



Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly

Submission from the Western Development
Commission (WDC)

October 2019

Introduction

The Western Development Commission (WDC) welcomes the publication of the *Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly*.

The WDC has provided input on a number of occasions during the preparation of the Draft RSES. The WDC made a submission (available [here](#)) to the consultation held in early 2018 on the NWRA *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy: Issues Paper*. We also made a submission (available [here](#)) to the consultation on the *Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly* in February 2019. We welcome the inclusion in the Proposed Material Amendments of a number of the suggestions made by the WDC in that submission.

This current WDC submission is made with appreciation and acknowledgment of the fact that the Proposed Material Amendments result from the democratic process of public consultation and input from the elected members of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly. We also recognise that only the Proposed Material Amendments are open for consultation and therefore our comments are confined to specific details of the amended text. Our submission is structured according to the Material Alteration reference numbers.

About the Western Development Commission

The WDC is a statutory body established by government to promote, foster and encourage economic and social development in the Western Region. It operates under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). The WDC works in co-operation with national, regional and local bodies, including the NWRA, involved in western development to ensure that the Western Region maximises its full development potential. It does this by:

- analysing economic and social trends and making policy recommendations;
- promoting the Western Region through the LookWest.ie campaign;
- supporting the rural economy through facilitating strategic initiatives (e.g. renewable energy, creative economy); and
- providing risk capital to businesses through the WDC Investment Fund.

Contact Details

We are pleased to have the opportunity to make this submission and would be happy to expand on any points made if the Assembly or RSES team requires more information, supporting data or clarification. For queries please contact:

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Material Alteration Number	WDC Comment
MA1	The WDC supports this new objective.
MA2	<p>We appreciate that considerable consultation has, and will continue to, take place with key relevant stakeholders in the revision of the Letterkenny and Athlone RGCSs to adapt them to a consistent approach for the RGCSs in the RSES. Therefore, our comments are confined to specific details of the amended text.</p> <p>3.6 (B)/3.7.2 LETTERKENNY REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN Pg 49, 1.2: There is an error in the 2nd paragraph which states ‘... ambition to grow the population by at least 28,000 by 2040 ...’ however in the Vision it states the ambition is to grow <u>to</u> at least 28,000.</p> <p>Pg 51, RGCO 2: It states the objective is to grow the number of jobs in Letterkenny to approximately 16,000 by 2040. However, in the preceding paragraphs it is stated that the target is approximately 18,000 jobs by 2040.</p> <p>Pg 54: RGCO 8: States ‘To expand Letterkenny’s bed-night capacity, and overall Tourist Offer as a Destination Town serving the Northern Headlands of the WAW.’ This RGCO seems to be out of place as there has been no discussion of tourism or tourist accommodation prior to this, with the focus on residential development. This RGCO would seem better suited to section 4.3 on Tourism? Alternatively, some discussion of the need for, location and development of additional tourist accommodation should be incorporated in the preceding paragraphs.</p> <p>Pg 58, 4.1: This section states ‘... this will equate to (a minimum) additional 4,000 workers employed in the Town over the next 15-20 years.’ However, in section 2.1 previously it was stated ‘... employment numbers will also increase by approximately 7,000 additional jobs.’ The variety of different targets used could cause confusion. It would be best to use a consistent figure for the target for additional jobs by 2040, or alternatively it may be appropriate to refer to a range e.g. 4,000-7,000 additional jobs, in all places.</p> <p>Pg 59, 4.3: The four Tourism objectives listed here are not designated as RGCOs but just listed. It seems appropriate that they should also be included as RGCOs.</p> <p>3.6 (D)/3.7.1 ATHLONE REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN The WDC welcomes the more detailed discussion of Athlone’s potential and needs in the draft material amendments. We support the proposed new RPOs.</p>
MA3	We agree that this new RPO should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA4	<p>p.68 3.6 (A) GALWAY METROPOLITAN AREA STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>The WDC agree with the inclusion of timeframes for prioritisation of projects in the MASP.</p> <p>We agree with the inclusion of the new objectives to provide specific detail and timelines for various projects.</p>

