

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly
Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre

MINUTES for MEETING

**OF THE EASTERN AND MIDLAND
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

HELD ON

Friday, 11th April 2025

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON 11TH OF APRIL 2025.

Cllr Emma Blain	Cllr David Healy
Cllr Mike Bray	Cllr Deirdre Heney
Cllr Danny Byrne	Cllr Feljin Jose
Cllr Mick Cahill	Cllr Rachel Kerley
Cllr Avril Cronin	Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr JP Durkan	Cllr Aoibheann Mahon
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley	Cllr Pádraig McEvoy
Cllr Neil Feighery	Cllr Garry Murtagh
Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald	Cllr Oisín O'Connor
Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cllr Tom O'Leary
Cllr Declan Flanagan	Cllr Aengus O'Rourke
Cllr Joe Fox	Cllr Robert Power
Cllr David Gilroy	Cllr Paul Ross
Cllr Patsy Glennon	Cllr Jacqueline Sheehy

Apologies received from: Cllr K Duffy, Cllr N Gaffney, and Cllr J Tuffy

In Attendance:

**Ms Clare Bannon, EMRA
 Ms Laure Antoniotti, EMRA
 Ms Katarzyna Kaczmarek, EMRA
 Mr Simon Musial, EMRA
 Ms Geraldine Kenny, EMRA
 Mr Ross Higgins, EMRA
 Ms Cara Farrell, EMRA
 Ms Sarah Campbell, EMRA
 Dr Owen Douglas, EMRA
 Ms Helena Stomberg, EMRA
 Ms Kiara Abbey, EMRA**

Mr Kieran Kehoe, Meath County Council

Mr Justin Gleeson, Maynooth University

ITEM 1

Adoption of Minutes of meeting held on 11th April 2025.

Minutes of the meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly held on the 11th April 2025 were proposed by Cllr D Lacey and seconded by Cllr JP Durkan.

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

ITEM 2

Presentation of the Regional Development Monitor and new National Census Atlas by Justin Gleeson, Director of the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO)

Mr Justin Gleeson, Director of the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) gave the Members a presentation and demonstration of the Regional Development Monitor and new National Census Atlas.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr M Cahill, Cllr M Bray, Cllr D Lacey, Cllr D Gilroy, Cllr D Heney, Cllr P McEvoy, Cllr P Ross, Cllr JP Durkan, Cllr C Fitzgerald, Mr J Gleeson and Ms C Bannon.

ITEM 3

Planning items

i. Draft EMRA submission on the draft Old Connaught LAP 2025

Mr Owen Douglas presented the EMRA submissions on the draft Old Connaught LAP 2025 to the Members.

Cllr. D Healy proposed the following amendments to the submission, the submission amendments were circulated to the Members prior to the meeting:

On p.3 under **3.1 Introduction and Local Area Context**, the following text in italics is proposed to be added: *The Assembly further welcomes the extensive reference to the Luas Green Line extension within the Draft LAP. [...] (see also Section 3.5 below).*

On p.6 under **3.5 Transport and Movement**, the following text in italics is proposed to be added:

RPO 5.2 of the RSES is to support the delivery of key sustainable transport projects including Metrolink, DART and Luas expansion programmes, BusConnects and the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Cycle Network to ensure that future development maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, existing and planned. Furthermore, RPO 5.3 of the RSES states that future development in the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall be planned and designed in a manner that facilitates sustainable travel patterns, with a particular focus on increasing the share of active modes (walking and cycling) and public transport use and creating a

safe attractive street environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Further to this, the Assembly notes that the only transport-linked phasing in the draft LAP relates to the provision of road access.

