EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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

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A message from An Cathaoirleach

I am pleased to present the third Annual report for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

Throughout 2017 the Region was represented well by all 38 members from our 12 Local Authority areas to ensure our core functions and the objectives of the Corporate Plan continue to be delivered. Through the monthly Assembly meeting and Strategic Planning Area meetings a wide area of interest to the region was covered. Again in 2017 the National Planning Framework was a main topic of discussion and our important publication in November, the Assembly Issues paper, originated from these discussions being distilled into the document issued. The Regional Planning Guidelines still maintained their important role and throughout the year reports were considered by the members.

As in previous years we had a number of changes in members and I would like to thank those who have moved on for their important contributions to EMRA and to welcome the new members. As an Assembly we have continued to promote and develop the region.

The debate on the National Planning Framework demonstrated the opportunity that exists for a new approach to Regional Governance in the country and brought into focus the many strengths that our region can bring to a national plan such as the NPF. The role the region played in assisting Government bring the discussion to the citizen showed that a well-resourced and empowered regional structure can provide a focused platform where cross county and cross regional issues of a strategic nature can be best managed.

Throughout 2017 our engagement with the European Union helped raised the hugely important issue of BREXIT to a high level of priority and debate and we have worked throughout the year in close co-operation with the other two regional assemblies, the Northern and Western; and the Southern, to ensure this vitally important topic remained high on the agenda. Throughout the year we also ensured that EU funding coming into the regions have been maximised and used to the best advantage of the citizens of the regions.

I wish to thank my Leas Cathaoirleach Catherine Fitzgerald for her support and work throughout the year and would also like to thank my predecessor Councillor Dermot Lacey for his work during his period as Cathaoirleach of the Assembly.

The foundations for the future of the Assembly have been clearly established through our work over the past 3 years and I believe we are in a strong place to show clear leadership for the region into the future. The upcoming Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies that will follow this work present us with a challenge that my past year as Cathaoirleach has shown me we well placed to deliver upon.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director and his staff for their work and support throughout 2017.

A message from the Director

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Corporate plan 2015-2020 sets out the strategic vision of the organisation and is supported by the Annual Works Programme approved by the members at the start of the year. This Annual Report sets out the actions undertaken throughout the year to deliver the objectives of that Corporate Plan.

This year saw the Assembly move from its establishment phase into one of developing its policies on regional planning, economic and EU related activities.

A full complement of 11 Plenary meetings of the Assembly was held throughout the year including the Annual meeting at which Councillor PJ Reilly was elected Cathaoirleach and I would like to thank him and all the members of the Assembly for their support and participation throughout the year. The high level of engagement ensured that our policy agenda continued to develop during 2017.

All of our areas of activity are of equal importance but it is fair to say that 2017 saw the Assembly have a clear focus on the National Planning Framework (NPF) process and what that meant for regional planning and economic development. As early as February the assembly played a prominent role in assisting with a regional launch of the NPF and this engagement continued throughout the year, a joint Strategic Planning Area meeting being held with Minister English in Granard in October. Stakeholder engagement in the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies resulting from the NPF continued throughout the year.

BREXIT and its implications also became an increasing focus for EMRA, particularly in its provision of supports to the Irish National Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) which are primarily delivered through the Irish Regions Office (IRO) in Brussels and managed through this Assembly. CoR members received supports in preparation for their attendance at full plenary meetings of the CoR, and supports were also in place for the members who participate on Commissions throughout the year. As in previous years the support of Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU in this process is invaluable and co-operation between the IRO and the office of the Perm Rep continued throughout 2017.

EMRA has continued to play an active role in the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes and various other European Programmes. It also participated in several EU projects as a partner. The Assembly actively engaged in relevant networks such as ENCORE and sat on Regional Action Plan for Jobs Committees and bodies such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategies Steering Group.

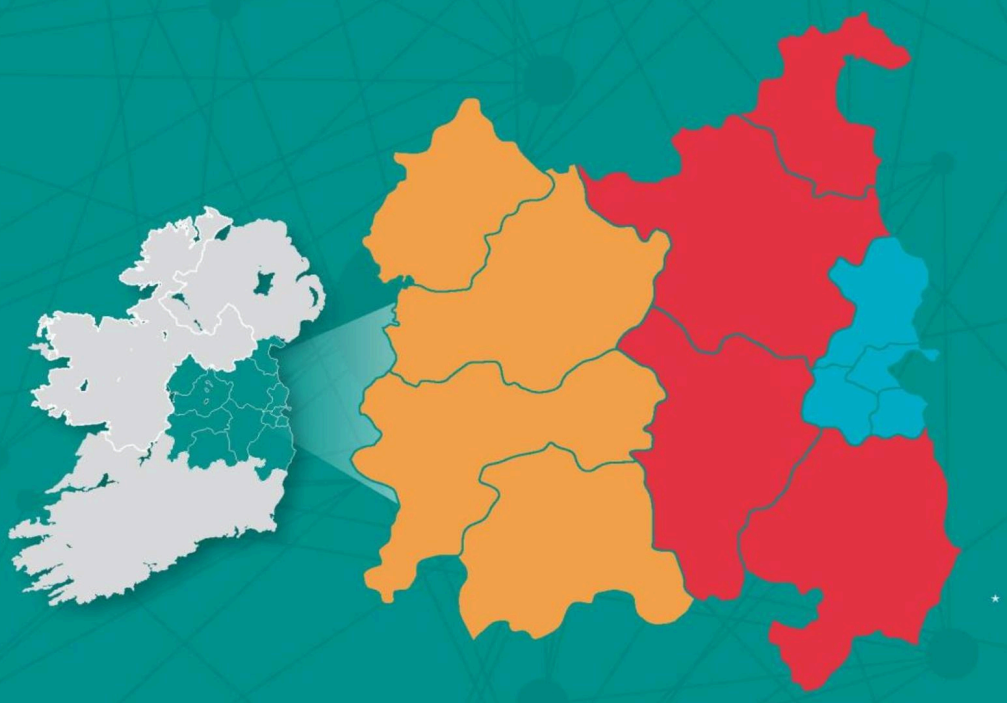
From a Corporate Governance perspective activities in areas such as Performance Management Development System and the implementation of a Core Time and Portal module were undertaken in 2017.

This year's report contains a set of accounts for 2016 audited by the Local Government Audit Service. Governance and financial controls continued to be managed during the year.

The ongoing linkage to local authorities was provided by the designated chief executive Joan Martin from Louth County Council who I would like to thank for her continued support.

Again the enthusiasm and professionalism of staff was evident throughout 2017 and I would like to personally thank them for ensuring that we achieved all our works plan objectives for the year.

Introduction to our region



- 3 Strategic Planning Areas
- 12 Local Authorities
- 2.33 million persons*
- Land Area 14,463km²

*

Photo credit:
Ireland's Content Pool, Three Rock Mountain; by Rob Durston

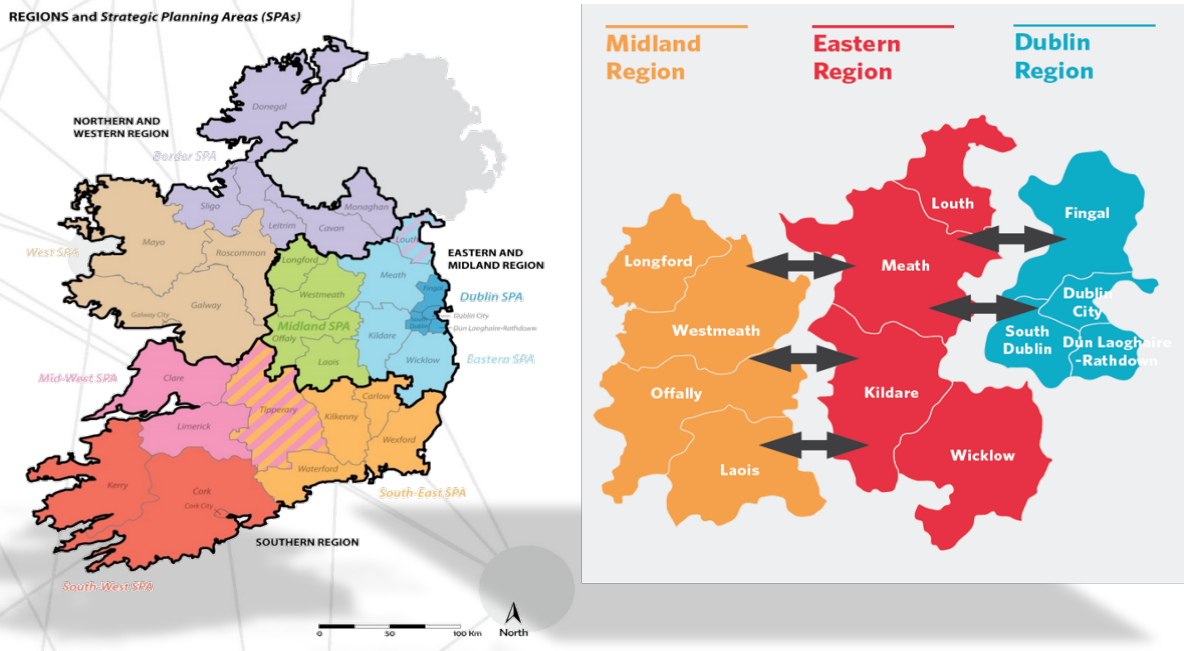
Introduction to our region

Introducing the Regional Assembly

This is the third year of the establishment of the Regional Assembly following on from the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act in 2014. The Eastern and Midland Regional has a population of upward of 2.33 million even though it is the smallest of the three regions in terms of land area. The region has approximately 270km of coastline from Carlingford Louth in Louth to Kilmichael Point at the Wicklow-Wexford border.

The main settlement centre is the Dublin metropolitan area which is supported regionally by key strategic county towns. The region contains an extensive rural hinterland and incorporates 12 city and county councils. EMRA is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland, primarily focused on strategic planning, EU programming and funding and coordination of certain local government activities. It is comprised of 38 elected members (councillors) who are principally elected by their peers in the 12 councils to represent them regionally.