	<p>MA 4 (1) The WDC supports the delivery of the named infrastructure projects (A through to F) and the timelines associated.</p> <p>MA 4 (2) We support the regeneration and development of city centre sites at Galway Harbour, Ceannt Station and Headford Road on condition that sustainable transport infrastructure including rail, bus, cycle and pedestrian access is enhanced.</p> <p>MA 4 (3) The WDC supports this objective.</p> <p>MA 4 (4) The WDC supports the provision of a dual railway track between Athlone & Galway but would suggest planning for it should start in the short term and so to change the timeframe to S/M.</p> <p>MA 4 (5, 6) The WDC supports these objectives.</p> <p>MA 4 (7) The WDC supports this objective.</p> <p>MA 4 (8) The WDC supports this objective.</p> <p>MA 4 (9-11) The WDC supports these objectives.</p> <p>MA 4 (12) The WDC supports this objective.</p> <p>MA 4 (13) The WDC supports this objective.</p>
MA5	MA 5 The WDC supports this objective.
MA6	Is this new RPO already included? See page 7 of MA document (MA4 no 7.) The WDC supports this objective.
MA7	The WDC supports this objective.
MA8	New RPO: The WDC supports the concept of reverse commuting to help encourage better more efficient use of public transport.
MA9	Welcome support to help growth of IWAK but ultimately there should be a review of National Aviation Policy and Policy Supports for Regional Airports to help direct growth away from 'business as usual' and the ever increasing dominance of Dublin Airport.
MA10	<p>24. As there are other organisations (in addition to landholders and recreational/tourism agencies) that have an important role in increasing and maintaining access (e.g. local authorities), it may be useful to make a small addition to the amended RPO as follows</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘To support, working with relevant landholders, recreational / tourism agencies and other stakeholders, to increase ...’</p> <p>25 - 26 We agree that these amended RPOs should replace the original RPOs in the final RSES for the NWRA.</p>
MA11	We agree that this amended RPO, including reference to key destination towns in Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands region, as proposed in the WDC’s submission on the draft RSES, should replace the original RPO in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA12	We agree that this new RPO should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA13	We warmly welcome the inclusion of this new RPO, as proposed by the WDC, and agree that it should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA14	The WDC welcomes the inclusion of Killybegs in this RPO.
MA15	The WDC supports this objective.
MA16	The WDC welcomes this objective and believes it would bring economic, social and cultural benefits to these areas.
MA17	The WDC supports this objective.
MA18	We agree that this new RPO should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA19	The WDC agrees with the amendments and inclusion of N26. While acknowledging that projecting timelines for infrastructure deployment can be difficult it would be important to be more specific than ‘in the medium term’. As

	the WDC noted in its submission, the NDP itself states (p. 40) ‘A particular priority in this is substantially delivering the Atlantic Corridor, with a high quality road network linking Cork, Limerick, Galway and Sligo.’ But then places all projects along the Atlantic Corridor (N13, N17, N15) in this category of pre-appraisal and planning, with no commitment to commence construction of any section of the Atlantic Corridor during this NDP. The RSES needs to very clearly state the high priority of the Atlantic Corridor and the need to progress construction of these schemes during the life of the current NDP.
MA20	We agree that this new RPO should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA21	We agree with the amendment to this RPO, but believe the timeframe should be more ambitious such as ‘Support the roll-out of the NBP with accelerated deployment given the delays in commencement’.
MA22	We welcome the inclusion of Roscommon and Leitrim in the amended RPO, as proposed by the WDC, and agree that the amended RPO should replace the original RPO in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA23	We agree that this new RPO should be included in the final RSES for the NWRA.
MA24	The WDC agrees with the amendment to this RPO.
MA25	The WDC agrees with the inclusion of an Implementation Timescale matrix to help effective monitoring. It would be useful to ensure that the timelines proposed: Short, Medium & Long-term are consistent with the same designations used in 3.6 A MA4 Galway MASP
MA26	The WDC agrees with the proposed RSES Oversight Committee but believes an important focus needs to be on measuring outcomes rather than just outputs such infrastructure and the infrastructure tracker. Measuring outcomes at a regional and sub-regional level and indicators need to be devised and used to benchmark and monitor progress. Where available indicators measuring rural and urban difference should also be used.

Ends