



Northern & Western Regional Assembly

Minutes of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Meeting
held on 20th of October 2023 at 11am in Roscommon Chamber.

Present:

Cllr. Enda McGloin	Cllr Patrick McGowan	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn
Cllr. John Caulfield	Cllr. Declan Bree	Cllr. Joe Sheridan
Cllr. Orla Leyden	Cllr. Clifford Kelly	Cllr. Christy Hyland
Cllr. Donal Gilroy	Cllr. Justin Warnock	Cllr. Declan McDonnell
Cllr. Niall McNelis	Cllr. Donal Lyons	Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. Áine Smith	Cllr. David Collins	Cllr. Jarlath Munnely

Presided: Cllr. John Naughten (Cathaoirleach)

Apologies: Cllr. Tim Broderick, Cllr. Michael Crowe, Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cllr. Brian McKenna, Cllr. Jack Murray, Cllr. Enda Stenson.

Officials: Northern & Western Regional Assembly:

Mr. Denis Kelly (Director)
Mr. Gerry Doyle (Assistant Director)
Mr. Frank Flanagan (A/Assistant Director / Senior Planner)
Mr. Brendan Mooney (A/Assistant Director)
Ms. Eileen McSweeney (Clerical Officer)
Ms. Catriona Meehan (Staff Officer)

1) Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 15th September 2023 (Circulated):

Proposed by: Cllr. Clifford Kelly

Seconded by: Cllr Donal Lyons

And unanimously resolved that:

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 15th September be adopted”.

2) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3) Director’s Update

Mr Denis Kelly (Director) updated Members on the Items listed below:

- The Regional Development Monitor won an Irish Planning Institute Award (IPI) award two weeks previously. Mr Kelly highlighted the importance of this monitor noting it was a great work of collaboration between the three Assemblies and the All Ireland Research Institute (AIRO).
- The National Planning Framework is being reviewed and he stated that the Assembly will be consulted during this process. He highlighted items which had come to the fore since the plan was established: Climate Change, Population change, Regional Growth – Spatial Equity, Compact Growth, Digitalisation, Investment Prioritisation. Mr Kelly informed Members that the Draft Review would likely be published in January – February 2024. He stated that it was positive that the delivery of regional equity appeared to be an issue for consideration. Mr Kelly stated this would be supportive of the call by the Assembly for a stimulus package for the region to lever job creation.
- Mr. Kelly referred to the Buildings Subcommittee previously established – which consisted of the following Members , Cllr. Maxwell, Cllr. McNelis, Cllr. Leyden, Cllr. Gilroy, Cllr. McClearn, Cllr. Collins, Cllr. McDonnell, Cllr. Bree, Cllr. Murray and Cllr. McGowan. Cllr. David Maxwell stated that it would be important that the current Cathaoirleach should sit on the sub-committee and he

Mr Kelly agreed with Members on all points, he stated this is a great opportunity to highlight the challenges and opportunities of the Region.

6) Special Meeting with MEP's on the 27th October in Roscommon

Mr Gerry Doyle informed Members that two MEP's, MEP Chris McManus and MEP Colm Markey had confirmed they would attend the special meeting. He asked Members what format they would prefer, enquiring would it be acceptable if the MEP's gave a brief presentation to Members and then answered any questions they had. This was agreed.

Members enquired whether all MEP's from the region had been invited and they emphasised the importance of active engagement between the Assembly and our MEP's. Members acknowledged that MEP Maria Walsh had recently addressed the Assembly adding that it was disappointing that all our MEP's were not engaging. Members requested that the meeting should be publicised and that it was important for the public to know the MEP's who are interacting with us and that we are campaigning for our region.

7) ERDF Update (Slides at Appendix 1)

Mr Brendan Mooney (Acting Assistant Director) updated Members on the status of various ERDF Schemes slides at Appendix 1.