Our Region in Ireland



Functions of Regional Assemblies

- To prepare and oversee the implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines, to be replaced by new **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies**, and providing statutory observations on local authority development plans and variations.
- To co-ordinate, promote or support **strategic planning and sustainable development** of the regions
- To manage **Regional Operational Programmes** monitoring and making proposals in all EU programmes of assistance from the EU.
- To **promote effectiveness** in local government and public services in the region, in conjunction with the National Oversight & Audit Commission.

European context

The Eastern and Midland Region, is one of the 3 designated Irish regions at European level. The 3 Assembly areas are all classified as NUTS 2 regions (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics). This is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU into *NUTS Regions*. NUTS regions are part of the mechanism of EU cohesion policy, and importantly, the decision to allocate cohesion funding is made on the eligibility of a region at the NUTS 2 level. An example of the funding allocated to eligible NUTS 2 regions is the European Regional Development Funding (ERDF). NUTS regions are also used to collect, develop and harmonise European statistics by Eurostat at European level and the Central Statistics Office in Ireland.

Following the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the two previous Regional Assemblies were reorganised into the three Regional Assemblies; Eastern & Midland Region (EMRA), Southern Region (SRA)and Northern & Western Region (NWRA). However, the NUTS 2 regions remained unchanged, and the current round of ERDF funding (for 2014-2020) is still administered using the old NUTS regions by SRA and NWRA through their Regional Operational Programmes. EMRA has no Regional Operational Programme at present, and the Eastern and Midland Region is administered under the Regional Operational Programme aligned with the former Regional Assemblies.

Regional Authorities

2 x NUTS II Regions

Former Regional Assemblies

3 x NUTS II Regions
Current regional structure

A new NUTS II structure, with 3 NUTS II regions mirroring the assemblies was approved and entered into force in December 2016. It is the intention of EMRA to participate fully and on an equal footing in the governance and administrative arrangements that will be introduced to manage Ireland's involvement with Structural Funds into the future. This will be particularly important in maximising opportunities to maintain and increase the region's competitiveness nationally and internationally. With the alignment of national, regional and local planning and economic development through Ireland 2040, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and County/City Development plans, effective use of our relationship with the EU institutions from a policy and funding perspective can be enhanced.

Assembly Meetings and Membership

Membership of the Assembly 2017

Councillor	Local Authority	2017 Changes
Paddy Bourke	Dublin City Council	
Sylvester Bourke	Wicklow County Council	Resigned February 2017
Tom Brabazon	Dublin City Council	Resigned February 2017
Paddy Bracken	Laois County Council	
Christy Burke	Dublin City Council	
Tommy Byrne	Louth County Council	
Mick Cahill	Longford County Council	
Ciaran Cuffe	Dublin City Council	Appointed April 2017
Thomas Cullen	Wicklow County Council	
Jennifer Cuffe	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Resigned May 2017
Kieran Dennison	Fingal County Council	
Eamon Dooley	Offaly County Council	
Francis Duffy	South Dublin County Council	
Andrew Duncan	Westmeath County Council	
Gaye Fagan	Dublin City Council	
Enda Fanning	South Dublin County Council	
Kate Feeney	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Catherine Fitzgerald	Laois County Council	
Brian Fitzgerald	Meath County Council	
Eddie Fitzpatrick	Offaly County Council	
Mary Freehill	Dublin City Council	
Mary Hanafin	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Appointed May 2017
Pat Hand	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
David Healy	Fingal County Council	
Paddy Hill	Westmeath County Council	
Pamela Kearns	South Dublin County Council	
Ivan Keatley	Kildare County Council	
Dermot Lacey	Dublin City Council	
Colm Markey	Louth County Council	
Lettie McCarthy	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Brian McDonagh	Fingal County Council	
Padraig McEvoy	Kildare County Council	
Seamus McGrattan	Dublin City Council	Resigned April 2017
Martin Miley	Kildare County Council	
Derek Mitchell	Wicklow County Council	Appointed February 2017
Maria Murphy	Meath County Council	
Claire O'Connor	Dublin City Council	Appointed March 2017
PJ Reilly	Longford County Council	
Tommy Reilly	Meath County Council	
Pat Vance	Wicklow County Council	
Barry Ward	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Irene Winters	Wicklow County Council	

Meetings and Membership of the Assembly

Assembly meetings were held on the second Friday of the month, throughout the year, in City Hall, Dame Street, Dublin 2. A total of 11 Assembly meetings were held during 2017, with an average attendance of 69%.

Assembly Membership

Assembly Members were nominated by the constituent Local Authorities in the region in proportion to the size of the Local Authority's population. Also when a Member was nominated to the Committee of the Regions, they automatically became a Member of the Regional Assembly. This resulted in an overall assembly membership of 38 councillors, breakdown by local authority below.

Dublin City Council	7	Louth County Council	2
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	5	Meath County Council	3
Fingal County Council	3	Offaly County Council	2
Kildare County Council	3	South Dublin County Council	3
Laois County Council	2	Westmeath County Council	2
Longford County Council	2	Wicklow County Council	4

The political breakdown of the Assembly during 2017 was as follows:

Party	Number of Members
Fianna Fáil	14
Fine Gael	9
Labour	5
Independent (Non Party)	5
Sinn Féin	2
Green Party	3

Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach 2017

Cllr. Dermot Lacey	Cathaoirleach	July 2016 to July 2017
Cllr. Lettie McCarthy	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2016 to July 2017
Cllr. PJ Reilly	Cathaoirleach	July 2017 to present
Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2017 to present

Election of Cathaoirleach at Annual Meeting 7th July 2017

At the third Annual Meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly on Friday, 7th July 2017, Cllr. PJ Reilly was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

2017 EMRA Meeting Schedule

Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates	Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates
January	13th January	July	7th July
February	10th February	August	**No Meeting**
March	10th March	September	8th September
April	21st April	October	13th October
May	12th May	November	10th November
June	9th June	December	1st December

Meetings and Membership of Sub-Committees

In 2017 the three strategic planning area committees for the Dublin, Eastern and Midland strategic planning areas (SPAs) met twice individually and twice on a joint SPA in Granard on the 27th October and in Naas on the 8th of December.

Dublin SPA	Eastern SPA	Midland SPA
Meetings held on 26th February / 22nd September	Meetings held on 17th February/ 6th October	Meetings held on 22nd February/ 28th September
Members		
Paddy Bourke	Sylverster Bourke	Paddy Bracken
Tom Brabazon	Tommy Byrne	Mick Cahill
Christy Burke	Thomas Cullen	Eamon Dooley
Ciarán Cuffe	Brian Fitzgerald	Andrew Duncan
Jennifer Cuffe	Ivan Keatley	Catherine Fitzgerald
Kieran Dennison	Colm Markey	Eddie Fitzpatrick
Francis Duffy	Padraig McEvoy	Paddy Hill
Gaye Fagan	Martin Miley	PJ Reilly
Enda Fanning	Derek Mitchell	
Kate Feeney	Maria Murphy	
Mary Freehill	Tommy Reilly	
Mary Hanafin	Pat Vance	
Pat Hand	Irene Winters	
David Healy		
Pamela Kearns		
Dermot Lacey		
Lettie McCarthy		
Brian McDonagh		
Seamus McGrattan		
Claire O'Connor		
Barry Ward		

Conferences and Training Attended in 2017

Title	Location	Representatives
AIR Annual Training Event	Newtownmountkennedy	16
Budget 2018	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	2
Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness	Louth	1
MacGill Summer School	Co. Donegal	9
Esperanza Enterprises	Galway	3
Managing Executive Governance	Galway	1
European Week of the Regions	Brussels	1
National Ploughing Championships	Offaly	1

The Association of Irish Regions

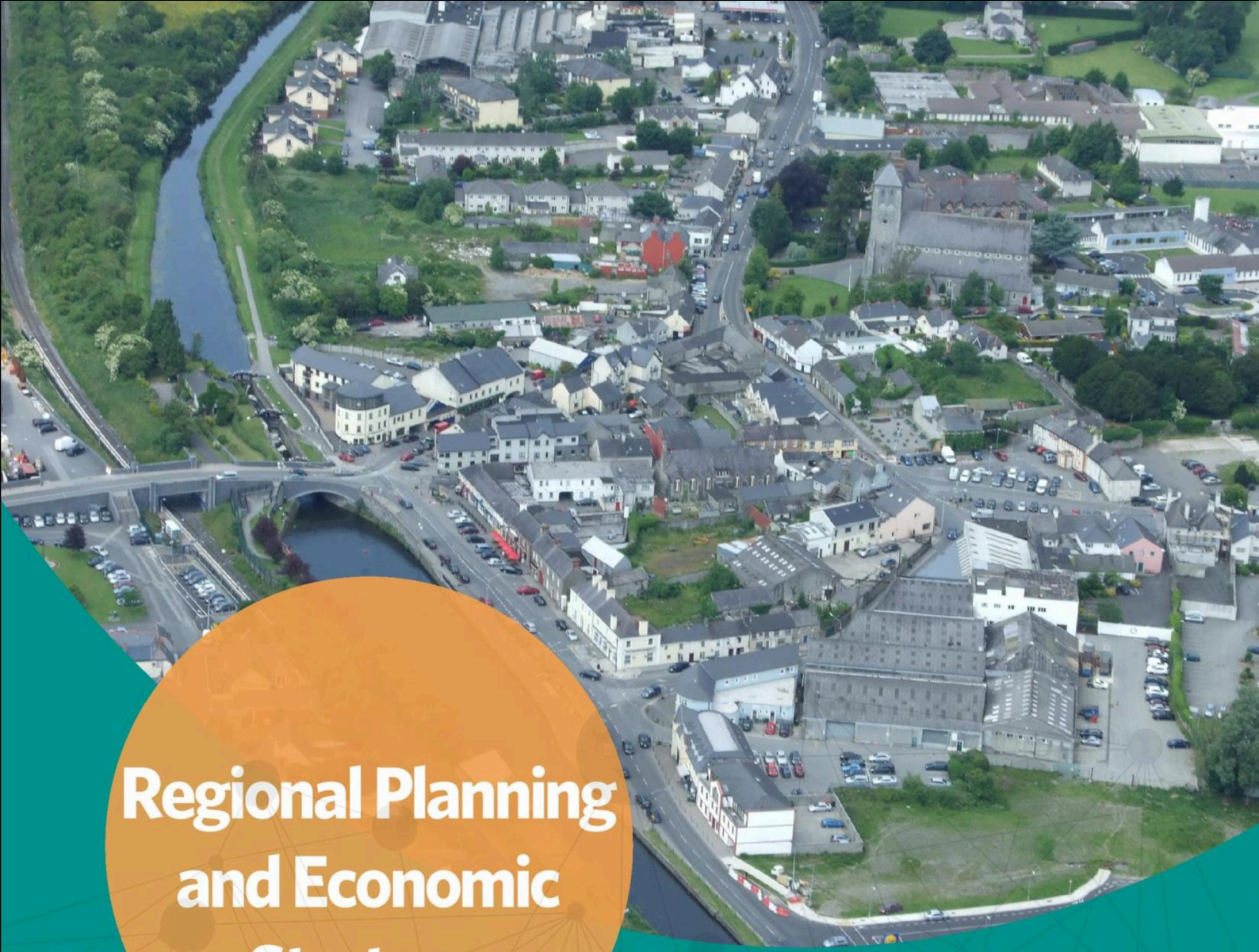
The Association of Irish Regions (AIR) is the national representative organisation of the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland (and previously the 8 Regional Authorities also). Its objectives are to:

- express the collective view of its membership on matters concerning their constitution and the functions for which they have statutory responsibilities;
- and to offer advice to Government on matters pertaining to economic and social development, including balanced regional development.

