acknowledged.
- Concern that development plans are making inadequate provision for one off dwellings in rural areas and residential development in smaller settlements – insufficient balance against urban settlements of scale.
- Acknowledged that there may be tension between the one-off dwellings in rural areas and the need to deliver zero carbon society.
- Members noted that councillors on the ground are in a better position to give input on local issues.
- There was detailed discussion in respect of MA 5.1. and 5.5 and concern was voiced that any development that spans two local Authorities can prove to be more difficult to deliver. It was ultimately agreed that the report would not include paragraph 2 of circulated report – except for the last sentence. The emphasis to be placed instead upon the proposed MA 5.1 only relating to employment uses on the former Airport Site, rather than residential, community and employment uses – as required to be consistent with RPO 3.6.6.

Proposed: Cllr. David Maxwell

Seconded: Cllr. Declan McDonnell

Resolved:

'Members agree the submission to the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 with the adjustment as agreed in respect of MA 6.20, MA 5.1 & MA 5.5

ii. Proposed extension of Mayo County Development Plan

Mr Denis Kelly advised that Mayo County Council had requested an extension of the life of their development plan until the 20th of September 2022. He stated that there is legislation that allows for this due to the Pandemic. Mr Kelly stated that he did not consider there to be any issue with the extension.

Proposed: Cllr. Donal Lyons

Seconded: Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Resolved:

‘that members agree to make a submission advising that it has no objection to the proposed extension of duration as proposed for Mayo’s County Development Plan until 20th September 2022’

iii. Proposed Variation No. 3 and 4 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (for noting – report circulated)

Proposed: Cllr. Donal Lyons

Seconded: Cllr. Brian McKenna

Resolved:

‘that Members note the submission to Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025’

c) Eu Funding Network Launch

Mr David Minton gave a brief description of the online launch of the Funding Network. He stated that the details will be circulated in the coming week. Mr Minton stated the focus will be to build the capacity of Local Authorities to maximise EU funding. He stated that the network will be very important when it comes to communicating the details of calls for funds in the future.

5) European Regional Development Fund

Presentation/Update on draft programme 2021-2027

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to defer this item until the March Assembly meeting.

6) Annual Work Programme 2022 (circulated)

Mr David Minton outlined the Annual Work Programme stating that it had been circulated to members for their examination he highlighted the extensive level of work that is ongoing across the Assembly. Mr Minton stated that the Programme will be circulated to the Chief Executives and the Department over the coming weeks.

Proposed: Cllr. Donal Lyons

Seconded: Cllr. David Maxwell

‘Members note the Annual Work Programme 2022’

7) Correspondence

• Letter from Galway County Council dated 26th January 2022 (Circulated)

Mr Gerry Doyle read and explained the letter sent from Galway County Council relating to creating a more inclusive Assembly at the next formation.

Cllr. Orla Leyden agreed with the motion set out in the correspondence stating that the Assembly needed to lead by example and aim to be more inclusive of all identities. She said there could be more pressure on Local Authorities to nominate members with a focus on diversity. She asked that at the next formation the Assembly seeks both male and female nominations. Cllr. Leyden added that the correspondence was not just about gender balance but to create a more diverse Assembly in general. She added that it would be worthwhile to engage a Women’s Caucus that had been set up in the North-West recently.

Other members expressed concern with mandating that a certain percentage of nominations by each Local Authority should be male or female. They acknowledged the importance of gender balance however they stated that the reality was not as simple. It was stated that there are so few female members that if every board mandated 50:50 balance then the female councillors would be on every board regardless of interest and suitability. Members stated that this was unfair on other Councillors but also unfair on female Councillors because some boards require a lot of time and effort. It was noted that their needs to be a push from the bottom up and all parties needed to encourage and support more female councillor running for election.

Mr David Minton stated that before the formation of the current Assembly, each Local Authority had been written to requesting Gender balance. He acknowledged the difficulty of having female

representatives on all external boards due to the small number of representatives available. He added that AILG has done great work on this issue, he suggested that perhaps they could be contacted to make a presentation to members

8) Any other Business

Motion

“New CSO data shows regional inequality in Ireland continues to rise, with urgent action needed to support the Northern & Western Region. The Northern and Western Regional Assembly calls on the Ministers for Finance and Public Expenditure to amend the Matching Funding requirement for Local Authorities in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area so that local Authorities only have to contribute a 10% Matching Funding as they are part of the region in transition”

Proposed: Cllr Donal Gilroy

Seconded: Cllr. Donal Lyons

The motion was unanimously agreed

Cllr Jimmy McClearn raised the following motion:

‘A delegation of Members would meet with the highest level of Government to address the issue of under investment in the area which has been highlighted in Mr John Daly’s recent report’

Members discussed the performance of the region and that (Project Ireland 2040 (PI2040) is not delivering. It was acknowledged that PI2040 was to be monitored on an on-going basis and corrective measures taken, but these corrective actions are not evident. Members agreed that a meeting should be held with Party Leaders of Government and their Secretary Generals. It was also considered appropriate to meet with Oireachtas Members to highlight the issues. It was agreed that the membership of the delegation be postponed to the March Monthly Meeting, where further details would be agreed in respect of the format, content and timing of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Seconded: Cllr Declan McDonnell

The motion was unanimously agreed

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____ (Cathaoirleach)

Date: _____