

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

**MINUTES for MEETING**

**OF THE EASTERN AND MIDLAND  
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**HELD ON**

**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY 2026.**

<b>Cllr Mike Bray</b>	<b>Cllr David Healy</b>
<b>Cllr Danny Byrne</b>	<b>Cllr Deirdre Heney</b>
<b>Cllr Mick Cahill</b>	<b>Cllr Feljin Jose</b>
<b>Cllr Fiona Connelly</b>	<b>Cllr Rachel Kerley</b>
<b>Cllr Avril Cronin</b>	<b>Cllr Dermot Lacey</b>
<b>Cllr Kieran Dennison</b>	<b>Cllr Pádraig Mc Evoy</b>
<b>Cllr Kevin Duffy</b>	<b>Cllr Justin Moylan</b>
<b>Cllr JP Durkan</b>	<b>Cllr Tony Murphy</b>
<b>Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley</b>	<b>Cllr Garry Murtagh</b>
<b>Cllr Neil Feighery</b>	<b>Cllr Sean O'Brien</b>
<b>Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald</b>	<b>Cllr Oisín O'Connor</b>
<b>Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick</b>	<b>Cllr Tom O'Leary</b>
<b>Cllr Declan Flanagan</b>	<b>Cllr Aengus O'Rourke</b>
<b>Cllr Joe Fox</b>	<b>Cllr Robert Power</b>
<b>Cllr Niall Gaffney</b>	<b>Cllr Paul Ross</b>
<b>Cllr Patsy Glennon</b>	<b>Cllr Joanna Tuffy</b>

**Apologies received: None**

**In Attendance:**

**Mr Kieran Kehoe, CE Meath CoCo**

**Ms Clare Bannon, EMRA**

**Ms Anne-Marie Wood Wolfe, EMRA**

**Mr Bernard Kenealy, EMRA**

**Ms Teresa Lennon, IREO**

**Ms Teresa O Reilly, EMRA**

**Ms Laure Antoniotti, EMRA**

**Dr Owen Douglas, EMRA**

**Ms Geraldine Kenny, EMRA**

**Mr Ross Higgins, EMRA**

**Visitors:**

**Mr Henry Abbott, Economic Counsellor, European Commission Representation in Ireland**

## **ITEM 1**

### **Adoption of Minutes of meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2025.**

Minutes of the meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 were proposed by Cllr P Mc Evoy and seconded by Cllr D Byrne.

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

## **ITEM 2**

### **Presentation and exchange of perspectives with Henry Abbott, Economic Counsellor, European Commission Representation in Ireland**

Henry Abbott, Economic Counsellor at the European Commission Representation in Ireland, briefed the Members on the key activities and priorities of the Representation. He outlined highlights from the 2025 Activity Report, including 59 political meetings, 8 Commissioner visits, over 100 events nationwide, extensive media outreach, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders and Europe Direct centres. He also provided an overview of EU budgetary and policy developments, including the Recovery and Resilience Plans, the European Semester cycle, preparations for the MFF 2028–2034, cohesion funding reforms, and funding allocations across agriculture, rural development and SMEs. Hard copies of the Activity Report 2025 were made available to Members.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr J Fox, Cllr D Heney, Cllr P Mc Evoy, Cllr D Lacey, Cllr K Dennison, Cllr T O Leary, Cllr M Cahill, Cllr J Tuffy, Cllr JP Durkan, Cllr D Healy and Mr H Abbott.

The Item was **NOTED**.

## **ITEM 3**

### **Programme of Works 2025 – Q4 update**

Ms C Bannon provided the Members with an update on the Programme of works for quarter 4, 2025. Highlights included;

- EU Just Transition Fund, completed the programme mid-term review and subsequent submission of a programme amendment to the European Commission.
- The Just Transition Fest was held in Mount Druid, Co. Westmeath showcased EUJTF-funded projects from across the Midlands.

- The Irish Regions Europe Office (IREO) facilitated the October visit of the President of the Committee of the Regions, Ms Kata Tütto.
- The EUI national capacity-building event in Monaghan supported 29 local authorities in developing sustainable heritage and adaptive reuse projects under the THRIVE strand.
- ORIGINN Interreg Europe project progressed into its policy transfer phase, with learnings from partners such as Catalonia's Bioeconomy Strategy and Emilia-Romagna's rural innovation approaches directly informing the review of the RSES.
- Preparatory work for the forthcoming statutory review of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) advanced significantly, with structured engagement undertaken with key stakeholders, and a dedicated workshop with elected members to shape the emerging RSES Issues Paper.

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

The Item was **NOTED**.

**ITEM 4 – Update on the General Scheme of a Bill to Amend the Planning and Development Act 2024**

Ms Clare Bannon provided an update on the General Scheme of the Bill to amend the Planning and Development Act 2024. Ms Bannon advised that the General Scheme of Planning and Development (amendment) (no. 2) Bill 2025 was published on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of January, and reflects the discussion held between the Regional Assemblies and the Department. Under the Bill, all towns with a population exceeding a population of 10,000 will be designated as key towns, with existing key towns retained. She further noted that the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) will now undergo a full review, to be completed within a condensed timeframe, with a stronger focus on key issues given the condensed timeframe. Ms Bannon confirmed that the RSES Issues Paper will be published, as normal, towards the end of March.

The item was **NOTED**.

**ITEM 5**

**Correspondence**

None

## **ITEM 6 – Any Other Business**

### **i. AIR Training Event**

Ms Clare Bannon reminded Members that the Association of Irish Regions (AIR) Training Seminar will take place on 25–26 February 2026 in Buncrana, hosted by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly. The registration link will be circulated to the members for the AIR training event.

### **ii. Resignation of Cllr Jaqueline Sheehy (South Dublin County Council) and Cllr Eimear Carbone Mangan (Fingal County Council) from EMRA**

The resignations of Cllr Jacqueline Sheehy (SDCC) and Cllr Eimear Carbone Mangan (FCC) from the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly were noted. The Cathaoirleach thanked both Members for their contributions to the Assembly. It was noted that Cllr Kieran Dennison has been co-opted as the Fingal County Council replacement, and that South Dublin County Council will co-opt a new Member in due course.

This was **NOTED**.

### **iii. EMRA Correspondence on the Transport Sectoral Investment Plan**

Cllr D Healy advised the members that the letter previously issued to Minister Browne and other Ministers on this matter, will be released from EMRA as a press release.

This was **NOTED**.

### **iv. Invitation to Mr Eamon Ryan, Chair of the Housing Advisory Board, to brief the Assembly on the Board's recommendations to the European Commission.**

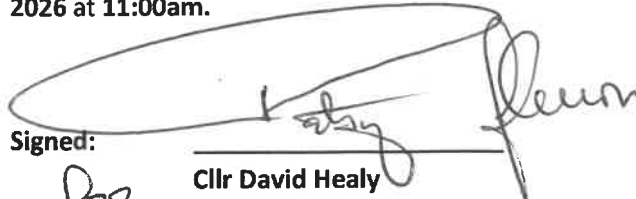


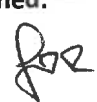
Cllr D. Lacey proposed that Mr Eamon Ryan, Chair of the EU Housing Advisory Board, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Assembly to brief Members on the Housing Advisory Board's recent report and recommendations to the European Commission. This proposal was seconded by Cllr D. Heney.

This was **AGREED**.

**ITEM 7**

**Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly is due to be held on **13<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 at 11:00am.**

Signed:     
 **Clr David Healy**  
**Cathaoirleach EMRA**

  
**Ms. Clare Bannon**  
**EMRA**

**Date:** 13-02-2026