Association of Irish Regions Training event 2017

On 26th May 2017 a training event was organised by the Association of Irish Regions, in conjunction with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, entitled "Brexit, Regional Planning and EU Affairs" – Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Government.

The Cathaoirleach of the Region – Cllr Dermot Lacey welcomed participants to the region. Stephen Donnelly, TD, gave a key note speech on Brexit – the Challenges to Ireland. Regional planning updates were provided by Malachy Bradley, Assistant Director, Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and Liam McGree, Acting Assistant Director, Southern Regional Assembly. This was followed by a questions and answers session on Regional and Economic Strategies. Presentations on EU related opportunities were provided by Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive, EMRA and Michael O/Brien, Programme Liaison Officer, NWRA.



Regional Planning and Economic Strategy

Image courtesy of TII

Regional Planning Guidelines

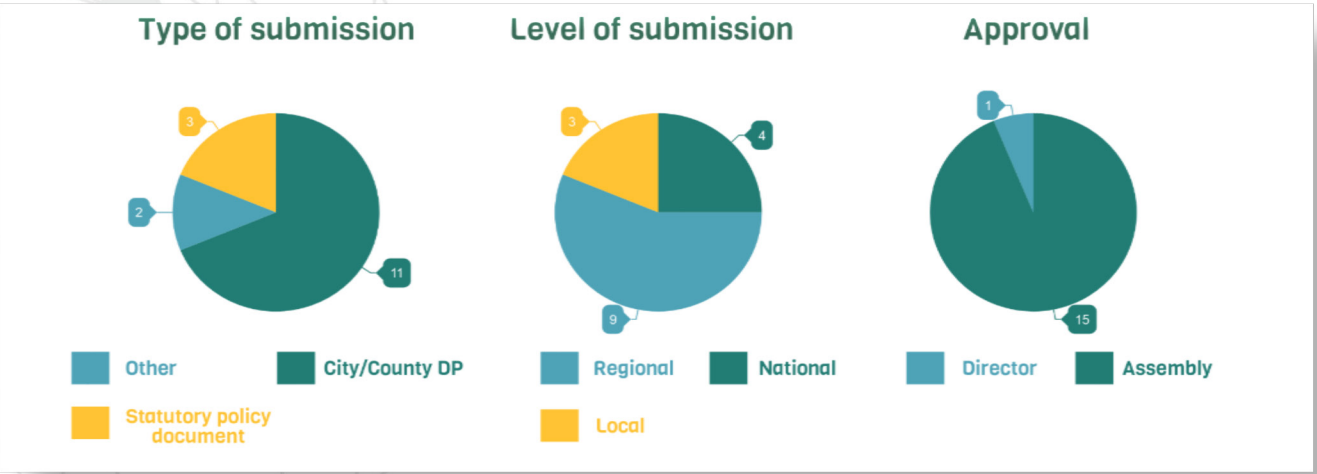
The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly is responsible for the ongoing implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-22; the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands Region 2010-2022 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-22 (EMRA is responsible for the part of these RPGs that pertain to Louth County Council). The RPGs, will in time be replaced by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, the process for the preparation of the RSES has commenced in 2017.

The RPGs provide a framework for, and policy guidance to, local authorities and others in the areas of spatial growth, settlement patterns, population and housing targets, economic development, infrastructure, rural development, flood risk, heritage and the environment, and social infrastructure.

Since the adoption of the Regional Planning Guidelines in 2010, significant progress has been made in implementing national strategic planning policy by the integration of regional objectives within County and City Development Plans. The primary mechanism for this has been through the provision of core strategies supporting an evidence based approach to spatial land use planning and growth strategies, as provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

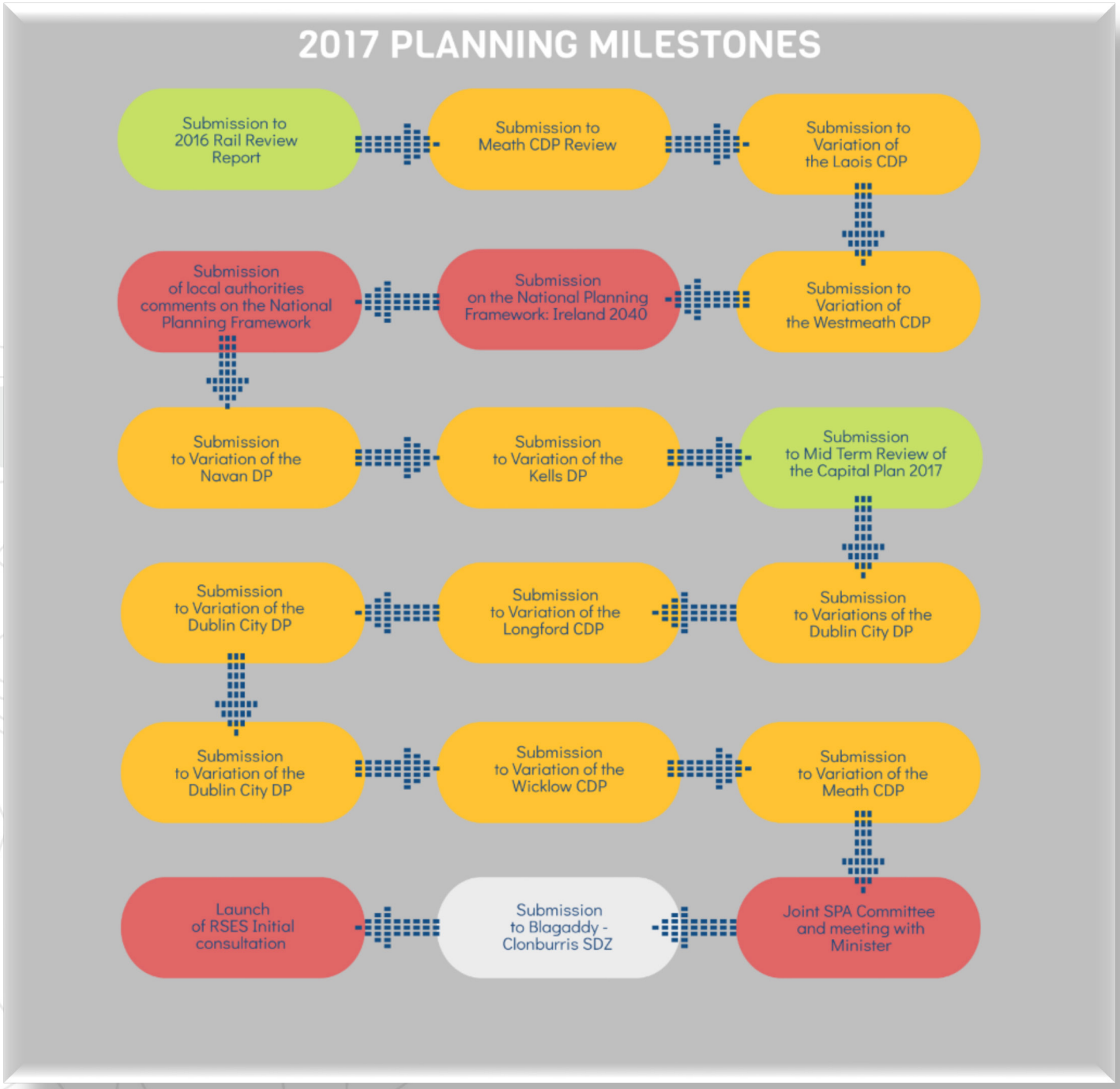
In 2017 the Regional Planning Guidelines have been central across a range of policy areas and consultations by way of engagement with local authorities, state agencies and other stakeholders and by way of 16 formal submissions. Some of these submissions were the Assembly performing its statutory functions in accordance with section 27 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) by way of observations on Development Plans and variations of Development Plans.

Breakdown of Submissions



In formulating these submissions the Assembly has worked with the local authorities in the preparation of City and County Development Plans both formally through the requirements of section 27B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and informally through the executive in preparation of the core strategy of Development Plans. The Assembly has made observations on Development Plans and variations of Development Plans in the local authorities of Meath, Laois, Westmeath, Dublin City, Longford, and Wicklow, and on the Blagaddy - Clonburris Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme.

In influencing national policy by implementing the Regional Planning Guidelines there have been submissions and statements made on the Irish Rail Study Review Report and on the Mid Term Review of the National Capital Plan.



Regional Policy

Ensuring other Regional Policy Areas

The Regional Assembly continues to work with a range of agencies and organisations to ensure that regional planning informs emerging and existing policy areas such as;

- Involvement in the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAMS) project for the Eastern Area and the Shannon Area including ongoing management and flood assessment of the District's rivers.
- Participation on the Eirgrid SEA Steering group for their Implementation Plan.
- Engagement with Healthy Ireland on the preparation of an emerging evidence based framework to inform the health sector.
- Participation on the Smart Dublin Advisory Network

National Planning Framework Ireland 2040: Our Plan

The main planning policy focus of the Assembly outside of implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines has been the emerging national spatial policy in the National Planning Framework (NPF) – Ireland 2040. The Issue and Choices pre-draft document for the NPF was published in February and the Assembly assisted the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government in the launch of the document with a regional event in the Axis theatre in Ballymun on the 21st February 2017 attended by Minister Simon Coveney TD.

