

**Minutes of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Meeting held on 15th July 2022 at 11am in the
NWRA Chamber, Ballaghaderreen.**

Present:

Cllr. David Maxwell	Cllr. Tim Broderick	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn
Cllr. Declan Bree	Cllr. Declan McDonnell	Cllr. Patrick McGowan
Cllr. Orla Leyden	Cllr. Brian McKenna	Cllr. Jarlath Munnelly
Cllr. Joe Sheridan	Cllr. Justin Warnock	Cllr. Donal Gilroy
Cllr. Christy Hyland	Cllr. Clifford Kelly	Cllr. Donal Lyons
Cllr. Enda McGloin	Cllr. Niall McNelis	Cllr. John Naughten
Cllr. Enda Stenson		

Presided: Cllr. David Collins (Cathaoirleach)

Apologies: Cllr. Sean Smith, Cllr. John Caulfield, Cllr. Michael Crowe, Cllr. Jack Murray, Cllr. Frank McBrearty
Mr Brendan McGrath (Chief Executive Galway City Council)

Officials: Northern & Western Regional Assembly:

Mr David Minton (Director)

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 17th
June 2022 (circulated):**

Proposed by: Cllr. Christy Hyland

Seconded by: Cllr. David Maxwell

Resolved:

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 17th June 2022 be adopted”.

2) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

3) Directors Update

Mr David Minton circulated to members a report titled ‘Reimagining Regional Development’ outlining the 6 pillars under which the Assembly’s work falls. He highlighted that the report provides a snapshot of some of our key successes to date, and the measurable impact of regional collaboration and partnership. He advised that the report will be formally published in September, with a media campaign to promote it.

4) Planning and Economic Development

a) Planning Reports

- i. **Draft Ministerial direction to Galway County Council plan 2022-2028 – submission circulated for noting**

Mr Frank Flanagan outlined the submission to be noted.

Members noted the items below:

- The Galway plans were made without up-to-date Census information. It was stated that the plan process began after the last crash and was made to deal with a different economic climate. Some members noted their disappointment in the plan stating that it lacks imagination and did not attempt to improve the county. It was stated that the plan did not work to future proof the county adding that it worked against the RSES.
- Members noted issues with zoning and de-zoning land.

- Members expressed disappointment that apparently the Planning Regulator did not visit the county when evaluating the County Development Plan.
- Some members stated that the Planning Regulator was simply a referee and that it was those who appointed them and gave them their brief that were the problem.
- Other members asked what specifically the regulator had done that members disagreed with, it was added that if there were serious issue with the OPR these issues needed to be communicated. It was stated that the Government was using the OPR as a scapegoat for difficult decisions.
- Members suggested that Chief Executive of the OPR could be invited to a special meeting. It was added that if a meeting was being organised it should be planned carefully, and topics should be agreed in advance.

Mr Frank Flanagan explained that the Assemblies role in planning matters is to ensure that plans are consistent with the RSES. He stated that the issue regarding the use of 2016 Census population figures was unfortunate, but he added that the plans did use population projections.

Mr David Minton agreed to arrange a meeting with members at SPA level to discuss whether to invite the OPR to an Assembly meeting or a Special meeting and to identify the specific issues of concern that they wanted to raise.

Proposed: Cllr Donal Lyons

Seconded: Cllr Declan Mc Donnell

Resolved:

“That the Northern and Western Regional Assembly note the report as circulated”

ii. Update on meeting with Minister O’Brien, DHLGH, on 18th July 2022

Mr David Minton updated members regarding the upcoming meeting, he informed members that the meeting was most likely to be held in Sligo. Mr Minton stated that Mr John Daly would present at the meeting focusing on the lack of infrastructure in the region.

The below members were unanimously nominated to attend the meeting:

Cllr. Niall McNelis

Cllr. Enda McGloin

Cllr. Declan McDonnell

Cllr. Orla Leyden

Cllr. Jack Murray

Cllr. Declan Bree

Cllr. Donal Gilroy

5) Update on the NWRA Building and offices

Mr David Minton outlined the Assembly’s position regarding the current Head Quarters, setting out options under consideration.

Members comments

- It was suggested that in the short term the suggested moved could be approved but it was added that perhaps if the landlord engaged and made the necessary improvements then the Assembly could return.
- It was queried whether a tender was needed for the move.
- The accessibility of the building was queried.

- It was suggested that the Assembly meetings could be moved around the region each month. It was added that some chambers would not be able to facilitate the meetings. It was also noted that if meetings were rotated it could be determined in time that there is no need for our own Chamber at all.
- The current controversy regarding the Public Library in Dillon house was highlighted.
- Members expressed relief that the Assembly HQ would remain in Ballaghaderreen.
- The value for money of the move to Dillon house was discussed.

6) Correspondence

Mr David Minton informed members that as per a motion adopted at the last meeting Eirgrid has been contacted but there has been no response so far.

7) Any other business

Members discussed the future meeting set up. Some members expressed their desire to have blended meetings to allow members who do not feel comfortable attending due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic or due to medical appointments. They also added that it gives members great flexibility to attend the Assembly meetings when it would otherwise not be possible. Other members noted that if members were allowed to attend remotely and physically eventually most people would move to online as it was much more convenient, and we would end up with a fully remote meeting. It was noted that members would be paid the same regardless of whether they attended remotely or in person. It was suggested that members could chose two meetings per year to attend remotely. Some members stated that were in favour of fully physical meetings as there is better discussion and facilitation of ideas at in person meetings.

Mr David Minton stated that at present we do not have the facilities for blended meetings but that he asked that members agree to continue with physical meetings for now until we have the technology available, he added that members can then decide how to move forward.

It was unanimously decided to leave meetings as fully physical for the foreseeable future.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____ (Cathaoirleach)

Date: _____