



**Minutes of the AIR Meeting
26th of November 2024
in the Southern Regional Assembly
Co. Waterford**

Attendance:

In person:

Cllr Declan McDonnell
Cllr Jimmy McClearn
Cllr Mick Cahill
Cllr Niall Nellis
Mr David Kelly, SRA

On-line:

Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr Niall "Botty" O'Callaghan
Cllr Jarlath Munnelly
Cllr Ken Murane
Cllr Padraig Mc Evoy
Cllr Paul Ross (Training Seminar Sub-Committee Meeting)
Mr Kevin Lynch, SRA
Ms Clare Bannon, EMRA
Mr Denis Kelly, NWRA

Support Staff:

Mr Simon Musial, EMRA
Ms Geraldine Kenny, EMRA
Ms Cara Farrell, EMRA
Ms Oonagh Messette, SRA
Mr Ian Ludlow, SRA

Apologies:

Cllr Terry Shannon

ITEM 1

Adoption of Minutes of meeting held 16th of October 2024

The Minutes from the meeting on the 16th of October 2024 were proposed by Cllr D McDonnell and seconded by Cllr M Cahill.

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

ITEM 2

Election of Leas-Chathaoirleach

Cllr D McDonnell proposed the Leas-Chathaoirleach is a member from the SRA given that SRA will assume the position of Cathaoirleach next year.

Cllr J Mc Clearn proposed to postpone the election of the Leas-Chathaoirleach until the next meeting of AIR. The SRA members are to nominate the Leas-Chathaoirleach.

This was **AGREED**.

ITEM 3

Letter from Minister Alan Dillon to EMRA Cathaoirleach (EU Funding Officer Posts)

Ms C Bannon informed the members that the EMRA wrote to two government ministers: Minister Jennifer Carroll Mac Neill and Minister Alan Dillon, in relation to EU funding officer posts. No response was received from Minister Carroll Mac Neill. The letter from Minister A Dillon was circulated to the members prior to the meeting. Ms C Bannon indicated that the letter states that no funding has been provided, in Budget for 2025, as the Regional Assemblies already fill the role, and under section 159 of the Local Government Act each local authority's Chief Executive is responsible for their own staffing requirements.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr J Mc Clearn, Cllr M Cahill, Cllr D Mc Donnell, Mr D Kelly (NWRA), and Ms C Bannon. It was noted that the correspondence stated that further detailed examination would be required before the proposal can be progressed.

Action – When a new government is formed, raise this issue again with new ministers and continue to progress the IREO strategy.

ITEM 4

A.I.R Constitution

Mr D Kelly (SRA) informed the members the minor amendments requested at the last meeting were made, and the new AIR constitution was circulated to the members prior to the meeting.

Cllr J Mc Clearn proposed to sign off on the AIR constitution, this was seconded by Cllr D Mc Donnell. Four members signed the AIR constitution: Cllr J Mc Clearn, Cllr D Mc Donnell, Cllr M Cahill, and Cllr N Nellis.

ITEM 5

A.I.R Training Seminar 2025

Ms C Bannon indicated that the AIR subcommittee met before the meeting today.

The event will be held in the Radisson Blu, Athlone, and the next AIR meeting in January will be held in the venue, if a room is available.

“Save the date” invites were sent to all TD’s and councillors in all the local authorities. Each political party has a WhatsApp group, and it was proposed to circulate this to party group leaders to issue it to their members.

Mr D Kelly (SRA) advised the members IPB has agreed to sponsor the event over the next number of years.

The AIR Cathaoirleach J Mc Clearn advised he will not be able to attend the AIR training seminar due to a prior commitment.

ITEM 6

AILG Interactions

Ms C Bannon provided the members with an update on recent interactions with the AILG. The Regional Assembly Directors met with Tommy Moylan and Elaine Lynch from AILG in order to progress this relationship.

It was indicated that AILG would work with the Regional Assemblies to roll out training to elected members on matters relating to the Regional Assemblies. It was also indicated that the AILG has agreed to circulate details of the AIR Training Seminar as part of their newsletter to AILG members.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr J Mc Clean, Cllr M Cahill and Mr D Kelly (SRA).

ITEM 7

Report on the Future of Local Democracy October 2024, Seanad Public Consultation Committee- Feedback from Cllr Padraig McEvoy and Kevin Lynch (Assistant Director and Senior Planner, SRA).

Cllr P Mc Evoy and Mr K Lynch gave the members feedback on the report from the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on the Future of Local Democracy which was issued in October 2024. It was indicated that it does not appear that the submission made by the Regional Assemblies was taken into account and there are many outdated and inaccurate references to the Regional Assemblies included. The stated requirement for reform, however, does provide an opportunity for the Regional Assemblies to inform this process.

Action: Ms C Bannon outlined that it would be beneficial for the Regional Assemblies to develop a joint paper on the essential contribution that Regional Assemblies provide in Ireland and what is needed to enhance this. One possible avenue to explore in completing such a Report is working with the OECD.

Cllr P Mc Evoy outlined that it would be beneficial to develop an interim marketing piece, to enable members to engage with candidates for the Seanad, ministerial leads (local government or regions,) DPER, actors in the new political landscape etc.

A discussion followed with contributions from Cllr J Mc Clearn, Cllr M Cahill, Cllr D Lacey, Cllr P Mc Evoy, Ms C Bannon, Mr D Kelly SRA, and Mr K Lynch.

ITEM 8

Schedule of Meetings for 2025- attached.

Clr D Mc Donnell advised there is a clash with Committee of Regions Bureau dates in May and September. Clr Jimmy McClearn indicated that it is not clear who the CoR Bureau members will be and so this should be determined in the first instance, and the AIR meeting dates changed if needs be.

ITEM 9

Any other business

None.

ITEM 10

Date and Venue for Next Meeting

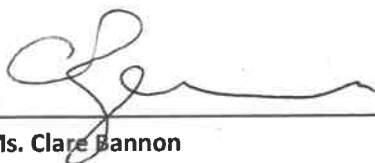
The next meeting of the AIR will be held in the venue for the next AIR training event, the Radisson Blu, Athlone on the 14th of January 2025 at 11.00.

Signed:



Clr. Jimmy McClearn
Cathaoirleach

14/01/2025
Date



Ms. Clare Bannon
EMRA

14 / 1 / 25.
Date