

Minutes of the North West Regional Development Group Meeting

Held on Thursday 7th July 2022 at 3.00pm

Virtually Via WebEx

PRESENT:

Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Councillor Martin Reilly
Councillor Rachael Ferguson
Alderman Derek Hussey, Vice Chair
Councillor Michaela Boyle
Councillor Conor Heaney
Stephen Gillespie, Director of Business & Culture
Rachael Craig, Strategic Business Manager
Karen McFarland, Director of Health & Community

Donegal County Council

Councillor Johnnny McGuinness
Councillor Albert Doherty
Councillor Paul Canning
Councillor Gerry McMonagle
Councillor Ciaran Brogan, Chair
Councillor Nicholas Crossan
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
Bryan Cannon, Director of Roads and Transportation
Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services,
and Information Services

NWRDG Secretariat

Maureen Doherty, Senior Project Officer
Dara Doherty, Administrative Officer

Apologies

Councillor John Boyle
John Kelpie, Chief Executive, DCSDC
Karen Phillips, Director of Environment and Regeneration
Brendan O'Donnell, A/Director of Roads & Transportation

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Vice-chair welcomed members to the meeting.

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

The draft minutes of the 11th March 2022 were:

APPROVED: Minutes of the meeting of 11th March 2022 were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Doherty

Seconded: Councillor Canning

Matters arising

Item 3 - Councillor Heaney asked if there was any response regarding City of Derry Airport? Ms Craig advised that multiple correspondence was sent to the Taoiseach's office, however to date there have only been acknowledgments received to those letters. Councillor Heaney proposed a delegation from the Group to meet with the Department of Transport/Taoiseach's Department. Mr McLaughlin said he would make a request for this and report back to the group.

Councillor McMonagle advised that when meeting with the Taoiseach on 1st April, he was very supportive and it could be funded through the Shared Island Fund.

ACTION: Mr McLaughlin to request a meeting with the Department of Transport/Taoiseach's Department.

Proposed: Councillor Heaney

Seconded: Councillor McMonagle

Item 4 – Councillor Doherty directed members to the National Spatial Strategy where it reads “it commended a collaborative approach across both planning teams”. Reference was made to the recent recognition of the Northwest in Ireland's NDP. National road projects were suspended in relation to planning and design during the period 21-25. One of the projects was from Clontribet to the border and any suspension of a project in the N2/A5 doesn't agree with the statement of being in the NDP.

Councillor Doherty proposed a submission from the Group highlighting the arterial significance of development along the N2/A5 as the issue needs further addressing and advising the government that any suspension or referral on the N2/A5 affects the Northwest directly.

Councillor Canning said he was on the A5 committee and this issue was raised at a recent meeting. He was informed that the reason for the deferral was because due to legal aspects in the north and the environmental process changing frequently. They do not wish to continue with environmental checks as they are changing daily.

Councillor Doherty said he had a copy of a letter Mr Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services received in May from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) informing members that TII delivers on the government policy relating to national roads, set out in the NDP 2021-2030 where governments decided that funding for new roads with 1.1b€ for 2021-2025 and 4b€ for 2026-2030.

It then advises the level of funding is not sufficient as outlined in the NDP to allow planning and design. From that, he added that planning and design seem to be suspended but should not be delayed because of the A5. Alderman Hussey agreed with Councillor Doherty saying there are difficulties but if it has to be done fractionally that is fine but it cannot be held up.

Mr McLaughlin said the N2/A5 is vitally important for all and will be kept on the agenda as a priority, also a letter can be sent on behalf of the group there is a nuance around environmental work which is difficult.

Action: Letter to be sent to TII requesting update on N2/A5

Item 6 - Councillor Heaney said he also sits on the ERNACT board, which is also a Derry/Donegal structured group focusing on drawing in European funding for digital innovation projects. He said it would be useful if Colm McColgan, Chief Executive of ERNACT could present to the NWRDG as it would be beneficial for both groups to interact.

Mr McLaughlin said that the group has worked with ERNACT in the past and currently Donegal County Council is working in conjunction with them on a number of projects and inviting Mr McColgan to present at a meeting would be useful.

ACTION: Colm McColgan, Chief Executive, ERNACT invited to present at a future meeting.

Agreed: All Members

3. North West Partnership Strategic Governance Issues

- a) Correspondence from NWRDG Meeting of 11th March 2022.

The Strategic Business Manager updated members on the correspondence actioned from the last meeting.

- b) NW10/22 Financial Monitoring Report and Register of Decisions – For approval

The Financial Monitoring Report and Register of Decisions at June 2022 was presented by the Senior Project Officer. Members were advised that a sum of approximately £4.3m had been committed to date with an actual expenditure of £3.6m.

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

Proposed: Councillor Canning
Seconded: Councillor M. Boyle.

- c) NW11/22 NW Secretariat Costs 22/23 – For approval

The Strategic Business Manager asked members to consider the expenditure for Secretariat costs. This is the first expenditure from the €1m fund. Total expenditure is £102,000, £99,000 salary costs and £3,000 overhead costs up to 31st March 2023.

AGREED: Expenditure for £102,000 Secretariat costs up to 31/03/23.

Proposed: Councillor Canning

Seconded: Councillor Doherty

d) NW12/22 Shared Island Development Proposals

Mr Martin, Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services & Information Systems updated members on the applications submitted for development costs for the Shared Island Fund applications. He said 3 applications were submitted by Donegal County Council and Derry City & Strabane District Council in conjunction with Catalyst.

He advised that there will be a further update at the next meeting.

4. Economic Growth and Development

a) NW13/22 Tourism Development Project – For Approval

Mr Stephen Gillespie said the purpose of the report was to seek funding approval for a North West Tourism Product Development Programme. Members were asked to agree expenditure of £125,000 for the delivery of the Tourism project.

Approved: Expenditure for £125,000 for the Tourism Product Development Programme.

Proposed: Councillor Heaney

Seconded: Councillor Canning

b) NW14/22 MIT Innovators Event – For Approval

Mr Garry Martin said the purpose of the report was to seek approval for expenditure of £20,000 for the sponsorship costs of hosting the 'Innovators Under 35 Europe 2022' held in May 2022.

Approved: Expenditure for £20,000 for the Innovators Under 35 Europe 2022.

Proposed: Councillor Brogan

Seconded: Councillor McGuinness

c) NW/15/22 Ireland NW Investment Strategy Proposal

Mr Gillespie and Mr Martin both presented this report – proposal for delivery of the Ireland North West Investment Strategy. Mr Martin said funding was being sought to the value of £130,000 towards phases 1 and 2, the Golden Bridges and Trade Mission Business Development Activities 2023.

Approved: Expenditure for £130,000 for the Phases 1 & 2 of the Investment Strategy 2022.

5. NWRDG Meeting Dates

Proposed: Councillor McMonagle

Seconded: Alderman Hussey

Members were advised that the next meeting, the AGM will take place on 28th September, Guildhall, Derry and the meeting for December will take place on 13th, venue to be confirmed.

6. AOB

Councillor Brogan said a letter had been sent on the groups behalf to Minister Murphy and Mr Losty about the Post Project Evaluation. A letter needs to be forwarded to both to seek clarification. The Strategic Business Manager advised members on the process the Executive Office will commence in the Autumn through consultants, which will be completed by December.

Councillor Canning said promotion needs to go into the art of thatching as there is one person in Inishowen. Old skills are being lost.