



22nd January, 2018

**Mr. Jim Conway,
Director,
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly,
Ballymun Civic Centre,
Ballymun,
Dublin 9.**

Dear Mr Conway,

I refer to notification of the proposed Draft RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region received by letter dated 5th November, 2018 and I wish to advise that the Northern and Western Regional Assembly welcome the publication and the opportunity to comment on it.

The Members of the NWRA considered the Draft RSES for the Eastern and Midlands area at its meeting on 18th January 2019 and unanimously welcomed the publication. It was noted that EMRA has successfully crafted a comprehensive document that is complementary to the contents and layout of the Draft RSES for the Northern and Western Region.

Members acknowledged the need for both the RSES for the NWRA and EMRA to provide an integrated strategy and that the importance of intra-regional connectivity is highlighted as a key issue for this region within the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Area.

The support given for the higher order role, function and growth targets for the Regional Centres relative to the Key Towns was considered as a key pillar for the RSESs. It was expressed that the Draft RSESs provisions in respect of the Regional Centre of Athlone may benefit from some further visualisation. It was asked that the influence of the Regional Centres of Dundalk and Drogheda upon the Cavan/Monaghan sub-regional catchment be referenced in this submission and support was given for the emphasis upon All Island Cohesion contained within the draft RSES.

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The NWRA Draft RSES makes reference to the impact of afforestation (Rf section 6.9) and it includes an objective to establish a Regional Fora that will set out a framework for sustainable afforestation across the region that enables government policy to grow the sector and address community concerns and perceptions (RPO 103 refers). Members asked that this be referenced in our submission as being something that may be worthy of consideration to parts of the Eastern and Midlands region and something that could be supported at a sub-regional catchment level.

I trust that the above clarifies the support being given for the collaborative production of the Draft RSES for the Eastern and Midland area, which represents the first time a combined economic and spatial strategy has been crafted.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Minton".

David Minton
Director