

Minutes of the North West Regional Development Group Meeting

held on Friday 11th March 2022 at 10.00am

in the Guildhall, Derry~Londonderry

PRESENT:

Derry City & Strabane District Council Councillor Martin Reilly
Councillor John Boyle
Councillor Rachael Ferguson
Alderman Derek Hussey, Vice Chair
John Kelpie, Chief Executive
Karen Phillips, Director of Environment & Regeneration
Stephen Gillespie, Director of Business & Culture
Alfie Dallas, Lead Finance Officer
Rachael Craig, Strategic Business Manager

Donegal County Council Councillor Johnny McGuinness
Councillor Albert Doherty
Councillor Paul Canning
Councillor Gerry McMonagle
Councillor Ciaran Brogan, Chair
John McLaughlin, Chief Executive
Michael McGarvey, Director of Water and Environment
Liam Ward, Director of Community Development &
Planning
Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and
Cultural Services

In attendance: NWRDG Secretariat Maureen Doherty, Senior Project Officer
Dara Doherty, Administrative Officer

Apologies

Councillor Sandra Duffy
Councillor Michaela Boyle
Brendan O'Donnell, A/Director of Roads & Transportation
Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, I.S. &
Emergency Services
Karen McFarland, Director of Health and Community

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Councillor McGuinness who had been co-opted to the Group. The Chair and Members welcomed Councillor McGuinness to his first meeting.

The Chair advised that Councillor Farren had resigned from the Group. It was proposed that a letter be sent to Councillor Farren to acknowledge his contribution to the group.

AGREED: To send a letter of thanks to Councillor Farren.

Proposed: Councillor Canning
Seconded: Alderman Hussey

2. Minutes & Matters arising from the meeting of 21st January 2022

The draft minutes of the 21st January 2022 were:

APPROVED: Minutes of the meeting of 21st January 2022 were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Doherty
Seconded: Councillor Canning.

2.1 Matters arising

Referring to minute reference NW 02/22 – Harvard Research Programme Update, the Director of Environment and Regeneration provided Members with a copy of the Harvard Atlas as requested at the last meeting. Mrs Phillips also advised Members that the Atlas would be launched at the next North West Strategic Growth Partnership meeting in Donegal.

3. North West Partnership Strategic Governance Issues

a) Presentation - City of Derry Airport (CoDA) Business Case.

The Chief Executive of Derry City and Strabane District Council and Councillor J Boyle declared interests as Board Members of the City of Derry Airport (CoDA).

The Lead Finance Officer of Derry City and Strabane District Council provided Members with a presentation on the City of Derry Airport (CoDA) business case. It was reported that the airport is currently funded by Derry City and Strabane District Council ratepayers and a London Public Service Organisation (PSO) which will sustain CoDA for 2022/23, depending on the approval of the business case and financial support from Government.

Members reflected on the New Decade New Approach Commitment to the Derry ~ Dublin route and recognised the strategic significance of the airport in enhancing regional connectivity and promoting economic growth.

Following discussion, Members agreed to write to the Taoiseach, the Department of Transport and the Shared Island Unit to seek financial support for the airport and the progress of the Derry~Dublin route. Members also suggested that a delegation could meet Ministers if necessary.

AGREED: To correspond with the Taoiseach's Department, The Department of Transport, and Shared Island Unit in relation to CoDA and/or send a delegation if necessary.

Proposed: Councillor Boyle
Seconded: All Members

b) NW04/22 Financial Monitoring Report and Register of Decisions

The Financial Monitoring Report and Register of Decisions at March 2022 was presented by the Senior Project Officer. Members were advised that a sum of approximately £4.33m had been committed to date with an actual expenditure of £3.31m.

Approved: Members approved the Financial Monitoring Report and Register of Decisions.

