

**Minutes of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Meeting
held on 21 October 2022 at 11am in the NWRA Chamber, Ballaghaderreen.**

Members Present:

Cllr David Collins (Cathaoirleach)	Cllr Donal Lyons	Cllr Justin Warnock
Cllr Declan Bree	Cllr Jimmy McClearn	Cllr Orla Leyden
Cllr Donal Gilroy	Cllr Brian McKenna	Cllr Enda Stenson
Cllr Christy Hyland	Cllr Jarlath Munnely	
Cllr Clifford Kelly	Cllr Joe Sheridan	

Apologies: Cllr Patrick McGowan, Cllr Niall McNelis, Cllr Declan McDonnell, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr David Maxwell, Cllr Tim Broderick, Cllr. John Caulfield, Cllr. Micheal Crowe, Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cllr. Jack Murray, Cllr. John Naughten, Cllr. Sean Smith and Chief Executive Designate Mr Brendan McGrath Galway City Council CEO.

Officials: Northern & Western Regional Assembly:

Mr. David Minton (Director)
Mr. Gerry Doyle (Assistant Director)
Mr. Denis Kelly (Assistant Director/Senior Planner)
Mr. Frank Flanagan (Senior Executive Planner)
Mr. John Daly (Economist)
Mr. Conall McGettigan (Senior Executive Planner – by video-link)
Ms. Fiona Timoney (Clerical Officer)

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on September 16th 2022 (circulated)

Proposed by: Cllr. Enda Stenson

Seconded by: Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Resolved:

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 16 September 2022 be adopted”.

2. Any Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Planning and Economic Development

a) Draft Ministerial Direction – Variation to Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024 (Submission circulated – for noting)

Mr. Denis Kelly (Assistant Director/Senior Planner) reminded Members that this item had been discussed at the previous Assembly Meeting, whereby he had advised that he was available to discuss the matter with Members before finalising the report. He advised that he had brief discussions with the three Donegal Members of the Assembly before finalising the report and they understood the rationale for the Regional Assembly’s position given in the report. The report was issued to the Cathaoirleach for approval. The submission was

subsequently issued to Donegal County Council and the report is on the agenda for noting by Members, in accordance with established procedure.

Proposed by: Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Seconded by: Cllr. Enda Stenson

Resolved:

“That the Assembly note the Submission on the Draft Ministerial Direction- Variation to Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024.”

**b) Proposed Material Alterations to Draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
(Submission circulated – for noting)**

Mr. Denis Kelly (Assistant Director/Senior Planner) advised Members that following the September Assembly meeting, the submission was discussed at the West SPA meeting before the report on it was finalised. The report was issued to the Cathaoirleach for approval and thereafter issued to Galway City Council. Members were advised that in accordance with agreed procedure the report is now on the agenda for noting.

Proposed by: Cllr. Donal Gilroy

Seconded by: Cllr. Enda Stenson

Resolved:

“That the Assembly note the Submission on the Proposed Material Alteration to the Draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029”

c) 2 Year Review of the RSES– Report presentation (Slides at Appendix 1)

Mr. Denis Kelly (Assistant Director/Senior Planner) reminded Members that the process was initiated in November 2021 with a draft questionnaire template being issued to each Local Authority to establish if it would be fit for purpose in meeting their obligation to prepare a report on how they had progressed the implementation of the RSES. Their feedback helped to inform the final questionnaire that issued in early March 2022 to Local Authorities and Public Bodies. The responses have now shaped the draft report and the SPA Committees had discussed the draft Report on the 2-year review in detail earlier this month and had considered many items. He advised that the purpose of today was to close out outstanding items and seek Members agreement to adopt the report. Thereafter it could be designed into a booklet format and issued to the NOAC as is required. He asked that Frank Flanagan provide a slide presentation on the outstanding items of the 2-year review of the RSES.

Mr Frank Flanagan recapped on the discussions to date, and he provided a detailed presentation on the outstanding issues (see Slides at Appendix 1).