The Draft LAP refers widely to the Luas Green Line extension, which is welcomed by the Regional Assembly. Notwithstanding, a number of these references refer to it as a "potential" rather than "planned" or "proposed" development. In this context, it should be noted that the Luas Green Line extension is referred to in the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042 Figure 19.1 for medium-term delivery (i.e. 2031 to 2036). Furthermore, given the emphasis in the First Revision to the NPF on Transport-Orientated Development, and in the RSES on strategic development areas and corridors, and reference in the RSES to the delivery of the Luas Green Line Extension as enabling infrastructure for urban development in this area, the Regional Assembly considers that the term "potential" should not be used to refer to this essential enabling infrastructure. In this context, the Regional Assembly recommends that the LAP recognises that the Luas extension is essential to the successful implementation of the LAP and that the Luas extension is included in the phasing plan in the LAP, with the delivery of the Luas within the 2031-2036 timeframe so that new residents can benefit from multiple positive individual and societal benefits. The Assembly further recognises that rapid delivery of the Luas Green Line extension - as a vital high quality public transport infrastructure - would bestow significant benefits including the potential to reduce the cost of housing (by reducing the number of car parking spaces needed) and the potential to improve the ability of households to afford housing (by reducing the number of cars per household).

RPO 5.1 of the RSES is to support continued collaboration between infrastructure providers, state agencies and local authorities in the metropolitan area to inform cross sectoral investment plans and capital spending plans to accelerate the development of strategic development areas and secure the best use of public lands in the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Aligned with this [...]

On p.7, the following text in italics is proposed to be added: *Furthermore, the Assembly welcomes the emphasis in the Draft LAP on filtered permeability and active travel. Notwithstanding, the Regional Assembly notes that integration of walking and cycling links, especially to public transport, schools and other local amenities, should be considered for inclusion in the phasing plan provided for in the LAP.*

On p.12 under 3.10 Phasing and Implementation, the following text in italics is proposed to be added to the last paragraph of that section:

However, as outlined in Section 3.5 above, the Regional Assembly recommends that the LAP recognises that the Luas extension is essential to the successful implementation of the LAP and that

the Luas extension is included in the phasing plan in the LAP, with the delivery of the Luas within the 2031-2036 timeframe so that new residents can benefit from multiple positive individual and societal benefits. Furthermore, the Regional Assembly recommends that the integration of walking and cycling links, especially to public transport, schools and other local amenities, should be considered for inclusion in the phasing plan provided for in the LAP.

On p.13, under **Section 4 Recommendations**, the following point 3 in italics is proposed to be added:

3. The Assembly considers that Chapter 6 of the LAP could be strengthened by recognising that the Luas Green Line extension, as referred to in Figure 5.4 of the RSES, is essential to the successful implementation of the LAP and that the Luas Green Line extension is included in the phasing plan in the LAP. Reason: In the interest of demonstrating consistency with the RSES.

On p.14, under **Observations**, the following point 2 in italics is proposed to be added:

2. The Assembly considers that the integration of walking and cycling links, especially to public transport, schools and other local amenities, should be considered for inclusion in the phasing plan provided for in the LAP. Reason: In the interest of best practice.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr JP Durkan, Mr O Douglas and Ms C Bannon. Cllr JP Durkan requested additional amendments. It was agreed that a high-level statement, consistent with the RSES, regarding the M11 would be drafted following the meeting and added to the submission.

This was seconded by Cllr P Mc Evoy.

This was **APPROVED with amendments**.

ii. **Draft EMRA submission on the DECC Statement of Strategy 2025-2028**

Mr O Douglas presented the EMRA submissions on the draft on the DECC Statement of Strategy 2025-2028 to the Members.

Cllr. P Mc Evoy proposed the following amendments to the submission, the proposed amendments were circulated to the Members prior to the meeting:

On p.2, under **section 1.0 Overall Context**, the following text in italics is proposed to be added as a last paragraph:

The Regional Assembly is further mindful of its obligations, as a relevant body, under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) to perform its functions in a manner consistent with achieving Ireland's national climate objective.