The Assembly members were briefed by the executive on the Issues and Choices document and made a formal submission to the Framework as part of this consultation. The Executive of the Assembly also met all the constituent local authorities in the region and collated all their comments into one coherent submission that was also lodged to this process.

Subsequently the Draft National Planning Framework Ireland 2040:Our Plan was published in September and the executive briefed the members on the content of the draft and the Director issued the members comments on the Draft NPF.

The Assembly also met with Minister Damien English TD, Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with special responsibility for Housing and Urban Development in a special event in Granard, Co Longford on the 27th October 2017.

Preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

One of the main functions of the Regional Assembly is the preparation and adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which will be the successor to the Regional Planning Guidelines. "The objective of regional spatial and economic strategies shall be to support the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region for which the strategies are prepared which shall be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies or objectives of the Government Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The Assembly was instructed to formally commence the process of preparing an RSES for the region by the Minister in September 2017 on foot of the publication of the draft National Planning Framework 2040:Our Plan.

The Assembly launched the initial pre-draft consultation period, in conjunction with the other Regional Assemblies (NWRA & SRA) on the 20th November 2017. As part of this consultation an Issues Paper was prepared and a socio-economic profile of the region was compiled in conjunction with AIRO Maynooth.

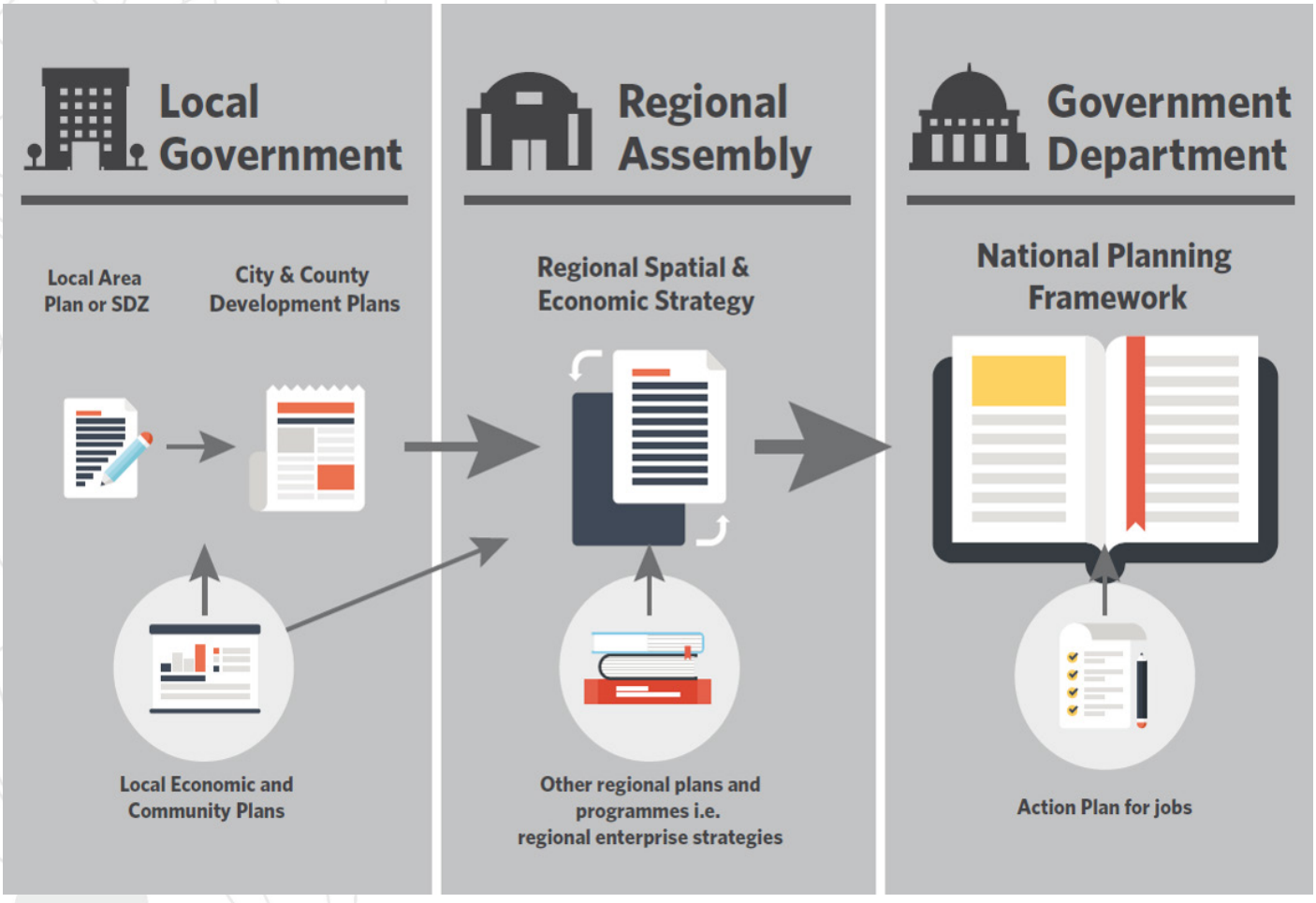
As part of the process to preparing the RSES, the Assembly are taking a collaborative approach with our key stakeholders that we have identified in the previous 2 years since our establishment. In this regard there was kick off meeting with our key stakeholders and senior technical staff in the local authorities to set out a roadmap for the preparation of the strategy for the region.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The first few years of the new Regional Assembly was considered a success in establishing our role and function in regional strategic planning and economic strategy, this was has been further enhanced by deeper engagement and commitment with key stakeholders through the region in 2017 culminating in the commencement of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy process.

With the publication of Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework in 2018 the formulation of the RSES for the region can progress under the governance and working structures of the Assembly that have been established.

2018 will see the progression of the RSES for the region as a statutory document that will set out the strategic vision of the region for the next 20 years and become the main policy driver for the implementation and monitoring of regional planning, sustainable development and economic strategy, aligned with EU, national and local policy and funding programmes in Ireland.



EU Activities

EU Policy and Funding Framework

There are 5 EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the European 2014 – 2020 programming period. These are European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and Cohesion Fund (CF). Ireland is in receipt of 4 of these funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF). There is no Cohesion Fund allocation to Ireland as we are outside the threshold. The Cohesion Fund is aimed at Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average. It aims to reduce economic and social disparities and to promote sustainable development.

ESIF	Acronym	Allocation
European Regional Development Fund	ERDF	€409.2m
European Social Fund	ESF	€542m
Cohesion Fund	CF	n/a
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	EARFD	€2.19b
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	EMFF	€147.6m

The shaded areas in table are Structural Funds (ESF, ERDF and CF).

The allocations in the table above represent the EU co-financing element, which in all cases, is matched by exchequer spending towards delivering strategic investment objectives.

The common goal of all of the Funds is to bridge the gap between the wealthier and less well-off regions of Europe by co-financing development programmes. This will reduce the differences between regions and create a better economic and social balance within and between Member States. The total amount of ESIF in Ireland for the 2014 – 2020 programming period is **€3,289,837,222** (as per National Partnership Agreement).

The Structural Fund element of the ESIF in Ireland includes both the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Ireland will receive €**1.153** billion from the Structural Funds from 2014-2020:

- €542 million will be in the form of ESF assistance. An additional €68m is provided for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which will be programmed through the ESF programme.
- €409.2 million is for European Regional Development Fund co-funded programmes including €160,097,179 for the BMW Regional Operation Programme and €249,109,350 Southern and Eastern Regional Region. Further details of these figures are given in the tables below.

The remainder of the ESIF €3.289 billion allocated to Ireland is as follows:

- **€2.19 billion** from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Fund (EAFRD). This includes the LEADER Programme funding of **€157,000,000**.
- **€147.6 million** from the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF), also for the period 2014-2020.

Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs)

The Regional Assembly participated in the implementation and monitoring of both the Irish Regional Operational Programmes – the Southern and Eastern ROP and the Border, Midland and Western ROP. These programmes involve significant investment in areas that help create jobs, increase competitiveness and innovation, promote indigenous enterprise and improve the critical infrastructure which facilitates our daily lives. The current programmes target the following priorities:

- Strengthening research, technology development and innovation
- Information and communications technology
- The creation of new enterprises and support for SMEs
- Low carbon economy
- Sustainable urban development

It is essential that investment in these areas add value to our local and regional economies, producing jobs and increased social cohesion. A better physical environment is also of benefit to the region making it a more attractive place to invest.

The Southern & Eastern ROP

Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020

The Southern Regional Assembly has been designated by the Government to be the Managing Authority for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020 and is responsible for its preparation and delivery, in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation. The development of the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 involved numerous consultations with relevant stakeholders, from April 2013, which allowed for the drafting of the ROP with the final version submitted to the European Commission on 5th December 2014. The S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 was adopted by the European Commission on 15th December 2014.

The Southern Regional Assembly recently submitted its third Annual Implementation Report for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for 2014-2020. It reports on the progress achieved under the ROP for the year 2017. Expenditure under the ROP was eligible from 1st January 2014. Good progress has been made in the implementation of all the Investment Priorities included in the ROP. Most schemes have reported expenditure in 2017 and output indicator achievements range up to 100% for individual output indicators. By the end of 2017, the total public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries (EUR) across all priorities was €285m. The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority was €26m.

Please note, the totals given below are for "Public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries".

The Southern & Eastern ROP

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries (EUR) (1st Jan 14 to 31st Dec 17)		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	90,000,000	90,000,000	180,000,000	50%	68,805,176	34,402,588	34,402,588
2 – ICT	30,000,000	30,000,000	60,000,000	50%	0	0	0
3 – SME Competiveness	35,556,827	35,556,827	71,113,654*	50%	31,828,282	15,914,141	15,914,141
4 – Low Carbon Economy	66,500,000	66,500,000	133,000,000	50%	179,028,355	89,514,178	89,514,178
5 – Sustainable Urban Development	26,000,000	26,000,000	52,000,000	50%	5,261,737	2,630,868	2,630,868
6 – Technical Assistance	2,009,350	2,009,350	4,018,700	50%	611,059	305,529	305,529
TOTAL	**250,066,177**	**250,066,177**	**500,132,354**	**50%**	285,534,609	142,767,304	142,767,304

* This figure includes an additional allocation of €956,827 approved by the Monitoring Committee in Spring 2017.