Following the presentation Members commended the detail of the report and asked that Members be provided with a list of the County Development Plans and their current status. They also referenced the changes in circumstances since the adoption of the RSES. Denis Kelly advised that he would circulate a list of Development Plans and their current status to Members in advance of the next meeting. He also acknowledged that there had been significant change since the adoption of the RSES and he believes that the strategic vision of the RSES is robust and that it enables the region to be resilient to the many changes and opportunities as they emerge.

Mr Kelly confirmed that the Assemblies are working with the DECC and SEAI in developing a roadmap for a Renewable Electricity Strategy and that it would be appropriate to have them provide a presentation to Members at a future meeting. Members asked that Officials from the DECC be asked to attend.

Proposed by: Cllr. Donal Gilroy

Seconded by: Cllr. Clifford Kelly

Resolved:

“That the Assembly endorse the report on the 2 Year Review of the RSES and agree that it be issued to NOAC when design work is complete.”

d) Regional EV Charge Point Analysis – Report presentation by John Daly (Slides Appendix 2)

Mr John Daly provided a detailed slide presentation on the Regional EV Charge Point Analysis (See Appendix 2).

There followed a long discussion from the Assembly, outlining the challenges of Electric Vehicles in the North and West of Ireland, weighed against the social responsibility to mitigate climate change.

In response to specific questions from members, Mr Daly responded as follows:

- The recommendations in the report are not in order of priority. Lack of access to grants is accepted as a major issue for the purchase of vehicles and co-financing will be essential for the establishment of EV charging stations.
- The available data indicates the vast majority of charging ports are still designed for standard charging – these are 22 kw ports with a charging time of 6 hours. Fast chargers (80% charge in 30 minutes) are very rare with high powered chargers (completely charged in approximately ten minutes) rarer still. There needs to be an emphasis placed on fast charging and high-powered charging points.
- Mr Daly will speak to the Assembly’s GIS officer, Mr Noel Ballantyne, about the possibility of separating Galway City from the rest of County Galway, to indicate any disparity between city and rural EV charging stations.

Mr David Minton confirmed that the next step will be for the Assembly’s PR team to publish the detailed information in the report.

e) Consider extending invite to the OPR to attend Assembly meeting

Denis Kelly summarised the discussion raised at the Border and West SPAs about inviting the OPR to a future Assembly meeting. It was agreed that Denis Kelly would discuss this matter further with both Chairs of the SPA before further consideration would be given.

f) Open EU Funding Calls – for noting

Director David Minton confirmed that funding calls were now open within the EU funding Network. Any interested parties can log onto the NWRA website and register with the EU funding network for more information about funding opportunities. Travis O’Doherty is the contact within the NWRA for more information

4. Research partnership with Atlantic Technological University – for noting

Director David Minton provided a brief summary of a recent collaboration with ATU in relation to a partnership for research and policy development.

A note will be sent out after the meeting, should Councillors like to nominate anyone for the PhD Research role. A job description has been posted on Phd.com and further details can be found there.

5. Association of Irish Regions – Conference / Training event update

Director David Minton advised that the AIR has reconvened and agreed to a National conference on February 8 and 9 2023. A Save the Date has been sent nationally. It will be a training event, with a reception and light dinner on 7 February, a full conference and dinner on 8 February and a half day (morning) session on 9 February.

Registration details will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.

A draft agenda will be brought to members in November or December. If Assembly members have ideas for speakers, they can provide them directly to Mr Minton.

It was agreed there was a need for the conference to stress the importance of the Assemblies and the work they did for the region.

6. Correspondence

There were no Correspondence.

7. Any other business

ClIr Warnock requested if the Assembly could have a role in addressing afforestation, including possibly bringing the issue to the Minister's attention.

He was advised by the Director that there were a number of Departmental consultation processes where the NWRA can make submissions. The Assembly will bring the item forward to the next Assembly meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____ (Cathaoirleach)

Date: _____