Members Comments and Questions

Cathaoirleach John Naughten enquired whether the THRIVE scheme would be 100% funded as he highlighted co funding as a barrier for Local Authorities applying for funding.

Cllr. Orla Leyden agreed with the Cathaoirleach regarding the co funding barrier. She stated THRIVE would be a great visible scheme that will help communities. Cllr. Leyden enquired would a specific building in Roscommon town be eligible which she added that it is not in the centre of the town. She also enquired whether the end use of the renovated building is specified as being for community use. Cllr. Leyden also enquired about training that was discussed for the LAs to help them avail of EU funding.

Cllr. Justin Warnock asked what is the population requirement for Urban Centres? He stated that in Leitrim the only town that qualifies is Carrick on Shannon, he added that some of the smaller towns could benefit from this scheme. Cllr. Warnock asked that if possible, there could be a list of towns with the relevant population be circulated.

Cllr. Declan Mc Donnell expressed his disappointment that none of the Members were invited to any of the scheme launches. He stated that these launches were important opportunities to show what the Assembly does and increase its visibility.

Cllr. Donal Gilroy expressed his apologies that he could not attend the event in Sligo - he added that the invitation had come from Sligo CC, he was not aware that NWRA would be there. He asked that the Assembly could notify Members if there was a launch or event that was occurring in their county. Cllr. Gilroy agreed with Cllr McDonnell regarding the importance of these events for the visibility of the Assembly.

Cllr Niall McNelis enquired regarding a specific building in Galway City would be eligible for THRIVE funding. He stated this will be a great scheme for the region. He also enquired about the recent Urban COOP event and he asked who all had been invited.

Cllr. David Maxwell enquired what stage the Just Transition Fund was at. He agreed that if EU money is being used in these projects Members should be invited.



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Mr Frank Flangan outlined the plan he stated that the plan showed close alignment with the RSES. He added that it could be more ambitious regarding population increase. He also stated that the reference to job creation was also not ambitious enough.

Proposed: Cllr. Justin Warnock

Seconded: Cllr. Enda McGloin

Unanimously agreed that:

'Members agreed the submission and statement to be made in respect of the Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan 2023'

d) Consideration of submission to Draft Westport Town & Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) 2023 – 2029 (Slides at Appendix 2)

Mr Frank Flanagan outlined the Plan emphasizing the importance of tourism in this plan. He stated the plan was clear and concise. He praised the plan for its consistent layout and consistency with the RSES. Mr Flanagan stated that planning should be plan led not developer led.

Proposed: Cllr. Neil McNelis

Seconded: Cllr. Donal Gilroy

Unanimously agreed that:

'Members agreed the submission and statement to be made in respect of the Draft Westport Town & Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) 2023 – 2029'

9) Correspondence

Mr Gerry Doyle stated that there was a new statutory instrument passed into law that gives legal power to extend the Director role by 3 years from 7 to 10 years.

Minister Ryan Delegation

It was stated that there had been no positive responses regarding a meeting with Minister Ryan.

Mr Gerry Doyle stated that a letter will issue from Cathaoirleach John Naughten formally inviting Minister Ryan to meet a delegation from the Assembly, the Cathaoirleach having raised this matter with the Minister when he visited Roscommon recently.

10) Any other Business

Cllr. Áine Smith suggested that the Assembly should visit each Local Authority in the region to update them on all the important activities that the Assembly is undertaking.

Cllr. Donal Lyons enquired had a new CE designate been appointed.

Cllr. Declan McDonnell enquired when would the position of Director be advertised.

Mr Denis Kelly agree with Cllr Smith adding that when invitations are received from Local Authorities that the NWRA would be delighted to attend. Regarding the CE designate, Mr Kelly stated that it is being followed up. He stated that the background information pack is currently being developed and this will enable an advertisement for the role of Director to be forwarded. However, should a CE Designate emerge in the interim then it would be appropriate to share it with them. He advised that the competition for same will be managed by the Public Appointments Service.

Signed:  (Cathaoirleach)