Border, Midland and Western ROP

EMRA elected members Cllrs Paddy Bracken (Full), Catherine Fitzgerald (Alternate) and EMRA Director Jim Conway sit on the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for the Border, Midland and Western ROP. Following the formal Designation of the 2014-2020 BMW Regional Operational Programme in June of 2017 by the Audit Authority, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly as Managing Authority commenced the process of declaring expenditure to the European Commission. A total of **€21,516,576** in expenditure was declared to the EU between June 30th and December 31st 2017. The total declaration for 2017 was comprised of expenditure incurred across four specific schemes included under three Programme priorities as follows: -

Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the BMW Region

- The Industry Research and Development scheme managed by Enterprise Ireland, Dublin

Priority 3 : SME Support, Promotion and Capability Development

- The SME Support Capacity scheme managed by Enterprise Ireland, Dublin
- The Micro – Enterprise scheme (measure 2) managed by Enterprise Ireland Shannon in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Offices throughout the region.

Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

- The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme managed by SEAI and overseen by the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment.

Priority 1 expenditure declared was in the region of €2.1m, priority 3 expenditure declared was approx. €6.1m and expenditure declared under Priority 4 was just under €13.3m

EU Programme Monitoring Activities

The EMRA had a series of important functions to perform in relation to European Affairs. Our regional government status gave us an opportunity to influence EU policy, to access EU funding, and to engage in beneficial EU projects and EU networks. The EMRA represented the Irish Member State in the management of a number of EU Programmes, sitting on the following Programme Monitoring and Steering Committees:

National Partnership Agreement (NPA)

This is the contract between Ireland (as a Member State) and the European Commission for all the European Social and Investment Funds (ESIF). These include European Rural Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Cohesion Fund.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

- Border, Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme
- Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme
- Interreg North West Europe (NWE)
- Interreg Atlantic Area
- Interreg Ireland-Wales
- PEACE
- URBACT

European Social Fund (ESF)

- Programme for Employability, Inclusion & Learning (PEIL)

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

- European Maritime and Fisheries Operational Programme

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

- Rural Development Programme (LEADER)

Meetings and Membership of Programme Monitoring Committees

Each of the Operational Programmes contained in the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) are required to have a Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC). The overall role of the Monitoring Committee is to satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and the quality of the implementation of all expenditure under the Programme. The Monitoring Committee considers the progress and impact of the co-financed expenditure and makes recommendations in this regard to the Managing Authority. The Monitoring Committee meet on an annual or more frequent basis to review the previous years' progress. Representatives also sit on the Programme Steering Committees as detailed in the NPA.

EMRA Elected Member representation on Programme Monitoring Committees:

Programme	Representative	Meeting Dates
National Partnership Agreement	Cathaoirleach Cllr PJ Reilly	30 November 2017
Border Midland West	Cllr P. Bracken (Full); Cllr. C. Fitzgerald (Alternate);	7th June 2017
Southern and Eastern	Cllr L. McCarthy (Full); Cllr. T. Reilly (Full); Cllr P. Vance (Alternate)	8th June 2017
European Social Fund (ESF)	Cllr P. Vance	19 May 2017
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	No position on PMC	
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland Wales	Cllr B. McDonagh (Full); Cllr P. Kearns (Alternate)	9 May 2017, 23 November
PEACE	Cllr T. Byrne (Full); Cllr C. Markey (Alternate)	

EMRA officials participating on Programme Monitoring Committees:

Programme	Participant	Meeting Attended
National Partnership Agreement	Mr Jim Conway, Director	12th December
Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (European Social Fund - ESF)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	19 May 2017
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	23rd May 2017
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	12 September 2017
Border Midland West Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	7th June 2017
Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	8th June 2017
Regional Operational Programme Quarterly Meeting	Mr Jim Conway, Director	22 February 2017, 28 July, 25 October
Interreg Ireland-Wales (PMC)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland-Wales (Steering Committee)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	23rd February 2017
PEACE	No position on PMC	
Interreg Atlantic Area	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	PMC 17th and 18th January; 19-20 April; 3-4 May, 29-30 November,
Interreg North-West Europe	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	ETC meeting 1 March 2017; PMC 15-16 March 2017, MC7 11 May, ETC meeting 11 September, PMC 8 19-20 September
Interreg Europe	No position on PMC	
Northern Periphery and Arctic	No position on PMC	
URBACT	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	Info Day 22 March and 15 September, 22 November; PMC 2nd June; City Festival 3-5 October 2017

Project Evaluation (ERDF)

The EMRA team have undertaken project evaluation for proposals from 3 funding programmes during 2017: Interreg Ireland Wales, Atlantic Area and North West Europe.

INTERREG North West Europe (NWE): The team evaluated 93 Step 1 proposals (50 from Call 4 and 43 from Call 5); and 31 Step 2 proposals (10 from Calls 2 and 3 and 21 from Calls 3 and 4). Participated in Interreg NWE PMC 6 in March, PMC 7 in May and PMC 8 in September.

INTERREG Ireland Wales – EMRA staff sit on the Programme Steering Group and undertook 8 evaluations (Gateway 1 and Gateway 2) for 6 unique projects over the course of the year.

INTERREG Atlantic Area – The EMRA team evaluated 51 Step 2 applications. Attended the National Correspondence Committee (NCC) meetings in January and in April. Participated in Programme Monitoring Committee meetings in May and November.

URBACT – Participated in the URBACT briefing and training course in November. Meetings held with Maynooth University in preparation for the handover of the National Contact Point role to EMRA.

Other committees where the Assembly plays a role:

Irish Sea Maritime Forum

Cllr Gerry Horkan (former EMRA member)
EMRA participated in the Irish Sea Maritime Forum Steering Group meeting on the 13th of July 2017.

ENCORE (Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe)

Mr. Jim Conway, Director participated in the ENCORE Steering Group in Bavaria 2-3 February 2017.

Mr. Jim Conway, Director and a circular economy expert Sarah Miller from the Ballymun Rediscovery Centre participated in the ENCORE Steering Group in Bilbao on 19th -20th September 2017.

ENCORE refers to the Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe. It provides a platform to political leaders in relation to Environmental and Sustainable Development issues. ENCORE is dedicated to transnational co-operation between the regions of Europe. ENCORE aims to contribute to the effective implementation of EU environmental policy, to improve environmental governance and to foster sustainable development in the regions of Europe.

European Week of Regions and Cities

The European Week of Regions and Cities (commonly known as OPEN DAYS) is an annual four-day event during which cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement European Union cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance. In 2017 the event took place from 9th – 12th October in Brussels. The Committee of the Regions members from the Assembly participated in the event.

Senior staff from the Assembly and from the Irish Regions office also participated through attendance at knowledge exchange workshops.

Networking events:

Staff from the Assembly participated in the following events:

- Circular Economy and the new entrepreneurial and social revolution and European cities
- European cities – providing leadership for health and well-being

Director Jim Conway also participated in the 7th Cohesion Forum 27th June 2017.

Chair of the CoR Irish delegation Cllr Michael Murphy and Jim Conway met with Commissioner Vestager 7th September 2017

Committee of the Regions

A significant function of IRO Brussels is to coordinate the work of the members of the national delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The CoR is the European Union's assembly of local and regional representatives bringing together 350 members from across the 28 EU Member States, all of whom must be democratically elected and/or hold a political mandate in their home country. The CoR gives regions and cities a formal say in EU law-making ensuring that the voice of local and regional authorities across Europe is heard on matters that directly impact them. The CoR mainly presents its views through written opinions or resolutions which are developed and discussed in one of its six thematic Commissions covering the following policy areas:

- Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)
- Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER)
- Economic Policy (ECON)
- Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
- Natural Resources (NAT)
- Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC)

Each Commission generally meets on five occasions during a calendar year to prepare the opinions which are adopted at the five to six plenary sessions held annually. EU Commissioners, Presidency Ministers and MEPs regularly attend CoR meetings and there is an ongoing exchange between the institutions on policy issues. As its key output during 2017, the CoR adopted 71 Opinions, plus 7 Resolutions.

The Irish Delegation

The Irish delegation to the CoR is currently composed of nine full members and eight alternate members appointed by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government. Following her resignation as member of Kerry County Council, Cllr. Dianne Nolan had to renounce her position as an alternate member of the Irish national delegation to the CoR.

As secretariat to the national delegation, the IRO together with colleagues in EMRA provided analysis and briefing to members at each stage of the drafting process as opinions progressed through the various Commissions to the plenary level with a focus on identifying the likely impacts or opportunities for Ireland, particularly at the regional and local level. Following the triggering of article 50 by the UK, the delegation has also been provided with regular updates on the ongoing Brexit negotiations.

Irish delegation members acted as rapporteur on four opinions in 2017:

- Cllr. Kieran McCarthy's opinion on "Building a European data economy" – adopted at the October plenary
- Cllr. Michael Murphy's opinion on the "Report on the competition policy 2016" – adopted at the November plenary
- Cllr. Jerry Lundy's opinion on an "Action plan for a maritime strategy in the Atlantic area – delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" – adopted at the November plenary
- Cllr. Enda Stenson's opinion on "Revitalising rural areas through Smart villages" – adopted at the November plenary
- Cllr. Mary Freehill prepared an opinion on the empowerment of women in the Mediterranean region as part of the ARLEM activities, which will be adopted in February 2018.

The secretariat accompanied and provided support to the Irish rapporteurs in the preparation of their opinion, including the organisation of meetings with relevant stakeholders and the drafting of speeches, speaking notes and press releases.

Examples of other topics covered by Opinions in 2017 include:

- Supporting young European farmers
- Mid-term Evaluation of the LIFE Programme
- Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3): impact for regions and inter-regional cooperation
- The Future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020
- A new stage in the European policy on blue growth
- Local and Regional dimension of Horizon 2020 and the New Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
- CAP post-2020

Overall during 2017, the EMRA staff briefed the Irish members in advance of 30 separate commission meetings across the CoR's six broad areas of work, as well as for the six plenary sessions and eight Bureau (executive body) meetings. National delegation meetings were held in advance of each plenary meeting to discuss agenda items, ensure that any Irish perspectives were fully represented as part of the CoR discussions and coordinate the work of the delegation.

