

## Assembly Meeting - Minutes

13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 12.00pm

Assembly House, Waterford



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional  
Assembly

**Presiding:** Cathaoirleach Andrew McGuinness.

**Present:** Cllr. Anthony Barry, Cllr. Dan Boyle, Cllr. Pip Breen, Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy, Cllr. Kay Dawson, Cllr. Joe Kavanagh, Cllr. Deirdre Kelly, Cllr. Mairín McGrath, Mayor John Moran, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy, Cllr. Tony O'Brien, Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan, Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan, Cllr. Peggy Ryan, Cllr. Bill Slattery, Cllr. Oliver Walsh, Cllr. Ben Ward.

**Remote Attendance:** Cllr. Alan Coleman, Cllr Gillian Coughlan, Cllr. Frankie Daly, Cllr. Fergal Dennehy, Cllr. Kieran McCarthy, Cllr. Norma Moriarty, Cllr. Bridín Murphy, Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, Cllr. Thomas Phelan, Cllr. Terry Shannon, Cllr. John Sheahan.

**Officials Present:** David Kelly, Cormac Laphorne, Kevin Lynch, Ronan O'Brien, Naomi Flood, Ian Ludlow, Lisa Slater, Gary Burke, Omer Sunguroglu, Maria Murphy.

**Remote Attendance:** Enda Hogan, Michael Buckley, Dominic Walsh, Brigh Ryan, Anna Sellars, Marie Harnett, Sarah Davoren, Breda Curran, Mary Molloy, Oonagh Messette, Samantha Richardson, Eve Hayden, Edel Hunt, Elayne McDonnell, Yvonne Cooney, Denis Cotter.

Prior to commencement of the meeting, The Cathaoirleach informed Members that David Kelly, Director is formally seeking a 3 year extension to his role as The Director of the Southern Regional Assembly and will write to the Minister for formal approval.

### 1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 12th December 2025

The Members adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 09th January 2025, proposed by Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Bill Slattery.

### 2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 3. URBACT presentation with DR Karl Murphy, EMRA

Dr Karl Murphy delivered a presentation on the URBACT programme, outlining its objectives, the URBACT method, programme locations, existing networks within the SRA region, the Portico knowledge-sharing platform, upcoming calls to action, and capacity-building opportunities. He also thanked the SRA Thrive Project Team and the SRA Corporate Communications Team for their ongoing work.

Following the presentation, several councillors commended Dr Murphy on the quality of his contribution, and a short Q&A session took place, with questions focusing on climate-related issues, the application process, and sustainability. The Director invited councillors to share any further ideas or suggestions via email, and the Cathaoirleach concluded by thanking Dr Murphy for his presentation.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the  
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional  
Assembly

#### **4. Annual Programme of Work for 2026 for Adoption**

Assistant Director Cormac Laphorne introduced the Annual Programme of Work to Members and outlined some of the key pieces of work such as the RSES, Regional Programmes, technology upgrades, and retrofit of Assembly House.

The Programme of Work was proposed by the Cathaoirleach and seconded by Cllr. John Brennan.

#### **5. Regional Planning Update**

The Director introduced the Regional Planning update, after which Assistant Director (Planning) Kevlin Lynch outlined key elements of the RSES, including statutory obligations, the consideration of additional key towns, amendments to the Planning Act, and the consultation process involving local authorities, chief executives, the public, and young people.

A short question-and-answer session followed, during which Members discussed housing, zoning, infrastructure, timelines, and renewable energy. The Cathaoirleach thanked Kevlin for the update.

#### **6. Discussion on public attendance at Assembly meetings**

The Director introduced the matter of public attendance at Assembly Meetings for discussion. Following a short debate with Assembly Members, it was agreed that meetings would be recorded and made available for the public to view online. The mechanism on how this will work will be brought forward at a future meeting. It was noted that the press and public are invited to attend meetings as per Standing orders.

The Cathaoirleach vacated the chair due to a personal engagement, and Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Peggy Ryan chaired the remainder of the meeting.

#### **7. Discussion on remote attendance at the Annual Meeting**

The Director introduced the issue of remote attendance at the Annual Meeting. Following a short debate with Assembly Members, there was general agreement that the requirement to attend the Annual Meeting in person should be strengthened. The proposal to amend Standing orders to reflect this was proposed by Cllr. Tony O'Brien and seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Kelly.

#### **8. Any Other Business**

The Director reminded Assembly Members of the upcoming Annual AIR Training Seminar, scheduled for 25–26 February 2026 at the Inishowen Gateway Hotel, Buncrana, Co. Donegal.

Senior Staff Officer Ian Ludlow informed Members that Eirgrid had proposed the 18<sup>th</sup> March for a site visit to the Celtic Interconnector project. The tour would be limited to ten attendees, and a separate email would be circulated with further details.



Cllr. Tony O'Brien raised the issue of the recent Uisce Éireann planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála for the Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region, highlighting concerns over ecological and biodiversity impacts. Cllr. O'Brien encouraged other Members who shared concerns to collaborate on a possible submission for the application. The Director confirmed that the Assembly had previously made a submission at pre planning stage.

Cllr. Ben Ward requested an update on the affordable housing funding that was previously mentioned at the December 2025 Assembly meeting.

Cllr. Gillian Coughlan enquired whether there were any plans with the Assembly for the hosting of the EU presidency in the second half of the year.

Cllr. Clare Colleran Molly thanked the Director for his input at a meeting on renewable energy in January, highlighting the need for the Assembly to make statutory submissions on grid infrastructure projects. Cllr. Colleran Molloy also enquired about the Assembly's plans for Europe Day 2026.

Cllr. Dan Boyle referenced the upcoming Local Democracy Task Force report and suggested that the Assembly review the findings in relation to regional governance.

Lisa Slater, Communications Officer, gave an update on planned Europe Day events, which includes traditional media campaigns, primary schools engagement, and a photo competition.

The Director gave a brief update on the Revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life workshop and asked that Members consider a submission for same.

## 9. Date of next meeting

13<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at noon, at Assembly House, Waterford.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cllr. Andrew McGuinness**  
Cathaoirleach

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the  
European Union



**Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt**

**Southern Regional  
Assembly**



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional  
Assembly

## AGENDA

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026
2. Matters Arising
3. URBACT presentation with Dr Karl Murphy, EMRA
4. Annual Programme of Work 2026 for adoption
5. Regional Planning update
6. Discussion on public attendance at Assembly meetings
7. Discussion on remote attendance at the Annual meeting
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of Next Meeting



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the  
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional  
Assembly