Proposed: Councillor Doherty
Seconded: Councillor Canning

c) NW05/22 Supplementary Funding Allocation to the NWDF

The Senior Project Officer advised members of the proposed funding profile for the €1m supplementary funding to the NWDF and the request for the extension of the funding deadline to 2023/24.

Following a query from the Chairman, the Chief Executive of Derry City and Strabane District Council clarified that The Northern Ireland Executive had not yet provided additional or supplementary funding to the North West Development Fund. Members suggested that correspondence should be issued immediately to the outgoing Finance Minister seeking additional funding.

AGREED: Forward forecast for the €1m supplementary funding.

Correspondence to be issued to the Irish Government to request an extension to the funding deadline of the €1m supplementary fund to the 2023/24 financial year.

Correspondence to be issued to NI Finance Minister seeking additional Executive Office funding.

4. Physical and Environmental Development

Proposed: Councillor Doherty
Seconded: Councillor Canning

a) NW06/22 Climate Action Framework.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration sought member's approval of the draft North West Climate Action Framework (NWCAF), copies of which were distributed to attendees.

The Climate Officer delivered a presentation on the North West Climate Action Framework including the indicative strategic aims, objectives and outcomes.

The Director of Water and the Environment commended the significant cross border collaboration in this project. Mr McGarvey added that over 500 staff have been trained in climate action to date and funding had been secured from the EU.

Referring to retrofitting - Councillor McMonagle added that it was important that the programme impacts vulnerable communities, offers practical supports and levers additional funding.

Councillor Doherty referred to rising costs of living and added that all climate projects in the North West City Region should complement and be collaborative.

Approved: Members approved the Draft Climate Action Framework.

Proposed: Councillor Doherty

Seconded: Councillor Canning

Councillor Brogan thanked Ms Burns for the presentation.

b) NW07/22 NW Metropolitan Spatial Strategy – A Scoping Paper for update and discussion.

The Head of Planning, DCSDC and the Head of Planning, DCC delivered a joint presentation briefing members on the North West Metropolitan Spatial Strategy Scoping Paper.

Both Heads of Planning asked members to consider the report and outlined that the next steps would be the preparation of a joint cross border spatial study. Costs for this work were briefly outlined.

The Chief Executives commended the collaborative approach across both planning teams. Reference was also made to the outdated Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy and the recent recognition of the North West in Ireland's National Development Plan.

Endorsed: The North West Cross Border Spatial Strategy Scoping Paper was endorsed

Proposed: Councillor McMonagle

Seconded: Councillor Boyle

5. Economic Growth and Development

NW08/22 Inward Investment Strategy.

Mr Gillespie introduced Mr O'Connell, OCO Global who presented an outline of the Inward Investment Strategy, providing details of the key evidence and analysis used to create the strategy.

Members discussed the roles of IDEA and Invest NI in this regard and welcomed the targeted approach to investment in other areas across the globe such as Europe and the UK.

Councillor Brogan thanked Mr O'Connell for the presentation.

6. NW09/22 Funding for Development of Shared Island proposals by Local Authorities

The Strategic Business Manager updated Members on the funding for the development of Shared Island proposals. She advised that a number of potential applications were currently being scoped by Senior Team including spatial planning/development projects, the Regional Energy Agency, the implementation of the Climate Action Framework, greenways, and a Regulation Tec proposal.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a further workshop would be arranged with Members to consider and agree potential projects for the Shared Island Fund.

AGREED: A workshop to be arranged to discuss and agree potential Shared Island Application(s).

Proposed: Councillor McMonagle

Seconded: Councillor Brogan

7. A.O.B.

Councillor Canning requested that Members consider sewage and protection of the south side of the Foyle at Carrigans at the next meeting.

Councillor Doherty raised an issue in relation to a boat captain from Ukraine in Moville. Mr Kelpie asked Councillor Doherty to forward details.

Members were advised that the next meeting of the NWRDG would be held on Thursday 23rd June 2022.

The meeting concluded at 1.55pm.