Members sought to develop political links with their colleagues in the wider political group structures in the CoR. As part of its representational role, the delegation maintains a focus on developing relationships with others who represent Irish interests in the EU, including in the Irish Permanent Representation, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The delegation also made a submission to the preparation of Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) as part of the annual European Semester process.

On Brexit, the delegation met with Emer Deane, head of the Brexit taskforce at the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU, to discuss the current state of the negotiations and the impact of Brexit on Irish local and regional authorities. Members took every available opportunity to raise Irish concerns and the need to identify and agree practical solutions and took part in the debate organised in plenary in November with MEP Brian Hayes. All Irish Members of the delegation have accepted membership of an inter-regional group on Brexit to be set up in 2018.

The delegation also engaged in the Future of Europe debate and met with Michael Collins, a senior CoR official to discuss the CoR initiative to organise citizens' debates on Europe at local and regional level and the CoR's contribution to the Future of Europe debate.

Further information can be found at http://emra.ie/committee-of-the-regions/

Irish Regions Brussels Office

Managed by EMRA, the Irish Regions Brussels Office (IRO) is an EU support facility collectively provided by the three Regional Assemblies. It is the sole organisation with a mission to enable the engagement of the broad Irish local government sector and its stakeholders in EU initiatives and opportunities. As such, the IRO provides the only Irish presence among almost 300 representative offices established in the EU capital by regions, cities and local government associations from across Europe. On behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), the IRO, in tandem with EMRA, provides the secretariat for the Irish National Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR).

The functions of the IRO include monitoring and reporting on the latest developments in relevant EU policy fields; providing analysis and advice to facilitate the active pursuit of funding from the programmes managed by the European Commission; and other representational, networking and liaison functions enabling Irish local authorities and Regional Assemblies to further their interaction with the EU Institutions and with counterparts elsewhere in Europe.

2017 was dominated by the discussion regarding the Future of Europe. In March, the European Commission published its White paper on the Future of Europe outlining five different scenarios for the future development of the EU27. Following this, the Commission published a series of reflection papers tackling specific issues: social dimension, globalisation, defence, the economic and monetary union and the future of EU finances. This debate is very much in keeping with two other topics that were on top of the agenda in 2017: the shape of the EU budget post 2020 and Brexit. On the former, the IRO has played an active role in following discussions and developments, with a particular focus on cohesion policy as the Southern and Northern & Western Regional Assemblies are currently managing authorities for two Operational Programmes. IRO has represented the three Regional Assemblies in the "Regions4cohesion" initiative organised together with other Brussels-based regional offices and advocating for the prolongation of EU Cohesion Policy for all regions post-2020 and engaged with the Irish Permanent Representation (EU's embassy to the EU) to discuss the future of regional policy and especially territorial cooperation programmes, such as the various INTERREG programmes. Regarding Brexit, the IRO office has provided the Assemblies with regular updates on the negotiations and has worked closely with the Permanent Representation and other European institutions to raise awareness on the impact for Irish local and regional authorities.

Among the (non-CoR) activities carried out by IRO Brussels in 2017 were:

- Monitoring of EU policy and programming developments and attendance at various workshops, seminars and information sessions.
- Timely and succinct research and reporting/briefings on recent developments and funding opportunities of specific relevance to our clientele, for example Horizon2020, Life+, COSME.
- Supported Cork City Council's successful bid to join the Partnership on Sustainable Land-use and Nature-based Solutions in the framework of the urban agenda
- Detailed consultation and advisory services in response to stakeholder enquiries.
- Expanded use of the *@IrishRegions_EU* twitter feed.
- Launch of the rebranding of the office and of the design of a new website for 2018.
- Helped to organise the EWRC seminar on European Capitals for Culture involving Galway city and county councils.
- Devised and contributed to delegation study visits by Local Enterprise Offices of the Northern & Western Region focused on and Cork County Council.
- Meetings and briefings to other visiting groups/officials including local authority staff from the local authorities of the Southern Region, CEOs of the local authorities from the Northern & Western Region, the Technological Higher Education Association and a delegation of Fine Gael councillors.
- Networking and alliance-building with other Brussels-based regional representations and associations (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Atlantic Arc Commission which includes a Brexit task force).
- Liaising with officials within the European Institutions, with MEPs, with representatives of Irish Government Departments and with other Brussels-based Irish interests (IBEC, Enterprise Ireland) to discuss and clarify issues of interest and areas of opportunity.

Corporate, Finance and HR

Corporate

In 2017 the Corporate Section continued to provide the administrative and organisation support services for the Assembly and the ongoing management of same, with 13 staff based in the offices in Ballymun, 1 staff member based in Longford County Council and 2 staff members based in Brussels.

The 2017 Programme of Works was adopted in March and circulated to the constituent Local Authorities.

The implementation of an Anti – Fraud Policy and the development of a Corporate Risk Assessment Register, enhanced the Assemblies corporate governance.

Ongoing supports are also provided to the Irish Regions Office based in the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels.

Finance

The main functions of the Finance section in 2017 included:

- Preparation of the Annual Financial Statement 2016.
- Financial Management, procurement and control.
- Payment, recoupment and reconciliation of accounts.
- Financial administration of the EU Affairs office in Brussels.
- Administration of EMRA payroll and superannuation through the local government payroll and superannuation shared services centre (MyPay).
- Preparation of the Annual Budget for 2017.
- Assistance with the Local Government 2016 Audit.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Section continued to implement the adopted Workforce Plan for the EMRA. Additional staff were recruited through the following recruitment campaigns over the course of the year:

- Administrative Officer – Committee of Regions
- Assistant Staff Officer – Corporate Services
- Project Officer RESILENS – Planning Section

Human Resources initiated the implementation of Core Time & Portal modules to enhance Time Management and reporting functions.

The roll out of Performance Management Development System commenced, training was undertaken by all staff, with Senior Management initiated PMDS.

Training

Training for staff continued to be provided in accordance with the objectives of the approved corporate plan. Training of staff continuing with on the job training, specially targeted training through the IPA and attendance and participation at relevant conferences.

In 2017 all staff received training on the Procurement and PMDS. Two staff were approved for assistance to support further third level education through the Employee Scheme of Assistance. An additional two staff were awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in European Studies by the European Institute of Communications

There was a Joint Assembly Training event in Athlone on the 13th and 14th of December 2017. Updates were provided on Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and EU Programme/ Projects and EER 2018. Staff participated in a workshop on General Data Protection Regulations Awareness and wellbeing.

Networking, Participation and Activities

Event	Date	Attendees
Dublin Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Midlands Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Mid – East Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Malachy Bradley
Dublin Economic Monitor	Various	Malachy Bradley/ Pauline Riordan
Climate Change Adaption Strategies Steering Committee	Various	Jim Conway
Eirgrid Implementation Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Eastern and Shannon CFRAMS Advisory Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
NPF Cross-departmental Steering Group	Various	Jim Conway
AIR Training Event	26th May	Malachy Bradley
Smart Regions Conference	1st-2nd June	Jim Conway
RSA International Conference	5th-7th June	Malachy Bradley/ Clare Bannon
Irish Planning Institute	6th October	Malachy Bradley

Communications

Social Media

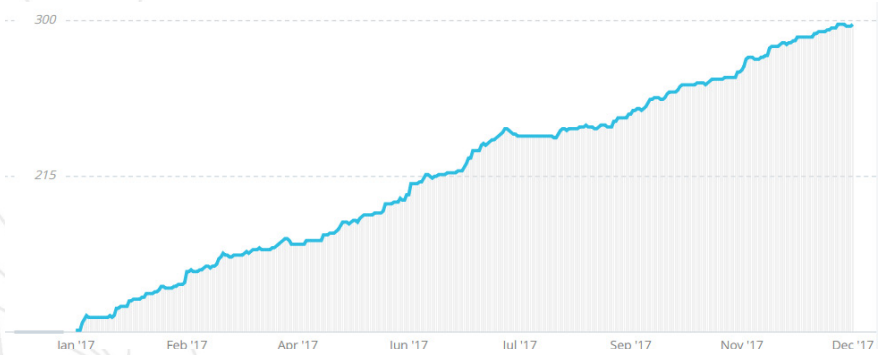
In 2017 we have continued to expand our online presence on various social media channels. We currently have accounts with three platforms:

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

@EMRAssembly & @IrishRegions_EU

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

Twitter is the most important dissemination platform for EMRA as most stakeholders and partners have a presence there. Our Twitter audience has grown by 97% between January and December 2017 and we have reached 298 followers by the end of the year. The growth was fully organic (non-paid for).



Twitter followers' growth, Jan 2017 - December 2017

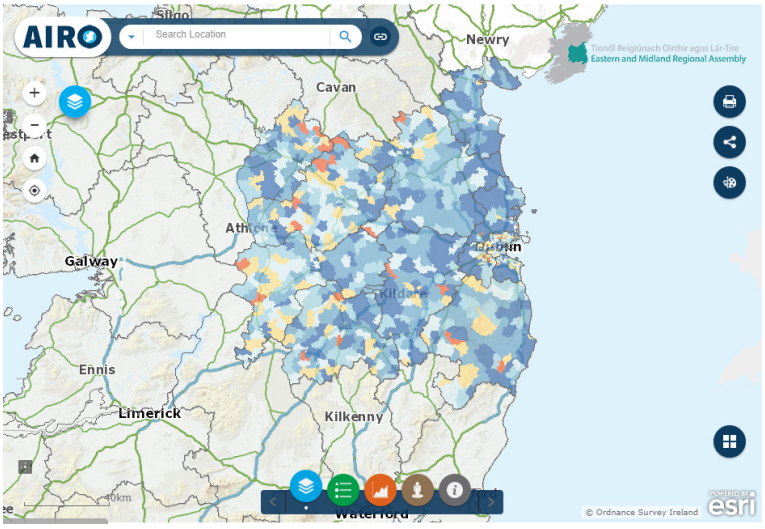
Recruitment campaign

Throughout 2017 the Assembly launched a number of recruitment campaigns to fill vacant posts. A number of communication channels were used to broaden the reach of the campaign including social media, website and print advertisements. We have revised our recruitment campaign budget based on learnings from a survey conducted amongst applicants for the Project Officer post. This allowed us to invest in targeted internet and social media advertising and limit our print advertisement expenses and at the same time maximise value for money.

