

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

MINUTES for MEETING

**OF THE EASTERN AND MIDLAND
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

HELD ON

Friday, 13th March 2026

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON THE 13TH OF MARCH 2026.

Cllr Mike Bray	Cllr David Healy
Cllr Danny Byrne	Cllr Deirdre Heney
Cllr Mick Cahill	Cllr Feljin Jose
Cllr Fiona Connolly	Cllr Rachel Kerley
Cllr Avril Cronin	Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr Kevin Duffy	Cllr Aoibheann Mahon
Cllr JP Durkan	Cllr Tanya McDonald
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley	Cllr Pádraig Mc Evoy
Cllr Neil Feighery	Cllr Garry Murtagh
Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cllr Sean O'Brien
Cllr Declan Flanagan	Cllr Oisín O'Connor
Cllr Joe Fox	Cllr Gerry O'Neill
Cllr Niall Gaffney	Cllr Paul Ross
Cllr David Gilroy	Cllr Joanna Tuffy
Cllr Patsy Glennon	

Apologies received: Mr. Kieran Kehoe CE Meath CoCo, and Cllr. K Dennison

In Attendance:

Ms. Clare Bannon, EMRA

Ms. Anne-Marie Wood Wolfe, EMRA

Mr. Bernard Kenealy, EMRA

Ms. Bernie Roe, EMRA

Ms. Teresa O Reilly, EMRA

Ms. Laure Antoniotti, EMRA

Dr. Karl Murphy, EMRA

Ms. Geraldine Kenny, EMRA

Mr. Ross Higgins, EMRA

Ms. Sarah Campbell, EMRA

The Cathaoirleach Cllr D Healy was unable to attend the meeting in person, the Leas-Chathaoirleach Cllr P Glennon chaired the meeting.

This was **AGREED**.

The Leas-Chathaoirleach welcomed Cllr Tanya McDonald from South Dublin County Council to the EMRA, she replaced Cllr Jacqueline Sheehy who resigned in December 2025.

ITEM 1

Adoption of Minutes of meeting held on the 13th of February 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly held on the 13th of February 2026 were proposed by Cllr A Cronin and seconded by Cllr D Lacey.

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

ITEM 2

Issues Paper of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) – Anne-Marie Wood Wolfe

Ms Anne-Marie Wood Wolfe delivered a detailed presentation on the RSES Issues Paper, explaining that it is a nonstatutory document intended to stimulate early engagement by the public, stakeholders and communities on key development themes. She outlined the structure of the Issues Paper, including the themes, the “Setting the Scene” section, statutory obligations under the Planning and Development Act, key issues identified in the National Planning Framework, and the accompanying questions for consideration. She also demonstrated the standard format used under each theme, showing how contextual information, legislative requirements and key issues are presented alongside prompts for respondents. Ms Wood Wolfe advised members that the PreDraft Public Consultation Period will run from 26th March to 22nd May 2026, during which public notices will issue and statutory consultees will be notified, and she concluded by outlining the next steps, including engagement with Local Authorities and consideration of thematic stakeholder workshops.

The Draft Issues Paper was issued and circulated to the members on the 2nd March. Ms Wood Wolfe advised that amendments submitted by Cllr Pádraig McEvoy and Cllr David Healy had been incorporated into the Draft Issues Paper circulated on 12th of March, and that further amendments received from Cllr Joanna Tuffy on 12th March 2026 had also been included in the Draft Issues Paper presented to members at the meeting. She noted that updates relating to Further Education were added within the “For Consideration” section to align with legislative requirements.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr J Tuffy, Cllr D Gilroy, Cllr S O'Brien, Cllr D Lacey, Cllr M Cahill, Cllr P Mc Evoy, Cllr JP Durkan, and Ms A Wood Wolfe.

Cllr JP Durkan submitted further amendments. These were supported by Cllr S'O Brien, Cllr M Cahill and Cllr D Lacey.

The amendments were proposed by Cllr P Mc Evoy and seconded by Cllr S O'Brien.

This was **AGREED with amendments**.

The RSES Issues Paper, incorporating the proposed amendments as agreed, is attached as Appendix 1.

ITEM 3

A presentation on new URBACT and European Urban Initiative (EUI) calls

Dr Karl Murphy delivered a presentation on the URBACT and European Urban Initiative (EUI) programmes, providing an overview of their purpose, methods and opportunities. He outlined the structure of the URBACT programme, its focus on sustainable urban development, the various network types, and the benefits of transnational exchange and capacity building. He also described upcoming calls, including the Action Planning Networks, eligibility criteria, and the supports available to participating local authorities. Dr Murphy further briefed members on the EUI programme, including capacity building supports, City to City exchanges, peer review processes and the forthcoming Innovative Actions Call, noting changes to eligibility and implementation timelines. A summary of previous URBACT participation within the EMRA region was also provided. The members were advised about a Joint EUI / URBACT information session will take place on 25th March at the Richmond Education and Event Centre.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr Paul Ross, Cllr David Healy, Cllr Dermot Lacey, Cllr Mick Cahill, Cllr Pádraig McEvoy, and Cllr JP Durkan

The presentation was **NOTED**

ITEM 4

Correspondence

NONE

ITEM 5 – Any Other Business

i. Reports from Cllr D Lacey and Cllr N Feighery on AIR

These were **NOTED**.

ii. EU Presidency Welcome Meeting – July 1st

Ms Clare Bannon informed the members that the Irish Regions European Office is organising an EU Presidency Welcome Event in Brussels on 1st July 2026, to coincide with the commencement of Ireland's Presidency. CoR members, the Cathaoirleach and Leas Chathaoirleach will be in attendance, and EMRA has six additional places available for elected members. Members were advised that travel will take place from 30th June to 2nd July, and those interested should contact their political group leader or the Executive.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr A Cronin and Ms Teresa Lennon.

This item was **NOTED**

iii. OECD Report - Strengthening Ireland's regions: towards a stronger multi-level governance system for improved national performance – OECD Fact Finding Mission March 23rd.

Ms Clare Bannon informed the members that the three Regional Assemblies have commissioned an OECD report on strengthening Ireland's regional governance, and that an OECD factfinding mission will take place during the week beginning 23rd March 2026. She advised that a meeting with EMRA AIR members is proposed for 24th, 25th or the morning of 26th March, and requested that members confirm their availability. Members unable to attend were asked to notify the Executive so that an alternate can be assigned. It was noted that the AILG event is scheduled for the same dates. Ms Bannon confirmed that the exact meeting date will be finalised and communicated to members once agreed

This item was **NOTED**

iv. OPR Training Webinar – Fri 27th of March 2026

Mr Clare Bannon advised the members the OPR Training Webinar will be held on Friday the 27th of March 2026.

This item was **NOTED**

ITEM 6 - Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly is due to be held on **10th of April 2026** at **11:00am**.

Signed:



Cllr David Healy
Cathaoirleach EMRA



Ms. Clare Bannon
EMRA

Date:

10.04.2026