On p.13, under **Strategic Goal 6: Develop our people, culture and organisation**, the following text in italics is proposed to be added:

Furthermore, the Regional Assembly is conscious of its legal responsibilities arising from the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, as amended, in particular s.15, which has implications across the Assembly's functions. The Assembly, as well as local authorities, has benefited from the work of the Climate Action Regional Offices (although they are not geographically aligned with the region). However, since the Climate Change Advisory Council's advisory function only extends to the national government, the Assembly considers that increased support at the regional and local levels is needed to address climate responsibilities.

On p.14, under section 4.0 Recommendations, the following point 5 in italics is proposed to be added:

5. In formulating the Statement of Strategy, the Department should commit to supporting the regional assemblies and local authorities in meeting their obligations under the Climate Act, through the Climate Action Regional Offices and/or otherwise.

Reason: To ensure consistency with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act.

This was seconded by Cllr. D Healy

Cllr McEvoy proposed further amendments to the submission during the meeting:

On p.4 under Strategic Goal 1, the following text in italics is proposed to be added to the last paragraph:

The Assembly supports the development of a user-friendly tool for quantifying and forecasting the relative GHG impacts of alternative spatial planning policies in Ireland - as well as the development of a tool to collate and visualise emissions data from multiple sectors at a regional level based on international best practice - and would welcome support for the development of such user-friendly tools and resources in the revised Statement of Strategy.

On p.13 under section 4.0 Recommendations, the following text in italics is proposed to be added to recommendation 1:

Recommendation 1: The Assembly recommends that the Statement of Strategy should set out a commitment by the Department to support the development of relevant user-friendly tools and resources to assist in the achievement of its goals, for example, the ESPON QGasSP Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment Tool and a tool to collate and visualise emissions data from multiple sectors at a regional level.

This was seconded by Cllr. D Healy

This was **APPROVED with amendments.**

ITEM 4

Unaudited 2024 Annual Financial Statement (AFS)

Ms Clare Bannon presented the Unaudited 2024 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) to the Members outlining that the Assembly had recorded a surplus of €837,329. Ms C Bannon indicated that €272,000 of this surplus had been carried forward in the 2025 Budget, leaving a surplus balance of

€565,329. This is due to several positions remaining vacant throughout the year. Ms C Bannon indicated that she will discuss a pathway forward for using the surplus with Chief Executives in advance of budget 2026 preparations.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr D Byrne and Mr S Musial.

ITEM 5

Programme of Works 2025 – Q1 update

Ms Clare Bannon presented to the Members an update on the Programme of Works – Quarter 1.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr P Mc Evoy and Mr O Douglas.

ITEM 6

Nomination to IPB insurance CLG

Following the resignation of Cllr Tony McCormack, Cllr D Lacey proposed the Cathaoirleach should be nominated to represent EMRA at the IPB insurance CLG going forward. Cllr Lacey nominated Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald to the IPB Insurance CLG, this was seconded by Cllr P Mc Evoy.

This was AGREED

ITEM 7

Update on the Chief Executives' study visit to Brussels

Ms Clare Bannon gave the Members an update on the Chief Executives' study visit to Brussels.

A discussion followed with contributions from Mr Kieran Kehoe, Cllr M Cahill and Cllr P Mc Evoy.

ITEM 8

Correspondence

None

ITEM 9

Any other business

Mr O Douglas gave the Members an update on the upcoming SSMA workshop, the dates are 29th April online for all Regional Assemblies, 13th May full day in Athlone for local authorities, and 12th June for EMRA Members. An invite link was sent to all Members.

Ms C Bannon received 11 expressions of interest for the Members' group visit to Brussels, Cllr JP Durkan also requested to be added. Ms C Bannon will contact the IREO to check whether this is possible and will revert back to the group leaders.

Ms L Antoniotti advised the Members that the URBACT Transfer Network call is now open until the end of June. An information session organised by EMRA as Contact point will take place on the 1st of May in the Custom House, now open for registration. The link will be circulated after the meeting.

ITEM 10


Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly will be held on **Friday the 9th of May 2025 at 11.00am.**

Signed:



Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald
Cathaoirleach EMRA


Ms. Clare Bannon
EMRA

Date:

09/05/2025