Website

We are continuously managing and improving the Assembly's website. The latest additions include updated interactive AIRO maps module. The website facilitated online submissions for the first stage of the RSES process.

In order to prevent cyber-attacks and ensure full functionality the website's Content Management System and plugins are backed up and updated on a regular basis.



Energy Usage

Overview of Energy Usage in 2017

The office of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly is on the third floor of the Ballymun Civic Centre. The Assembly lease the office space from Dublin City Council which occupies 3.7% of the total office space of the Ballymun Civic Centre building. The main categories of energy use are:

- Space heating,
- Water heating,
- Electrical appliances, and
- Lighting.

Electricity and gas are the main sources of energy. Overall gas consumption increased in 2017, while water and electricity consumption decreased in 2017.

Energy reducing initiatives implemented in 2017 include replacing all 11 watt emergency light fittings with 3 watt LED lamps throughout all areas in the building.

Actions Planned for 2017

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will continue to review energy initiatives, identifying areas for further efficiency gains in an effort to reduce energy consumption. EMRA will work with Dublin City Council and the Ballymun Civic Centre management team to identify potential areas for energy saving and will run energy awareness training for employees.

Climate change

The EMRA are partners in the large urban area adaptation (URB-ADAPT) project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The goal of this project is to produce guidelines and tools to inform local climate change adaptation strategies. In 2017 EMRA provided regionally specific environmental and socio-economic data to UCC to inform the modelling.

Photo credit:
Wind turbines, by Leo-setä, wwww.flickr.com
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Projects

EMRA Projects

In 2017 the Assembly has been involved in a number of projects, including 3 funded by the European Union. Activities of these project provide a valuable insight that can be useful in regional policy development.

GBIHealth

EMRA became a partner on the EPA funded project Green and blue spaces and health: a health-led approach (GBIHealth). GBIHealth is assessing the health profile of the Eastern & Midland Region, identifying high and low health case study sites and then characterising configurations of environmental features (e.g. trees, water, built surroundings) contributing to these health outcomes. The results of the project will provide a supplementary evidence base for input into the RSES and spatial planning generally. As part of this project, EMRA plays a key role by providing inputs in relation to the regional planning context and research expertise. The project kicked-off in February 2017 with the recruitment of a postdoctoral researcher based with the lead partner, NUI Maynooth. In 2017, the project completed Work Packages 1 & 2, entailing compiling and submitting a review of the literature in the topic area, and conducting a detail audit of Irish health data respectively.

Urb-ADAPT EnRoute

EMRA is a partner in the large urban area adaptation (URB-ADAPT) project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of their research programme 2014–2020. As part of the Urb-ADAPT project EMRA is working closely with the Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy at University College Cork to detect and characterise climate change impacts in the region up to 2060. The project team includes coastal and climate experts from UCC in conjunction with the policy experience of EMRA. The project is identifying possible risks and future risks posed under a changing climate.

Progress in 2017 included an initial data assessment and integration, presenting research at the 12th International Joint Urban Remote Sensing Event. Future work involves assessing the current and future vulnerability of the region to climate change. Then adaptation options will be identified and explored in consultation with stakeholders.

EnRoute

The aim of EnRoute is to contribute to the development of green infrastructure in urban areas. EnRoute aims to implement a common framework for the assessment of urban green infrastructure which European cities can use to support policies, assess and monitor urban green infrastructure and the urban ecosystem. It builds upon the experiences of a pilot project 'Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES). EnRoute aids in our understanding of how urban policy on green infrastructure at different governance levels can be mutually reinforcing. It aims to enhance contact between communities at local, regional and national level in order to exchange experiences and knowledge.

Progress in 2017 included running a workshop for local authorities and administering a survey to gain the views of stakeholders. EMRA attended three project team meetings and two conferences in 2017 which provided training on ecosystem services and networking with other projects in the EU.

RESILENS

The RESILENS project, in which EMRA is a partner, is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. This is a 3-year project which commenced in May 2015 and will be completed in April 2018.

RESILENS

RESILENS aims to address Critical Infrastructure vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of Europe, thereby increasing the ability of societies to prepare for, respond to and recover from crises and disasters, including natural hazards and man-made threats. Critical Infrastructure (CI) includes the essential functions and services which support our societal, economic and environmental systems, e.g. water, energy, transport infrastructure. Resilience is the ability of these systems to survive and thrive in the face of a complex and uncertain future.

The international project consortium includes partners from Ireland, Portugal, the UK, Germany and Israel. They are drawn from a range of different backgrounds and are engaged in various aspects of resilience research and CI operations. Together, the partners have a broad range of expertise in project management, security, conceptual elements of resilience and resilience research, technical and engineering aspects, development of guidelines for public bodies, legal implications and technical development of interactive online platforms and tools. The expertise of the consortium is focused on moving CI Resilience from current conceptual understanding to applied, operational measures and established practices which can be adopted by key stakeholders. Key outputs delivered by the RESILENS project partners are the ERMG (European Resilience Management Guideline), ReMMAT (online interactive toolkit, including a CI resilience audit tool) and e-Learning Hub, all of which are hosted on the interactive online RES-DSP (RESILENS Decision Support Platform).

In the face of a complex and uncertain future, Resilience is becoming a widely-used concept by which places and systems are measured and assessed. To protect our future societies and economies and to enable them to respond and recover quickly from threats, crises or disasters, it will be important to incorporate resilience management into our planning systems, policy development and decision making. Thus, the ERMG will be a guideline which will lead to better crisis and disaster management and more resilient and secure economic and societal systems in the future. The ERMG and RESILENS toolkit will guide users towards developing and enhancing systems which have the ability to survive and thrive in the face of uncertainty, to minimise disruption when responding to a disaster, to absorb shocks and stresses, to recover rapidly, adapt to change and thrive under new conditions.

EMRA's participation in this project benefits the region in that it places us at the forefront of innovative thinking around the creation of better prepared, more secure, more adaptable and safer places and systems, economies and societies. EMRA was responsible for managing Work Package 4 of the project which involved pilot demonstrations to test, evaluate and validate the draft ERMG and toolkit. During 2017, EMRA collaborated with project partners and organised pilot demonstrations which were attended by the project's CI partners at three different international locations (Ireland, Portugal, Germany), in three different CI sectors (Water, Energy, Transport), and at different spatial scales with the view of making the RESILENS outputs usable in real world situations. Following this EMRA prepared a pilot demonstration summary report with a view to enhancing operability of the ERMG for all critical infrastructure end users Also in 2017, EMRA contributed to other work package deliverables including input to the RESILENS Website, social media sites and e-newsletter; and development of the draft ERMG, toolkit, e-Learning Hub and RES-DSP.

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN)

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN) has been in operation since 2010, it is an agile network which continues to attract new members and by the end of 2017 increased its membership by 9 members per month, giving a total increase of 108 for the year.

During 2017 the IE Network carried out a survey of its members and those who responded gave the network an insight which enabled us to react and remain relevant in the ever changing employment landscape.

In this survey on of the questions asked was "current employment status"

Answer Choices	Responses	
Full-time	**40.95%**	43
Part-time	**27.62%**	29
Contract work	**31.43%**	33
Sole trader	**16.19%**	17
Total Respondents: 105		

This equates to an estimated saving to the exchequer of € 2.15 million. Another question was on age and gender of membership and of those who replied

- 62% were male and 38% were female
- 61% were between the age of 45-64 years of age.

At the end of 2017 the network has hosted over 140 network events and is now not only supporting unemployed high–skilled professionals but also graduates, post graduates, business owners and sole traders.

The experience and knowledge that is within the IE Network provides the ideal platform for idea generation, mentoring and support, all of which empowers the members to identify a route back to the workplace, either by getting a new employer, or, if you simply cannot get a suitable job, to assist you with starting out on your own. Members are from all sectors of the business world - architects, web developers, civil, electrical and pharmaceutical engineers, solicitors and business owners.

The events hosted by the IE Network are wide and varied including Social Media, Job seeking skills, Motivational talks, Resilience, Start your own business, Innovation, Creative thinking, Entrepreneurship, interview workshops, Communication skills.

The IE Network has tendered out for a new website and rebranding of the network and this should be completed by May 2018.

The network is now integrated with the 4 Local Authorities in Dublin and has a direct link to the Local Enterprise offices and the local economic and community plans.

Funded by the four Local Authorities the IE network delivers motivational talks, seminars, workshops across the Dublin area. These talks take place on Mondays - Fingal, Wednesday's - Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, Thursday's - South Dublin and Friday's - City Centre.

You can Change, BE THE CHANGE.

Become a member today www.ienetwork.ie

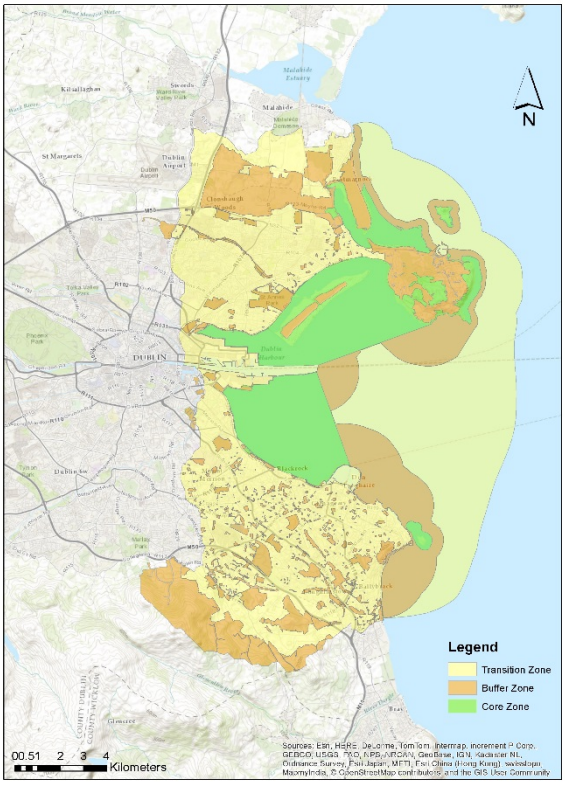
INNOVATION ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Career Re-Ignition for High-Skilled / Professionals

Celtic Seas Partnership

The EMRA was a partner in the Celtic Seas Partnership (CSP) which is a European LIFE+ funded project (LIFE11/ENV/UK/392), the Celtic Seas Partnership project concluded in March 2017. The project brought people together to create collaborative and innovative approaches to managing the marine environment and supporting the delivery of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). EMRA developed a Strategic Management Framework and a stakeholder engagement model for Dublin Bay. The framework looks at how the Marine Strategy Framework Directive can be delivered on a local level. In addition EMRA worked in collaboration with the Programmable City project and the All Island Research Observatory (AIRO) at Maynooth University, and Dublin City Council to develop a data module on Dublin Bay for the Dublin Dashboard.

Other outputs from the Celtic Seas Partnership include a guide and country fact sheet to support people involved in planning and development on land in terms of considering interactions with the marine environment. The future trends study looked at three scenarios for the Celtic Seas over the next 20 years. This study, found that under every scenario pressure on the marine environment was predicted to increase, potentially leading to more conflict between sectors and substantial impacts on the marine environment. The Celtic Seas Information Portal was developed to help marine users find data and documents about the Celtic Seas marine environment. There is the data catalogue that holds over 370 records of datasets relevant for Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Work is ongoing promoting the outputs from the Celtic Seas Partnership.



Staff

Photo credit:
Teamwork, by www.rawpixel.com

Our 2017 STAFF

Jim Conway
Director

Malachy Bradley
Assistant Director

Labhaoise McKenna
Senior Programme Executive

Sarah Holden
Head of Office
Irish Regions Brussels Office

Laure Antoniotti
Head of Office
Irish Regions Brussels Office

Juan Martinez-Covarrubias
Economist (Three Regional Assemblies)

Pauline Riordan
Senior Executive Planner

Hazel Healy
Corporate Management Programme Executive

Clare Bannon
Senior Executive Planner

Michael Brennan
RESILENS Project Officer

Travis O'Doherty
Project Officer

Ronan Gingles
EU Affairs and Policy Advisor

Andrea Corrigan
RESILENS Project Officer

Jim Nolan
IE Network Manager

Richard Kenneally
Clerical Officer

Simon Musial
Clerical Officer

Ross Higgins
Clerical Officer

Annual Financial Statements 2016

Income and Expenditure Account 31 December 2016

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly –
Income and Expenditure Account 31 December 2016

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	
Expenditure	EMRA 2016
Salaries	479,184.32
Office Equipment & Supplies	9,787.11
Information Technology	63,857.19
Communications & Postage	6,619.51
Members Annual Allowances	44,420.94
Travel & Subsistence Allowances:	
I - Members Travel & Subsistence	6,321.05
II - Members conferences	5,718.89
III - Staff Travel and Subsistence	33,965.67
Rent	69,337.17
Insurance	2,872.09
Training	12,178.40
Consultancy & professional Fees	10,766.12
Facilities, Energy & Rates charges	41,227.75
Advertising	3,899.10
Audit Fee	6,202.00
Miscellaneous	7,704.56
Bank Charges	616.26
EU Affairs & IRO (COR)	203,358.85
Celtic Sea Project	79,109.11
EU Operational Programme	12,025.87
Resilens	108,059.32
I.E. Network	80,341.02
Urb-ADAPT	6,352.67
Expenditure total	1,293,924.97
Income	
Local Authorities Contributions	1,048,710.18
Other Income	40,802.35
Superann	22,070.70
Committee of the Regions	202,710.55
COR Misc	648.30
Celtic Sea Project	45,511.00
Resilens	108,059.32
IE Network	80,341.02
Urb-ADAPT	6,352.67
Receipts total	1,555,206.09
Difference between Income + Expenditure	261,281.12
Opening balance at 01/01/2016	230,321.15
Closing Balance at end of year Surplus	491,602.27

Signed: _____
Councillor PJ Reilly, Cathaoirleach

_____
Mr. Jim Conway, Director

Consolidated Balance Sheet
for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2016

Consolidated Balance Sheet for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2016

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	
Balance Sheet 2016	
Fixed Assets	
IT Equip	5,000.00
Furniture & Fixtures	0.00
Heritage Assets	10,000.00
	15,000.00
Current Assets	
Cash at Bank	431,152.60
Debtors	302,293.35
Petty Cash	134.24
Prepayments	2,938.65
	736,518.84
Current Liabilities	
Creditors & Accruals	204,504.41
Deferred income	40,412.16
Bank	0.00
	244,916.57
Net Current Assets	**491,602.27**
Net Assets	**506,602.27**
Financed by	
Balance @ 01/01/16	230,321.15
General Reserve	0.00
Inherited Fixed Assets from old DRA	15,000.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure	261,281.12
	506,602.27

Members' Allowances and Expenses 2017

Member (Cllr)	Annual Fixed Allowance	Training	Committee of the Regions	Conference / Training
Andrew Duncan (W.Meath)	€ 688.66	€ -	€ -	€ -
Barry Ward (COR) (Dublin)	€ 385.01	€ -	€ 333.24	€ -
Brian Fitzgerald (Meath)	€ 1,181.09	€ -	€ -	€ -
Brian McDonagh (Dublin)	€ 581.06	€ -	€ -	€ -
Catherine Fitzgerald (Laois)	€ 2,016.34	€ 157.23	€ -	€ 526.24
Christy Burke (Dublin)	€ 507.67	€ -	€ -	€ -
Ciaran Cuffe (Dublin)	€ 200.71	€ -	€ -	€ -
Claire O'Connor (Dublin)	€ 385.41	€ -	€ -	€ -
Colm Markey (Louth)	€ 1,014.90	€ -	€ -	€ -
Derek Mitchell (Wicklow)	€ 1,124.26	€ -	€ -	€ -
David Healy (Dublin)	€ 992.07	€ -	€ -	€ -
Dermot Lacey (Dublin)	€ 967.26	€ -	€ -	€ -
Dermot Lacey (Cathaoirleach Q1&Q2)	€ 5,850.00	€ -	€ -	€ 380.00
Delcan McDonnell (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 428.19	€ -
Deirdre Forde (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 2,206.36	€ -
Dianne Nolan (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Eamon Dooley (CoR) (Offaly)	€ 2,594.04	€ 314.02	€ 288.19	€ -
Eddie Fitzpatrick (Offaly)	€ 1,946.64	€ 155.46	€ -	€ 299.85
Enda Fanning (Dublin)	€ 127.55	€ -	€ -	€ -
Enda Stenson (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 1,547.67	€ -
Francis Duffy (Dublin)	€ 383.12	€ -	€ -	€ -
Gaye Fagan (Dublin)	€ 517.13	€ 126.41	€ -	€ -
Gerry Murray (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 1,532.56	€ -
Hugh McGrath (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 206.09	€ -
Irene Winters (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Ivan Keatley (Kildare)	€ 1,037.07	€ -	€ -	€ -
Jennifer Cuffe (Dublin)	€ 52.51	€ -	€ -	€ -
Jerry Lundy (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 2,906.38	€ -
Jimmy McClearn (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 240.36	€ -
Kate Feeney (CoR) (Dublin)	€ 389.26	€ -	€ 212.14	€ -
Kieran Dennison (Dublin)	€ 953.08	€ -	€ -	€ 420.00
Kieran McCarthy (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 346.68	€ -
Lettie McCarthy (Dublin)	€ 1,206.43	€ 28.35	€ -	€ 465.00
Maria Murphy (Meath)	€ 1,035.77	€ 75.10	€ -	€ -
Martin Miley (Kildare)	€ 799.28	€ -	€ -	€ -
Mary Freehill (CoR) (Dublin)	€ 935.36	€ -	€ 729.42	€ -
Mary Hanafin (DLR)	€ 402.97	€ -	€ -	€ -
Mick Cahill (Longford)	€ 2,291.60	€ 302.21	€ -	€ 460.00
Michael Murphy (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 2,996.01	€ -
Mary Shields (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Neil McNelis (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ 287.61	€ -
Paddy Bourke (Dublin)	€ 579.64	€ -	€ -	€ -
Paddy Bracken (Laois)	€ 2,269.69	€ 156.05	€ -	€ 400.00
Paddy Hill (W.Meath)	€ 2,165.20	€ 275.20	€ -	€ 416.50
Padraig McEvoy (Kildare)	€ 1,315.76	€ -	€ -	€ -
Pamela Kearns (Dublin)	€ 444.22	€ -	€ -	€ 423.24
Pat Hand (Dublin)	€ 707.59	€ 55.04	€ -	€ 460.00
Pat Vance (Wicklow)	€ 1,220.08	€ -	€ -	€ -
PJ Reilly (Longford)	€ 2,295.15	€ 300.43	€ -	€ 500.00
PJ Reilly (Cathaoirleach Q3&Q4)	€ 5,850.00	€ -	€ -	€ -
Rosemary Conway-Walsh (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Seamas McGrattan (Dublin)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Sylvester Bourke (Wicklow)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Thomas Cullen (Wicklow)	€ 1,313.18	€ -	€ -	€ -
Tom Brabazon (Dublin)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Tommy Byrne (Louth)	€ 482.69	€ -	€ -	€ -
Tommy Reilly (Meath)	€ 1,614.02	€ 222.47	€ -	€ 440.00
William Paton (CoR)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -

Note:

Cllr Ciaran Cuffe (Dublin)	Joined the Assembly April 2017
Cllr Claire O'Connor (Dublin)	Joined the Assembly March 2017
Cllr Derek Mitchell (Wicklow)	Joined the Assembly February 2017
Cllr Jennifer Cuffe (Dublin)	Left the Assembly May 2017
Cllr Mary Hanafin (DLR)	Joined the Assembly May 2017
Cllr Seamas McGrattan (Dublin)	Left the Assembly April 2017
Cllr Sylvester Bourke (Wicklow)	Left the Assembly February 2017
CllrTom Brabazon (Dublin)	Left the Assembly February 2017
Cllr Dianne Nolan (CoR)	Left the Assembly September 2017

EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tire
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly