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How clean are our waters?

Potential lessons for the next *River Basin Management Plan*

Inside: A Redesigned Equalisation Funding Model
■ InPLACE: Investigating Place, Planning & Commuting ■ Climate Action
■ Commemorating the War of Independence

Contents

SAFETY FIRST

The summer edition of the Local Authority Times comes out as the reopening of society and the vaccine rollout gathers pace. As part of the government's *Think Safe, Think Outdoors* campaign, local authorities have been busy over the past few months helping to get businesses and public spaces ready with facilities for an outdoors summer. Their efforts have seen streets pedestrianised and open spaces equipped with additional seating, bins and toilets. In addition, local councils have organised outdoor events to further encourage people to get out and about and make the most of the summer months. As we eagerly look to life beyond the pandemic, local authority efforts to promote a social and economic recovery will intensify over the coming months. Indeed, this edition also looks somewhat to the future.

Gerard Turley and Stephen McNena (NUI Galway) contribute an article on the local government fiscal equalisation system. They have designed a potential future model for estimating top-up or equalisation grants for local authorities with relatively low revenue bases.

Local authorities have a leading role to help deliver Ireland's ambitious climate action targets. In the first of two articles, members of the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office provide a comprehensive review of climate change policy and assess what it means for local authorities now and in the future.

The IPA research team have published research (funded by the EPA) on the governance arrangements in place to help Ireland meet its EU obligations. Naomi Blumlein and Toby Finch (IPA interns) outline the key findings and recommendations from the research outputs that seek to inform the development of the third-cycle *River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027.*

A very timely research study – entitled InPLACE: Investigating Place, Planning and Commuting – on pre- and post-COVID commuting patterns in Ireland has been launched by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development. An article by the research team discusses the project's approach and objectives.

Naomi Blumlein and Toby Finch provide articles on two important aspects of local government activity: litter management and public participation in local projects.

Liam Bradley, current Chairperson of the Local Authority Museums Network, reviews several of the excellent displays and programmes organised by local museums that seek to share stories of the War of Independence with the wider public.

As always, we are very thankful to our contributors for submitting articles. The *Local Authority Times* continues to provide a platform for news, analysis and opinion pieces from those working in, or closely with, the sector. We try to cover a broad range of relevant topics and are always interested in receiving submissions and feedback from our readers.

Please contact, Fergal O'Leary (acting Editor) at: latimes@ipa.ie

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NUMBERS: An overview of key indicators

Key Quarterly Data, July 2021

14%

TOTAL REVENUE

€2,051m in Q1 2021

Up 14.3% on Q1 2020
Source: Department of Finance

17%

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

€2,471m in Q1 2021

Down 16.5% on Q1 2020
Source: Department of Finance

40%*

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

€344m (total amount collected up to Q2 2021)

Up 40.4% on the same quarter last year.
* Because of the pandemic, Revenue extended the LPT payment date in 2020 for some property owners which affected the amount collected up to Q2 2020.
Source: Revenue

Total number of local authority staff

Number of staff in Q4 2020 was **29,351.** This is an increase of 190 from Q4 2019. ***Data not available for Q3 2020 & Q1 2021**
Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Housing & Homelessness

20%

New dwelling completions
3,953 in Q1 2021
Down 20.1% on Q1 2020

Source: Central Statistics Office

18%

Homelessness
8,060 people homeless at end of Q1 2021 (March). Down 18.6% on figure at end of Q1 2020 (March).
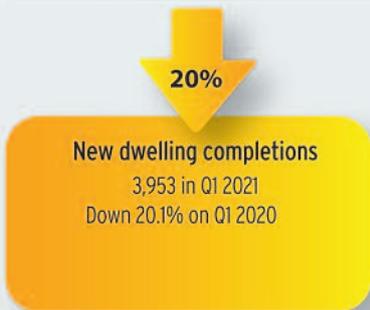
Source: Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government

51%

Planning Permissions
6,963 planning permissions were granted for all housing types (including apartments) in Q1 2021. This represents a 50.7% decrease on Q1 2020.
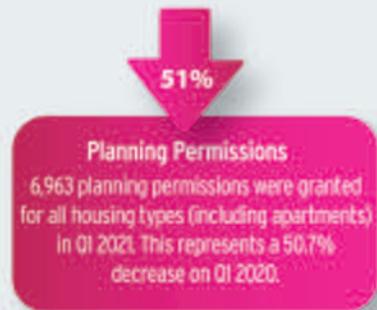
Source: Central Statistics Office

GETTING THE RIGHT BALANCE

A redesigned revenue equalisation funding model for local government

Gerard Turley and Stephen McNena, NUI Galway

Researchers at the Whitaker Institute in NUI Galway have designed a new model for estimating top-up or so called equalisation grants for local councils with inadequate revenue bases. Undertaken by economics lecturers Dr. Gerard Turley and Stephen McNena at the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, the research was published in the Spring 2021 issue of the *Economic and Social Review*, Ireland's leading journal for economics and applied social science. Here, the authors present a summary of the methodology and their findings.

Rationale

One of the roles of local government is the provision of public goods and services. In delivering these local services, fiscal decentralisation allows local authorities to reflect the preferences and circumstances of their citizens. However, variations in the economic base of regions and localities will result in fiscal disparities across local authorities, and in turn, differences in the ability to provide given levels of public goods and services. To offset this so that individuals are not disadvantaged in their access to local public services by their place of residency, a system of fiscal equalisation is needed that will reduce these horizontal fiscal imbalances.[1]

Fiscal equalisation addresses local authority differences in the levels of expenditure on public services relative to tax rates. Indeed, fiscal decentralisation and fiscal equalisation are natural complements. In the Irish case the introduction of the Local Property Tax (LPT), where local councils have rate-setting powers, meant a need for a well-defined equalisation system to offset the larger revenues accruing to local

Gerard Turley, NUI Galway

Stephen McNena, NUI Galway

With a predetermined share (namely 20%) of the estimated LPT yield pooled to fund the equalisation pot, equalisation transfers are based on the difference between the LPT retained locally (=0.8*LPT) and the 2014 GPG payment, with the latter set as the LPT baseline i.e. the minimum level of funding available to every local authority.[2] Where the locally retained LPT is less than the baseline, a local authority receives an equalisation grant equal to this shortfall. In this model, funding is from the well-off local councils (mainly the four Dublin local authorities and other urban areas) to the less well-off local councils, of which most are small, rural local authorities in the west, north and midlands of the country.

The result of this model is that 20 local authorities receive equalisation payments, totalling €133m in 2021. Four local authorities receive just over 40% of the total. They are Tipperary County Council (€16.3m), Donegal County Council (€16.2m), Mayo County Council (€11.5m), and Waterford City and County Council (€10.8m). Per capita, Leitrim, Longford and Monaghan County Councils receive the largest payments, with these central government equalisation grants accounting for 12-17 per cent of their revenues.

New model
We set out to design a more equitable, consistent, transparent, and evidence-based fiscal equalisation model, not tied to historical baseline supports or the LPT. In doing so, we examined local government equalisation systems in other countries (unitary and federal, decentralised and centralised, high-income and medium-income, large and small). Elsewhere, equalisation models and these intergovernmental fiscal transfers are often based on estimates of fiscal capacity and/or expenditure needs.

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[1] The principle of fiscal equalisation is enshrined in Article 9.5 of the Council of Europe's European Charter of Local Self-Government. See https://rm.coe.int/168007a088

[2] The Pension Related Deductions (PRD) amount was later added to the baseline.

authorities with the greatest taxable capacities i.e. large, urban councils with the greater and more valuable number of residential properties.

While there are different models of fiscal equalisation (for example, horizontal versus vertical, partial versus full, revenue versus expenditure), what matters most is the design of the fiscal equalisation programme, and in particular, the size of the distributable pool – that is, the equalisation fund - and the formula used to allocate these unconditional equalisation grants.

Current system
Ireland's fiscal equalisation model is tied to the LPT, and the central government General Purpose Grants (GPG) that councils received in 2014 when those payments were discontinued and replaced with the LPT. With the central government deciding that no local council would be worse off from LPT receipts than what they received in GPG in 2014, a decision on the determination of the equalisation pool and the allocation method was effectively made.

Given the abortive experience of the earlier (pre 2008) needs and resources model, the difficulty in assessing spending needs, and the relatively homogenous nature of local authorities in Ireland (with respect to socio-economic, demographic and geographical factors, and the subsequent cost of providing a similar level of local public services), a revenue equalisation model based on estimates of fiscal capacity was selected as the most appropriate methodology.[3] Regarded as the most sophisticated technique for assessing interjurisdictional differences and designing an equalisation transfers system, revenue-raising or fiscal capacity is commonly defined as the potential ability of local authorities to raise own-source revenues. In Ireland, own-source or local revenues are commercial rates, the LPT, and fees and charges for goods and services.

From a number of different methods to measure the underlying fiscal capacity, the Representative Revenue System (RRS) was chosen, which consists of applying national average rates to commonly used revenue bases. The advantage of using potential rather than actual revenue is that the latter may incentivise local governments to raise less revenue in anticipation of higher transfers or grant funding. As for the size and allocation of the grant pool in our model, equalisation transfers are based on the difference between the fiscal capacity of a local authority and a predetermined standard, defined as the average of the fiscal capacity estimates. Where the fiscal capacity of a local council is less than the common standard, a local council receives an equalisation payment equal to this shortfall. Based on this formula, the fiscal capacity or potential revenue estimates are displayed in Figure 1, with the national standard depicted as the horizontal line and equal to just over €620 per person.[4]

Results

In our model, the distributable pool is the sum of the equalisation amounts, equal to €210m. Although larger than the existing fund, it is still smaller than equalisation funds in many other OECD countries. As for the individual council allocations, although it is roughly the same local authorities that receive equalisation payments under the two models, the euro amounts differ. For illustrative purposes, the 2017 amounts for the existing model as against our new model are presented in Table 1.

In the new model, 22 local authorities are eligible for equalisation grants, with the funding now derived directly from central government. In our simulations, the local authorities that receive the largest grants are Donegal, Galway, Meath, Laois, and Wexford County Councils. Although rural Leitrim and Longford County Councils are eligible for less funding under this model, they still receive more than most other local authorities per head of population. As for the overall impact of equalisation, using *before* and *after* estimates to measure the equalising effect, the reduction in fiscal disparities across local authorities is greater under our new model.

Figure 1: Fiscal Capacity Estimates (€ per capita)
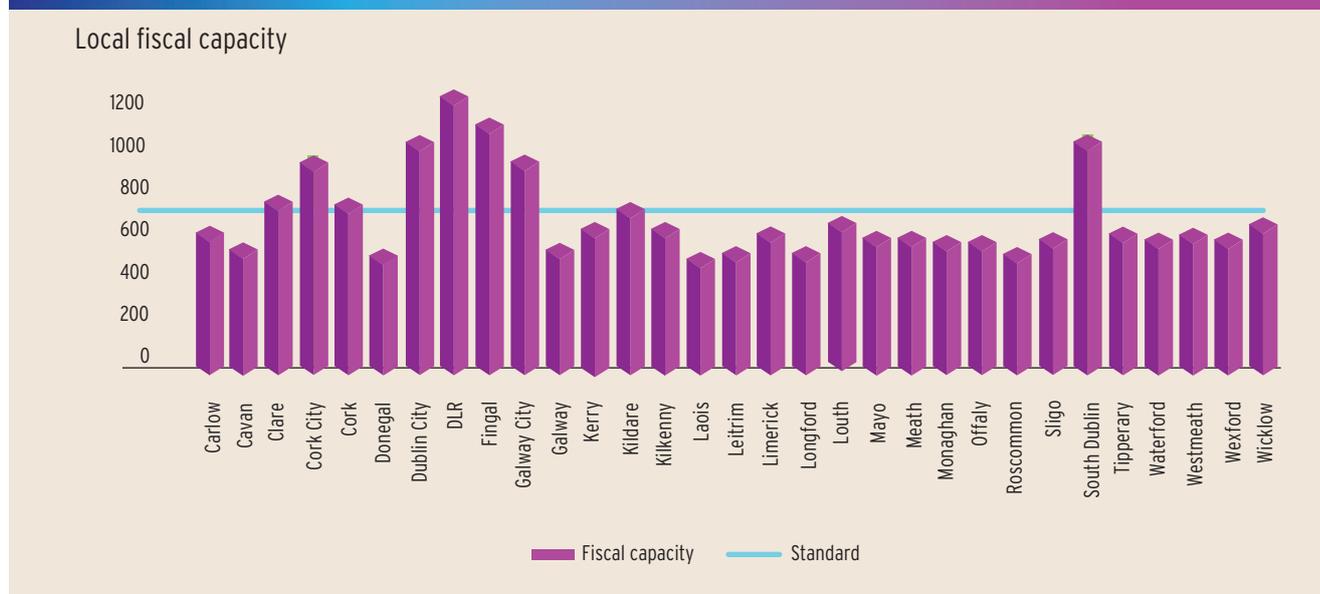
[3] This decision to omit a spending needs assessment from the methodology is supported by international evidence, where expenditure equalisation is regarded by many as highly complex and prone to lobbying and negotiation, but also because subnational disparities in service costs are generally smaller than in tax-raising capacities.

[4] This standard amount represents the revenue that would be available, on average, to the local authorities if they had a uniform tax and non-tax revenue system that they applied in a common manner.

Local authorities	New	Old
Carlow County Council	3.5	3.0
Cavan County Council	9.7	6.0
Cork City Council^	--	3.1
Donegal County Council	24.1	16.4
Galway County Council	23.2	2.9
Kerry County Council	6.9	2.5
Kilkenny County Council	4.7	4.7
Laois County Council	13.9	4.6
Leitrim County Council	4.5	7.3
Limerick City & County Council	12.4	5.0
Longford County Council	5.6	7.2
Louth County Council	2.9	2.3
Mayo County Council	10.5	11.5
Meath County Council	15.2	--
Monaghan County Council	5.9	8.2
Offaly County Council	7.6	3.7
Roscommon County Council	9.4	7.0
Sligo County Council	5.6	7.0
Tipperary County Council	10.5	16.5
Waterford City & County Council	10.3	11.3
Westmeath County Council	6.1	6.1
Wexford County Council	13.3	3.8
Wicklow County Council	3.9	--
Total	**€209.9m**	**€140.3m**

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage; Turley & McNena (2021).
* Estimates for 2017.
^ Due to the 2019 boundary extension (vis-à-vis Cork County Council), Cork City Council is no longer in receipt of equalisation transfers as it now has a bigger economic base.

Given the highly political nature of fiscal equalisation, any new redistributive scheme will inevitably result in losers and winners. The biggest 'loser' is the central government as it funds this equalisation model. Although the proposed cost is over €200m per annum (as against the €35m that the Exchequer currently contributes to the existing equalisation fund), it must be remembered that at the peak of the GPG payments in 2008, the total amount of unconditional grants to local authorities was €1bn.

Per head of the population served, the biggest winners are Galway, Laois, Meath and Wexford County Councils. Here, we note the outcome for Galway County Council as it is often cited as a case of inadequate and unfair equalisation payments (of less than €3m per year), as against, for example, equalisation grants in excess of €11m and €16m for Mayo and Tipperary

County Councils respectively, which have arguably similar socio-economic and demographic profiles. The somewhat surprising results for Meath and Wexford County Councils are largely explained by the relatively low commercial rates base in Meath (pre the 2019 revaluation) and the high rural share of the population in Wexford (at more than 60%).

Finally, given that the LPT will no longer be used to co-fund these equalisation payments under this new model, urban councils also win out with an additional €40m revenue income available annually to the four Dublin local authorities to fund essential services for their residents.[5] Figure 2 outlines the losers and winners, with the euro amount per head of population reported.

Conclusions

Equalisation is a key element of a country's inter-governmental fiscal arrangements where functions and funding are decentralised to subnational government. Although Ireland is a highly centralised country with limited responsibilities and powers devolved to local authorities,

Figure 2: Winners and Losers (€ per capita)
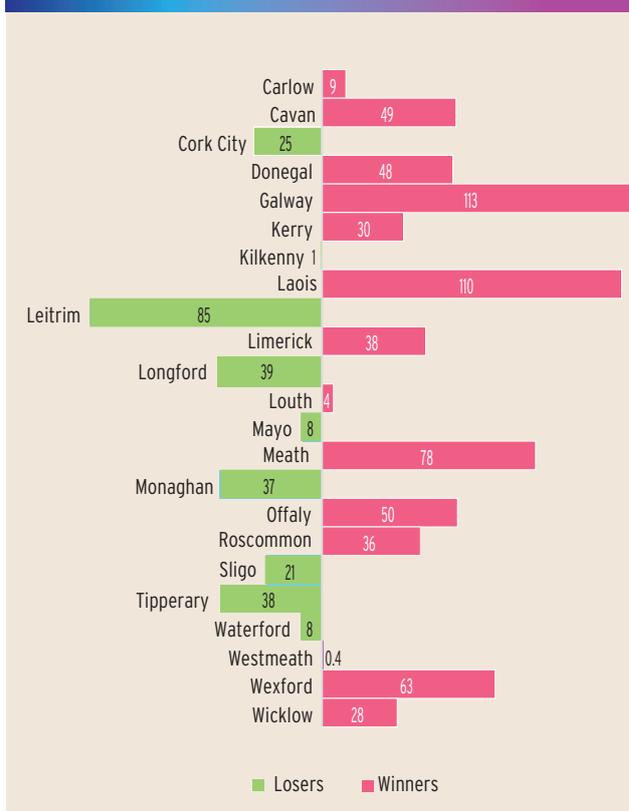
[5] In the changes to the LPT announced in June 2021, local authorities will in future retain 100% of the LPT receipts collected in their administrative area. Although the shortfall will be made up by central government, no details of the new equalisation fund or the Local Government Funding (Baseline) Review Group report were publicly available at the time of writing.

horizontal fiscal imbalances exist, and persist. Ireland has a system of equalisation transfers but we believe that the current model is not fit for purpose. This study constructs a model of fiscal equalisation that is consistent with international best practice but tailored to the specific circumstances of the Irish local government system. For the model to be operational, we believe that the data requirements are relatively straightforward, and not overly burdensome.

As for the sensitive issue of the councils that lose out from this new fiscal equalisation model, alternative sources of funding include, if the fiscal space allows, higher taxes locally levied on commercial and/or residential properties, or in cases where it is deemed necessary, a temporary transition payment from the central government. Either way, this new model provides for a local government funding model that is more objective, predictable, sustainable and, most importantly from the perspective of less well-off local

councils providing comparable levels of public services, equitable. Finally, while fiscal equalisation may appear an obscure and technical subject, all individuals in the Irish State are affected by it through the local authority services they receive, and the taxes and charges they pay to their local councils. Hence, as the title of this article indicates, there is a need for a redesigned funding model for Ireland's system of local government, based on the key principles of horizontal equity and revenue equalisation.

To read the full paper entitled *Equalisation transfers and local fiscal capacity: A new methodology for Ireland,* visit https://www.esr.ie/article/view/1497. Based at NUI Galway, the authors manage the local government finance website at *www.localauthorityfinances.com.*

If you require more information on fiscal equalisation, please email gerard.turley@nuigalway.ie.

Launch of special edition of *Administration* to mark the retirement of Dr Richard Boyle from the IPA

Joanna O'Riordan, IPA

In March 2021, a special edition of *Administration*, the peer reviewed journal of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was launched. The edition which is free to access on the journal's website is a tribute to Dr Richard Boyle who worked in the Institute's Research Division for 34 years, the final decade as Director of Research, Publications and Corporate Affairs.

The special edition includes contributions from both senior public servants and academics and is framed around key public service reform and policy challenges. The areas chosen are ones which are particularly pertinent to the future capacity of the public service and the aim was to make recommendations and suggest ways forward.

The twelve papers in the special edition are grouped into three sections. The first set of papers draw on a wealth of experience of the Irish public service – Richard's own reflections, and those of Robert Watt, Dermot McCarthy, Muiris MacCarthaigh and Peter Thomas. These papers review public service reform over the past decade and provide some valuable insights and challenges. The second group of papers look at specific aspects of the reform agenda requiring further energy – William Roche and Joanna O'Riordan look at people issues, Mary Murphy and John Hogan focus on policy analysis, Gerry McNamara and colleagues examine performance management, Aidan Horan and Michael Mulreany look at governance issues, while John Healy and Madeleine Clarke reflect on citizen

engagement. The final group of papers by Mark Callanan and Paul Umfreville and Local Sirr provide overviews respectively of reform in the key sectors of local government and housing.

Richard was interested in all aspects of the public service. The breadth of his interest in, and contribution to, research on the public service is best reflected in the fact that all of the topics covered in the special edition are topics on which Richard himself actively researched and wrote about in the course of his career. In addition to his research and writing, Richard also had a long track record of supporting the public service through active involvement with a wide range of committees, most recently the *Our Public Service 2020* management board. Richard also contributed immensely to the IPA. While he was always willing to represent the Institute publicly or in the media, more typically it was behind the scenes, supporting the education, training and publishing dimensions of the Institute's work. Richard will be missed by all his IPA colleagues.
Administration special edition link:
https://sciendo.com/pl/issue/ADMIN/68/4
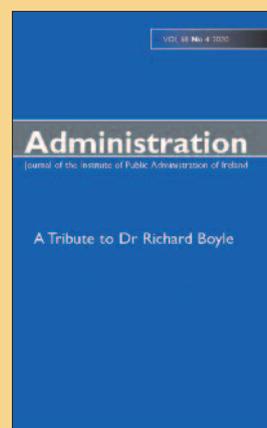
Over the course of two articles, we will look at the role of local government in delivering climate action and the policy implementation efforts underway to drive actions at the local and regional level. This first article provides an introduction to what climate action means for local government and sets out the wider national and international context within which the sector is operating. It will look at the national policies and structures in place to support local authorities in their important work to help Ireland deliver on its ambitious climate action targets and outlines the challenges facing local government in meeting the level of ambition set out.

CLIMATE ACTION

WHAT IT MEANS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PART
1

by Joe Boland, Alan Dunney, Breda Maher and Paul Regan
[Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office]

Introduction

There is unequivocal evidence of the warming of the climate system which, since the 1950s has undergone unprecedented changes compared to what has taken place for millennia. There is also worldwide consensus among researchers in the broad scientific community as human activities, primarily through greenhouse gas emissions, are changing the earth's climate (Herring 2020). In essence, climate change is a global issue impacting on countries and societies around the world to varying degrees with vulnerabilities projected to increase. To this end, the United Nations, from the mid 1980s, set about efforts to develop and introduce an international response. This included, in particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which was adopted with the Kyoto protocol in 1997. The Paris Agreement, building on the UNFCCC, is an international legally binding treaty adopted in 2015. All countries (currently 189) agreed to limit the global temperature increase to 2° while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5^o. This was the first ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement and it is the bridge between current policies and achieving climate neutrality within this century. It encapsulated several interlocking elements and provides a framework for mitigation action; to reduce emissions, provide transparent national reporting as well as increasing resilience. In particular, the agreement also recognises the key leadership role of local authorities as well as promoting cooperation at a regional and international level.

More recently, the European Green Deal plans to achieve carbon neutrality in the EU by 2050 and enhance the efficient use of resources through moving to a clean, circular economy as well as restoring biodiversity. The programme identifies where investments will be required as well as ensuring how an inclusive Just Transition can be achieved. Delivery on the deal will require the transformation of a range of sectors including energy, industry, agriculture, transport and the built environment.

National Trends Observed

Changes to Ireland's climate are consistent with regional and global trends. Mean temperatures have increased by approximately 0.8^o since the 1900s (Dwyer 2012). These changes to Ireland's climate are impacting on many locations and systems including key socio-environmental and economic sectors as well as those managed by the local government sector. These impacts both currently, and in the future, will include but are not limited to:

- Increased rate of deterioration of roads, footpaths, bridges and related infrastructure from flooding events, sea level rise, storm surges, sustained higher temperatures or a combination of such events

- Increased damage to local authority buildings and housing stock
- Exceedance of existing flood defences from higher rainfall events
- Deterioration of community infrastructure (i.e. public realm spaces, playgrounds, public parks and beaches) from sustained extreme events
- Damage to properties, streetscapes and community assets from storm and rainfall events
- Deterioration of wastewater infrastructure from higher rainfall events, heatwaves, or sub-zero temperature events
- Increased demand on resources for emergency response.

National Policy in Ireland

In recent years, Ireland has taken steps to align with EU and international commitments. In April 2014, the government published its *National Policy Position on Climate Action* which provided a strategic roadmap to enable the State to move to a low carbon economy by 2050. The long-term vision captured in the National Policy Position was based on an aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (C02) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and in parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production (DECC, 2021: a).

Statutory authority was given to this vision through the adoption of the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015*. This legislation tasked the Minister with making and submitting to government a *National Mitigation Plan* aimed at achieving the national transition objective i.e. 80% emission reductions. The Act also required the making and submitting of a *National Adaptation Framework* specifying the measures in different sectors including local government to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of the positive effects of climate change that may occur. Additionally, the Act prescribed for the establishment of a *Climate Change Advisory Council* which will monitor progress towards the national transition objective as well as providing advice to government (Irish Statute Book, 2015).

In July 2017, the Government published the *National Mitigation Plan* (NMP) which included over 100 actions to achieve a decarbonisation target of 80% (relative to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the sectors of electricity generation, the built environment and transport, with an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land use sector (DECC, 2021b). This was followed in 2018 by the *National Adaptation Framework* (NAF) to address climate resilience to

offset the negative impacts of climate change. The NAF required the making and submission of twelve sectoral adaptation plans (covering critical infrastructure, natural and cultural capital, water resources and health etc) as well as the adoption of *Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategies* within a specified period upon its approval. The strategies sought to identify key vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities, build capacity as well as improving resilience and coordination within local government and other sectors. All 31 adaptation strategies were adopted by the statutory deadline of September 2019.

Climate Action Regional Offices

In accordance with the *National Adaptation Framework*, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, in collaboration with local government set up four *Local Authority Climate Action Regional Offices* (CAROs) in January 2018 (DECC, 2019). While their role initially was to support local authorities in the preparation of their adaptation strategies, this has since expanded to include: collaboration with other key stakeholders, promoting and supporting coordination among local authorities, reporting on the progress of the local government sector, creating effective linkages with other entities as well as the development of regional specialisms and centres of excellence (Boland, 2019). With the support of the CAROs, all 31 local authorities developed and adopted climate change adaptation strategies setting out a path to: building the capacity of the sector and to increase its resilience to risks, vulnerabilities and change. There was a key focus on mainstreaming climate change considerations into all plans, policies and operations of the local authority as well as building capacity and knowledge of the sector.

Atlantic Seaboard North

Atlantic Seaboard South

Dublin Metropolitan area

Eastern and Midlands

The Role of the CAROs may be summarised as follows:

- Supporting local authorities in the implementation of their adaptation strategies

- Driving climate action at the local authority level
- Ensuring coordination between the sector and other stakeholders on climate action activities
- Promoting and supporting coordination among local authorities
- Reporting on the progress of the local government sector on climate action
- Creating effective linkages with other actors
- The development of regional specialisms and centres of excellence.

The designated regional specialisms are as follows:

- Atlantic Seaboard North – coastal erosion and flooding, Atlantic storms and groundwater flooding
- Atlantic Seaboard South – sea level rise, coastal erosion and flooding
- Eastern and Midlands Regional – fluvial and pluvial flooding
- Dublin Metropolitan area – urban heat effect, urban freezing and urban pluvial flooding

Climate Action Plan 2019

In June 2019, the all of government *Climate Action Plan 2019: To Tackle Climate Breakdown* was published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. This plan was an iterative extension of national climate policy, informed by the third report and recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly – *How the State Can Make Ireland a Leader in Tackling Climate Change* (Citizens' Assembly, 2018) and the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action, entitled, *Climate Change: A Cross-Party Consensus for Action,* published in March 2019 (Government of Ireland 2019). The plan's publication proceeded the Supreme Court Judgment made on the 31st July 2020 to quash the NMP 2017. In conclusion to the case of *Friends of the Irish Environment v the Government of Ireland and Others*, the Supreme Court determined that the NMP was 'inadequate' in terms of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and confronting the threat posed by climate change to human and constitutional rights. (Supreme Court, 2021)

The *Climate Action Plan* sets out a pathway to transition the country to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. Its purpose, format and approach brought a renewed impetus to tackling emission reductions across all government departments. It included 183 actions to be implemented across all sectors as well as mandatory reporting on annual targets to be achieved. These sectors included electricity generation, agriculture, waste management, forestry, enterprise and the public sector. It

also identified local government as a key stakeholder in many actions and highlighted the important leadership role that it must play in the transition to a net-zero carbon society. The plan tasks local government, along with reducing emissions from their own operations, with becoming a key mobiliser at local and community level as well as becoming a key driver and enabler of local decarbonisation efforts.

Climate Action Charter

One key action under the Plan was the establishment of *The Local Authority Climate Action Charter* (DECC, 2021:c), which was signed by the Minister and every local authority in October 2019. Its aim was to ensure that local authorities embed decarbonisation, climate resilience and sustainable development into every function. It tasks local authorities with delivering on energy reduction targets, carbon proofing major projects and programmes, implementing green public procurement strategies, partnering and collaborating with communities, as well as building local citizen engagement (Climate Action Charter, 2019).

New Climate Plans 2021

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020* will commit into law the objective of moving to a climate neutral and climate resilient economy by 2050 through:

- Establishing a target of climate neutrality by 2050
- Introducing successive 5-year economy-wide carbon budgets commencing in 2021
- Enhancing the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council
- Requiring the development and revision of the all of government Climate Action Plan on an annual basis with a national long-term strategy developed every decade
- Requiring local authorities to prepare individual Climate Action Plans to include both adaptation and mitigation actions.

What all this means for Local Government

The climate action impetus over the past five years or so sets a number of challenges for the local government sector including increased demands:

- To deliver on the obligation and objectives as outlined in the various plans, strategies and charter
- Provide local leadership
- Collaborate with a range of stakeholders.

As outlined in *A Profile of Local Government Climate Action in Ireland 2020* (Clarke & O'Donoghue-Hynes, 2020), the sector has been undertaking an array of actions over the years

across all services and functions including mitigation, adaptation, emergency response and clean-up activities. Accordingly, local government is well placed to lead on wider changes and to further mobilise local communities. Local Authorities are embracing this leadership role and are now building capacity and mainstreaming climate action initiatives within their operations. Many have established cross departmental, multi-disciplinary climate action teams comprised of staff with a range of expertise. These teams are tasked with coordinating climate action activities across local authority structures and working with the CAROs in the coordination of activities across the region as well as implementing a range of actions.

Building the capacity of Local Government

The CAROs in collaboration with the *Local Authority Services National Training Group* (LASNTG) and other stakeholders developed an extensive training programme aimed at all staff and elected members. These programmes, which fall under six pillars, are aimed at equipping all local authority staff and elected members, some 30,000 in total, to improve knowledge, skills and understanding to help drive positive and effective climate action through their work. The six pillars are:

- Championing Leadership
- Raising Awareness
- Building Capacity
- Empowering Change
- Delivering Action
- Actioning Policy
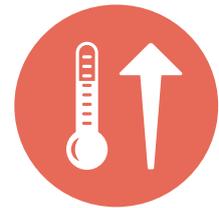
The training courses under these six pillars, serve to underpin the commitments set out under Action 150 of Ireland's *National Climate Action Plan* which is to strengthen and empower local authority climate action leadership and build capacity within the sector. The Institute of Public Administration has played a central delivery role from the start of this training programme as one of a number of national collaborators drawn from across academic institutions, central and local government. Together they have developed and piloted a multi-module programme to help build the capacity of Climate Action Teams to deliver climate action mitigation and adaptation measures across all local authority functions.

An aspect of the adaptation strategies worth highlighting relates to the focus on local governance arrangements. In this context, it can be noted that climate action ambition is now interwoven within the recently adopted corporate plans and also cascades down through the PMDS structure. It is also a standing item on the agenda of senior management teams and Corporate Policy Groups. A dedicated climate action Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) has also been established. All local authorities have established cross departmental

climate action teams. Most have appointed Climate Action Officers and Energy Efficiency Officers.

Towards a low carbon, climate resilient community
It will be gleaned from the foregoing that local authorities have potentially a very significant leadership role in the impetus towards sustainability at local level. The component elements are now being reflected in the various specialisms and initiatives being progressed by the CAROs. These may be summarised as follows:

1. **Adaptation:** Again, this refers to the need to build resilience, particularly at local level, to the inevitable consequences of climate change. In this context, the adaptation strategies adopted by all local authorities in 2019 have given an initial impetus, not only in terms of the actions included therein, but also by galvanising and equipping the organisation for the significant challenges which lie ahead. Attention is drawn, in particular, to the governance actions which are included.

2. **Mitigation:** Particularly in light of the stretched targets included in 2020's *Programme for Government: Our Shared Future,* there will be an obligation on all sectors, including the public sector, to significantly improve energy performance and to reduce carbon footprints. There are also the obligations to comply with the 7% annual targets under the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill* when enacted. There are particular consequences here for local authorities in terms of its own activities, including: fleet management, retrofitting, public lighting, active travel/public realm, facilities/depots etc. In addition, the 'mainstreaming' of climate action considerations in its various plans, programmes and policies will be another vital consideration. The role of Sustainable Energy Communities Programme, with the assistance of local authorities, will also be key in guiding communities to work together to develop local sustainable energy systems.

3. **Building local capacity:** In order to gear up for these challenges, it will also be vital to ensure that local authority staff and elected members are equipped with the skills and confidence to progress a very stretched agenda. In this context, the CAROs are advancing a very ambitious training programme with the rollout having commenced in 2020. This is a very far-reaching and extensive initiative and also represents another example of collaborative activity involving some 18 key national entities, including: government departments, third level institutions, vocational groups, as well as a range of national and regional entities. Indeed, it is pleasing to note that there is now significant interest among the broader public sector to also take up this training.
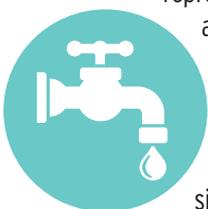
4. **Connecting with local communities**: Clearly, the community sector is a significant user of energy. In addition, there is also the groundswell of local interest in issues of sustainability, particularly on the part of the younger generation. It is vital, therefore, to tap into this key resource and progress to a stage where the staff, elected members and local communities are all working together to meet the challenges which lie ahead. This is the essence of local government.

In this context, recourse to pilot initiatives, particularly involving the Municipal Districts (MDs), Public Participation Networks (PPNs), existing fora (such as Tidy Towns) as well as other community groups will be really important. Some initiatives advanced to date include:

- Community capacity building events being progressed collaboratively by LEADER, PPNs and the local authorities.
- A climate action youth camp organised by a combination of local Chamber of Commerce/Municipal District/Tidy Towns group
- Grants to local organisations from MDs to encourage climate change initiatives
- The CAROs have also produced an interactive video which is being rolled out to all MDs nationally setting out potential ways in which they can positively work with local communities on local climate action initiatives.

5. **Strategic Collaboration:** Reference has already been made to the range of national/regional organisations which have contributed to the training plan. Another exemplar is the GAA Green Club Programme which is a partnership between the GAA and all local authorities across the island of Ireland (GAA, 2021). The programme is structured around five thematic areas, energy; water; waste; biodiversity; and travel/transport and is at a pilot stage, with forty-five clubs initially participating. Both entities have significant commonality in terms of local influence wherein the potential for interaction, particularly through the green clubs initiative, has the capacity to win hearts and minds locally. There may also be emerging strategic collaboration to progress social housing retrofit programmes at scale. Fleet management will be another area of interest.

6. **Spatial Planning:** There is also a very strong emerging linkage between spatial planning and climate action/sustainability. Bear in mind, in particular, the extent to which the planning and development function is so central to the role of local government. The following represents a sample of potential influencing activity through both mitigation and adaptation measures:

- Integrating climate action into development plan objectives particularly in terms of settlement patterns, compact urban forms, active travel/permeability, policies relating to renewable energy etc.
- Making provision for decarbonising zones in terms of an area spatially identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation measures can co-exist to address low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emission and climate needs
- Greening development standards particularly in such areas as construction [NZEB], micro-generation, use of materials etc
- Adaptation measures including nature based solutions, enhanced green infrastructure and biodiversity

7. **Business/Enterprise:** As previously outlined, climate action is not entirely about risk as there are also significant opportunities for enterprise: for example, new products, services, technologies, educational streams, research and development, energy systems etc. This greening of economies is following international trends with significant funding, being advanced through the European Green Deal. The CAROs are also advancing a research initiative in conjunction with the 3rd/4th level education sector in this regard.

8. **Other Sectors:** The biggest users of energy are the domestic, transport and agricultural sectors. In the first two cases, local authorities are in a strong position to influence activity. The agricultural sector is, however, clearly not without its complexities but is also likely to undergo some level of transformation. There may be ways of linking such with other local initiatives, possibly through the agricultural pillar which is represented on the SPCs, also perhaps through the PPN and local economic and community plan (LECP) as well as possibly through the national training plan. Consideration of such matters is at a relatively early stage.

Conclusion
In can be gleaned, therefore, that the local authority sector has a key role at local level in rolling out a model for a 'low carbon climate resilient society'. Indeed, this terminology is now often used, particularly in EU and national government contexts. However, arguably there has been little debate as to how this can be achieved in practice. From the perspective of local government, it is far more than interventions encompassing adaptation and mitigation actions. Rather, the achievement of low carbon climate resilience at local level requires a range of interventions to encompass: building local capacity, connecting with local communities, strategic

collaboration at the several levels of governance (local, regional and national), and using spatial planning as a means of ensuring long term sustainable outcomes. The coordination of the role of other sectors, particularly transport, energy and agriculture, represents another key aspect. Finally, there are also significant opportunities to be grasped in the areas of economic development and enterprise wherein the Local Enterprise Offices, in particular, are well placed to play a key role. The interweaving of green enterprise opportunities into economic development strategies and LECPs is another key aspect. The leadership role of the local government sector in pulling together these strands at local level will be pivotal in terms of ultimate success.

The second article in this series (Part 2), to be published in the next edition of the *Local Authority Times*, will take a more detailed look at how local government has been leading out on activities to meet these challenges.

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"Nearly half of the surface waters in Ireland are failing to meet the legally binding water quality objectives set by the EU Water Framework Directive because of pollution and other human disturbance" [1]

By Naomi Blumlein and Toby Finch, UCD public policy students and IPA research interns

How Clean are our Waters?

Potential lessons for the next *River Basin Management Plan*
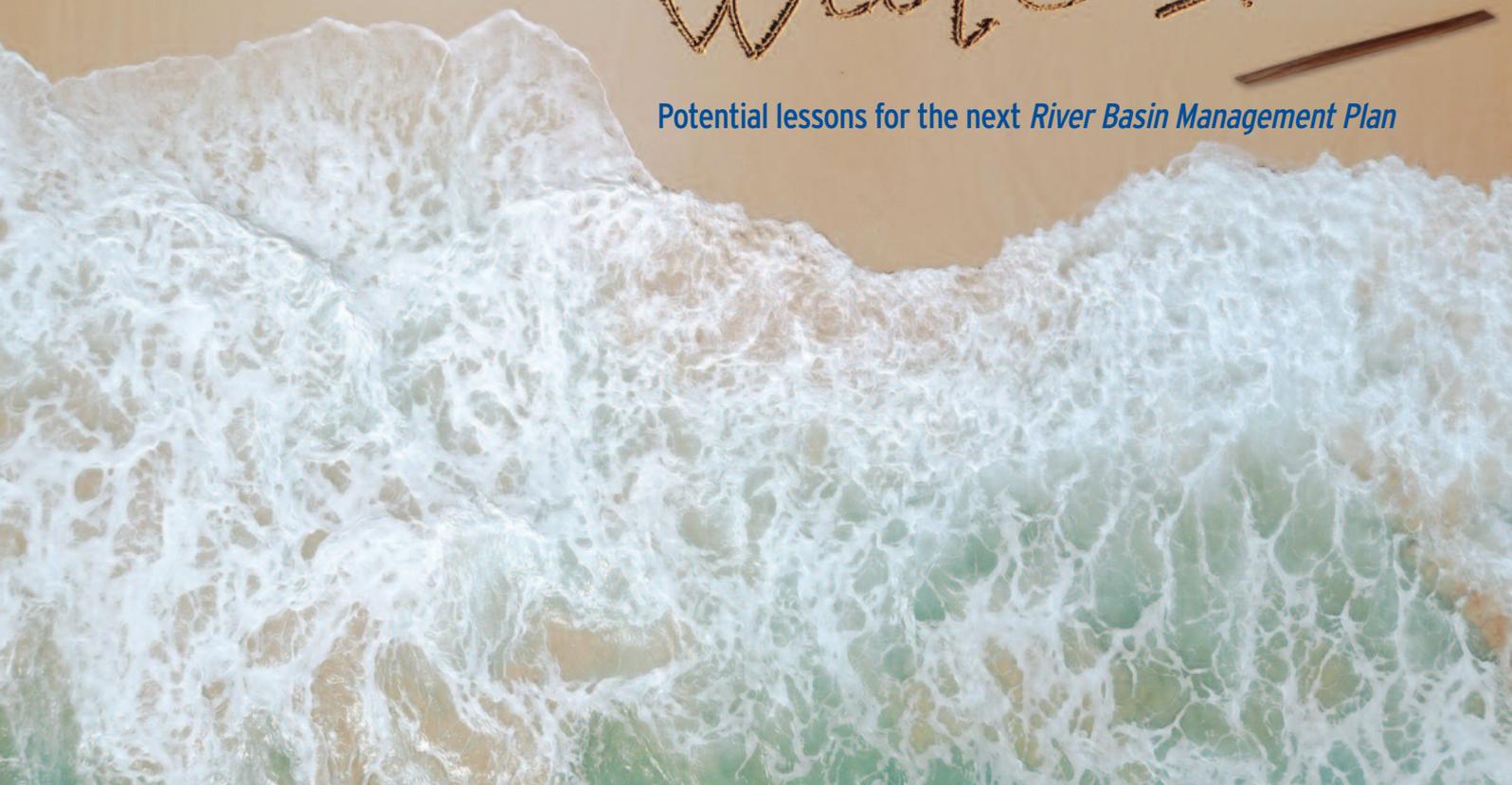
Introduction

Although recently an overall improvement in river water quality has been observed,[2] water quality remains an urgent policy issue in Ireland as the lives of many will be adversely affected should water quality decline further. In 2020, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), commenced a two-year research programme funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review the water governance arrangements in Ireland. The objectives of the research programme are to examine the water governance structures in order to identify any gaps, develop best-practice recommendations to help address water quality issues, and to disseminate lessons learned from water governance for other policy areas. The outputs from the first year of the research programme were published this summer. Overall, the research conclusions in respect of Ireland's water governance arrangements are broadly positive. In particular, there has been significant innovation and improvement over the governance arrange-

ments previously in place. It is further concluded that the current governance structures have been well-received and should be continued. There is, however, scope for improvement.

OECD's Water Governance Indicator Framework
The first report, entitled *Using the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework to Review the Implementation of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2018-2021,* examines the progress being made in respect of water governance in Ireland using the OECD's Water Governance Indicator Framework.[3] The report measures Ireland's performance in respect of each of the OECD's 12 water governance indicators with the metrics of 'Strong', 'Good', or 'Limited' progress being used. The research concludes that for 9 out of the 12 indicators, Ireland was making either 'Good' or 'Strong' progress. Areas in which 'Strong Progress' had been made include establishing innovative water governance practises, pursuing stakeholder engagement and developing overall capacity and knowledge in respect of water governance. The establishment of the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) is identified as making a significant contribution to this progress.

Despite these positive findings, there were some indicators of good water governance in which the report contends that limited progress had been made. One such area relates to water finance, with both local authorities and LAWPRO under considerable pressure to meet their obligations given resource constraints. The absence of primary Irish legislation to implement the Water Framework Directive was also described as a major challenge by the report, minimising progress towards an effectively implemented and enforced regulatory framework. The report also observes that 'Limited Progress' is being made regarding monitoring and evaluation in particular in relation to actions included in the current RBMP.

Using an Experimental Governance Lens
The second report entitled *Using an Experimental Governance Lens to Examine Governance of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021* examines lessons learned from the governance arrangements put in place for the RBMP 2018-2021 through the lens of experimental governance. The term 'experimental governance' is used to describe one way in which governance arrangements can evolve in the face of difficult or 'wicked' policy issues such as water governance where a cross-government response is required.[4] Experimental governance can be defined as a system of governance that is open to change based on the practical lessons learned through implementation. An example lies in Ireland's response to critiques of the governance structures for the first-cycle RBMP (published in 2009) and the lessons learnt; a new three-tier structure was established for the

second RBMP which ranges from national to local level organisations.

Stakeholder Engagement in Governance
The third report entitled *An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum) as an example of Stakeholder Engagement in Governance* analyses the Water Forum as a specific example of national-level formal stakeholder engagement in the process of policy development and governance. Essentially, the report outlines the strengths, limitations, and influence of the Water Forum. Regarding its strengths, interview participants noted that no stakeholder groups were excluded or have decided not to participate, as sometimes happens with policy fora,[5] meaning that the representation of interests is high. Furthermore, the research concludes that knowledge of water issues has increased among members of the Water Forum, reflecting the importance of social learning as an emerging governance mechanism to promote collaborative action amongst stakeholders to improve water governance.[6] Regarding limitations, most frequently noted was a sense of limited impact that the Forum has had on policy to date, despite all the work put in by members. This report offers a useful case study to examine the advantages and disadvantages of stakeholder engagement in governance as well as opportunities for mutual-learning and knowledge transfer.

Local Catchment Groups in Ireland
The fourth report entitled *Case Studies on Local Catchment Groups in Ireland, 2018-2020* examines the role of local groups in the water governance structures through case studies of the River Moy Trust and Inishowen Rivers Trust. This report highlights the challenge of a lack of adequate resourcing that restricts the work that these catchment groups can undertake. One such issue mentioned in the report was being unable to employ full-time project officers to monitor the progress of local initiatives on the ground. The report also illustrates the feeling of frustration amongst catchment group members at their perceived lack of a clear role within the governance structures, stating that whilst many catchment groups are engaged, they are struggling to gain a firm foothold within the water governance system.

Recommendations for the third-cycle River Basin Management Plan
The reports conclude with several key recommendations for water governance in Ireland, these include highlighting the need for all committees across the three governance tiers to move towards a more robust fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities as set out in the second-cycle RBMP. The need to improve high level policy direction, project management and the monitoring of the overall implementation of the RBMP, are also highlighted. Notably, the reports acknowledge the importance of maintaining a regulatory mix with regards to changing behaviours and enforcement.

Moreover, the reports recommend that the knowledge and experience gained by the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advice Programme (ASSAP) advisors and LAWPRO, through their local initiatives and projects, should be mainstreamed across the work of local authorities and Teagasc with the potential for scaling up lessons learned and disseminating effective practice. It is, additionally, recommended that local organisations like Rivers Trusts and local partnerships be recognised and supported more comprehensively within the water governance framework in order to provide them with a clearer role and to capitalise on potential information and lesson sharing from those groups to others in the water governance structures.

Next phase
The next phase of the research programme will focus on drawing out wider lessons from the research in respect of water governance and applying those learnings to aid in addressing other 'wicked' problems within public policy for instance, climate change and public sector reform.

The full reports from the first year of the EPA-IPA research programme can be found at the below links:
https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/water/research-372.php
https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/epa-research-2030-reports/research-373.php
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InPLACE:
Investigating Place, Planning and Commuting

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Caroline Creamer (ICLRD Director & Maynooth University)
Prof. Des McCafferty (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick)
Dr Gavan Rafferty (Ulster University)
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Understanding the changing relationship between work and home
Since early 2020, COVID-19 has been a major disruptor in all our lives. The global pandemic has dramatically changed the activity patterns of individuals and families, transforming everyday geographies, and the scale at which we live. It has created challenges and opportunities for local authorities, and for small and medium sized towns in particular. In the longer-term, the implications for places and communities are potentially profound. One of the areas where this is most clearly seen is the changing relationship between work and home. The enforced switch to home working significantly reduced commuting to work for many and has opened greater possibilities for hybrid or remote models of working in the future. Policies and practices in local and national government have begun to address the changing pattern in how we live and work, for example, with changing approaches to town and village renewal, digitisation and pedestrianisation in towns. Nationally, *Our Rural Future* and the *National Remote Work Strategy* strongly identify the need to support telecommuting and flexible working.

Over the past fifteen years, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) has been supporting local authorities and other actors to enhance their capacity to

with the economic recovery. In the Republic of Ireland, the number of people commuting for more than an hour and a half to work increased by 33% between 2011 and 2016, based on CSO data. In Northern Ireland, according to the UK Trades Union Congress (TUC), between 2010 and 2015, commutes of over two hours duration increased by 57%. Decades of development have generated a growing concentration of employment in metropolitan zones, which in turn has resulted in greater volumes and distances of commuting, and a steady increase in time spent commuting.

Perhaps the most dramatic expressions of commuting in the Irish landscape have been the emergence of ever more extensive commuter belts around the major cities since the 1990s (Horner, 1999), the accompanying development of inter-urban transport infrastructures, particularly roads and motorways which have facilitated commuting, and the rapid increase in the population of commuter-based settlements (Kitchin et al., 2012). To a large extent, urbanisation in Ireland has been expressed in the growth of these commuter settlements. For example, of 32 towns that attained a population of over 10,000 population between 1966 and 2016, 15 are in the Greater Dublin Area, and all but one of these can be classified as commuter towns (McCafferty, 2019). At the same time, there has been a hollowing-out of many rural towns as population has increased in their rural hinterlands which have become part of the commuter belts of the larger urban centres.

The current pivot to telecommuting, as a response to COVID-19, may be temporary, and last only as long as the global coronavirus pandemic, or it may prompt longer term shifts in working and commuting patterns. For example, in the 2021 Whitaker Institute-Western Development Commission (WDC) Remote Working Survey , 95% of respondents said they would like to work remotely for some or all of the time after the crisis is over. In the longer term, different scenarios can be envisaged for the future of work and commuting. First, if economic adjustment follows the path of the recovery from recession after 2008, the mismatch between the distributions of people and jobs will worsen, leading to increased commuting, in particular long duration commuting. Alternatively, the economic shock and social dislocation induced by COVID-19, together with the growing realisation of the increasingly urgent need for climate action, may lead to a new, more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable economy. A third, and perhaps more likely scenario, could be a hybrid approach to working, which will address sustainability challenges while maintaining elements of office-based working. Whichever of these scenarios unfolds – whether a return to high volume, long duration commuting, or an attempt to build a new, more balanced, economy – the findings from this study will be an invaluable guide to planners and policymakers.

understand and implement strategies focused on place-making. The ICLRD is a north-south-USA partnership that involves Maynooth University, Ulster University and the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG). Its multi-disciplinary team combines academic and practitioner expertise in spatial planning, geography, local and regional development and good governance. Together with University College Dublin and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, the ICLRD is leading a two-year action research programme investigating the impacts of pre- and post-COVID commuting on people and place. The study, entitled 'InPLACE: Investigating Place, Planning and Commuting', is supported by:

- the National Regional and Urban Planning Policy Section within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
- the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR),
- the Local Government Management Association (LGMA), and
- Clare County Council.

Commuting and COVID-19
Having emerged as a major phenomenon during the economic boom of the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, commuting volumes, distances and travel times decreased following the financial crisis and subsequent economic recession, but increased again

The InPLACE approach

The aim of the InPLACE Study is to explore and understand the impacts of pre- and post-COVID commuting on people and place. Taking a case study approach, and an island of Ireland perspective, InPLACE will examine the interplay between home, community and workplace across a series of towns that experience varying levels of (pre-COVID) out-commuting. The project will be delivered in two phases. Phase 1 takes place over 12 months (April 2021-March 2022) and focuses on three case study towns, which have been identified on the basis of statistical profiling and in collaboration with the strategic stakeholders in this project. The towns are:

- Newtownmountkennedy, County Wicklow
- Maghera, County Derry/Londonderry
- Ennistymon-Lahinch, County Clare

It is expected that the detailed examination of the case study towns will allow clearer identification of the effects of out-commuting on place and, conversely, the dividend to communities of having lower separation of residences and workplaces, and the subsequent implications for local authorities. Phase 1 will include the selection of further towns for investigation during Phase 2. This selection will take place in collaboration with the LGMA.

To achieve the study's aim of assessing the impacts of commuting on people and place, the research objectives are to:
- Quantify and map the scale of pre- and post-COVID commuting in the case study locations, with particular reference to the extent of car-based commuting, and the distances, frequencies of travel, and travel times;
- Examine the demographics, community dynamics and spatial patterns of development in the case study locations;
- Assess the impacts (economic, social and spatial) of pre- and post-COVID commuting, through engagement with key stake-holders in civil society and policy-making, and with specific cohorts (e.g. women and migrants), in the case study locations;
- Examine good practice examples of place-based interven-tions (in the case study areas and elsewhere) that promote more resilient and sustainable communities; and
- Draw conclusions and recommendations to inform future public policy and planning responses.

Local government and changing patterns between home and work

Callanan (2020) identifies a range of challenges and changing responsibilities for local authorities, some of which have been brought to the fore with the COVID crisis. In particular, local authorities are addressing the revitalisation of town centres; changes in where people want to live and how the planning system manages this; access to affordable and appropriate housing; the need for infrastructure provision, especially capacity for housing, broadband and digital hubs; and the demand for, and access to, green and recreational spaces. Findings from the InPLACE Study can be utilised to inform future regional and local policies and strategies. For example, it is envisaged that conclusions and recommendations from the research will provide a greater understanding of housing need and anticipate changes to established patterns of demand; inform potential priorities and actions for the next iteration of both the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs); and provide evidence for the leveraging of funding for digitisation and regeneration.

This timely study sets out to address the gaps in knowledge on the role of local authorities and other actors in this changing pattern between home and work, and to capture recent, and anticipated future, changes to commuting and telecommuting behaviours. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the relationship between home and work, and consequently on communities and places, is only beginning to be understood. The InPLACE Study will capture the developing situation. It is expected that the study's findings will have relevance across a wide range of policy domains, many of which are within the remit of local authorities, and all of which directly influence local places, including health, housing, environment, community development, social policy, transportation and spatial planning.

Further Details
For further information on this project, email:
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LITTER BUGS

IRELAND'S RUBBISH PANDEMIC

By Naomi Blumlein, UCD public policy student and IPA research intern.

Whether we like it or not, another outdoor summer is on the cards for 2021. The question is: are we prepared for the litter that comes with it? Fingal County Council's Director of Operations and Water, Mary T. Daly, explains: *'litter levels have increased as footfall to our beauty spots has increased throughout the past 15 months... facemasks, pizza boxes and coffee cups have become a big litter problem'.* [1] Additionally, the 2020 National Litter Pollution Monitoring System notes cigarette, packaging, food-related, and plastic litter as the main types of litter in our communities. The government announced in May 2021, *'€5 million additional funding for litter prevention and cleaning as Ireland prepares for an outdoor summer'.* [2] This additional funding will provide more general bins and recycling facilities to meet increased demand from the public. However, no matter how many bins we have in place, it will not matter if public participation is not there.

So, who litters, where, and why?

Although the characteristics of 'litter bugs' are far from conclusive, some studies suggest that littering is more common among males, younger adults, and individuals living in rural communities more so than in cities. [3] With that said, people of any age, educational level, and income can and do generate litter. In environmental settings which are already littered, people are more likely to litter than when they are in a litter-free environment. [4] Moreover, people have also been found to litter more frequently in run-down or 'disordered' settings than in those considered affluent or tidy. [5] People litter

for a whole host of reasons ranging from a lack of appropriate facilities, to misinformation, to laziness by those who believe some one else will clean up after them, to rebellion by those who feel disenfranchised or alienated from their community. [6] *A Zero Waste Scotland* report notes that our sense of responsibility for a location is a key influence on attitudes towards littering.[7] Notably, in areas where people feel a connection to that area, they are less likely to litter.

Searching for a solution: education versus enforcement

Over the past 30 years, the Irish government, An Taisce, and other bodies have rolled out an assortment of environmental education programmes including the Green Schools programme, Clean Coasts, Picker Pals, and the Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Fund. Yet, our dirty little litter problem is not going away. In fact, an increase in litter across the country has been observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Media and Communications Officer for Meath County Council, Ailish Shaw, notes that there has been a notable increase in illegal dumping since the start of COVID-19 restrictions in April 2020:

'The drive towards outdoor recreation has seen a rise in litter also, especially in urban areas with many consuming fast food etc. 'on the go', in cars, in public areas and then disposing of waste packaging in an irresponsible manner… [Additionally] *we suspect this rise may have been attributed to house-holders who were using their place of work to dispose of waste and now found themselves without that option'.* [8]

So where have we gone wrong? Could our litter problem be a symptom of miseducation, or even a total lack thereof, or insufficient enforcement measures?

One could argue that current education programmes are aimed at the wrong demographic. Typically these programmes are targeted at children, particularly those in primary school. While it is important to teach children to care for the environment and inform them about the problem of littering, the focus on them is perhaps misguided. Children, in general, do not have their own money to buy goods which they could litter with. They are accompanied by a guardian who makes decisions for them. By the time they're old enough to participate in the market on their own, the environ-mental knowledge and skills that they learnt have likely dissipated, rendering the early intervention less useful.

Awareness raising among the general public

The litter problem is about more than just educating children – holistic buy-in from the general public is key. We need the participation and support of all members of communities, national and local government, businesses, campaigns, and educational institutions to fight this issue. Perhaps we then ought to focus our efforts more firmly on young adults in second and third-level education as well as more generally on the national workforce.

Having observed the success of regular television and radio infomercials during the pandemic in educating and informing the population on the coronavirus and on public health guidance, it

seems appropriate and likely advantageous to consider whether such an approach could work as an educational platform for littering. Of course, such a national campaign would come at a relatively high cost, however, it is worth reflecting on the heavy financial cost which the litter issue is putting on local authorities. Figures from 2019 show that South Dublin County Council spends around €1.4 million per year cleaning up after illegal dumpers. [9] In Fingal County Council, staff are working overtime with the cleaning crews on double shifts every weekend to keep up with the demand.[10] This has inevitably led to increased costs in the street cleaning services budget along with the installation costs of providing more bins.

Clearly, litter is a huge expense for local authorities and it is certainly worthwhile to consider whether more frequent and comprehensive national television/radio campaigns would be beneficial. Many local authorities together with the regional waste management offices have undertaken media campaigns high-lighting the issue during the pandemic and the level of dumping has begun to decrease from the highpoint in 2020. [11] Moreover, if waste collection infrastructure is improved throughout the country, including the provision of recycling and compost bins at appropriate sites, these could be accompanied with some educational text and graphics so that information is easily accessible for citizens who are uncertain about the correct waste disposal procedures i.e. explaining what can be put in each bin – the dos and don'ts.

Stricter enforcement?

Another option to potentially solve this issue would be a more stringent litter enforcement policy and practice. Historically, however, litter enforcement has been a contentious issue as it's very difficult to monitor littering and therefore to enforce regulations. Some argue, including a number of councillors with Cork County Council in June 2021, that the key to tackling this problem is to employ more wardens to enforce litter regulations around the country and to follow through with prosecution procedures for those who do not follow the rules.[12] Wicklow County Council, for instance, has taken a tough stance against illegal dumpers and litterers for failing to comply with the legislation. This war waged on waste offenders has resulted in fines being imposed on those caught to cover the clean-up costs and legal fees.[13] According to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report focusing on local authority environmental enforcement, 1,200 litter prosecutions were initiated in 2019, a significant increase in comparison to 2018 which saw only 350 prosecutions.[14]

However, as litter levels in urban areas hit a 13-year high, and with just 23 towns deemed 'clean',[15] one wonders whether enforcement alone will solve the problem. In fact, one study found that prosecu-tion for littering offences is both inadequate and ineffective in Ireland, revealing that fewer than half of the littering fines are actually paid.[16]

So, what is the right approach to tackle this issue? It is apparent that a mix of comprehensive and integrated education strategies, alongside more stringent enforcement will be essential; however, it can be difficult to determine the appropriate balance between these

two responses. As noted earlier, an effective and efficient solution will require a holistic and coordinated response from all members of all communities.

A balancing act: the harmonisation of education and enforcement

The launch of the *Gum Litter Campaign* here in Ireland is a useful example of a successful collaborative response to a particular litter issue. Local authorities have decided to take firm measures against the all too common practice of gum littering around the country.[17] Starting in Wexford, it has been expanded to twenty-six other local authorities. The Gum Litter Taskforce, an environmental initiative, was established with the objective to raise awareness and educate people about the negative consequences of incorrectly disposing of chewing gum; fines would be imposed on those who fail to dispose of their gum properly. Employing nationwide activities such as educational school campaigns, advertising, community mobilisation, and coordinated efforts by the Department of Communications, Climate Action, and Environment, and by Food and Drink Ireland on behalf of the chewing gum industry, the Gum Litter Taskforce has made significant improvements regarding gum litter disposal and changing behaviours since its inception in 2007. Results demonstrate that in 2019, 88% of people who responded to a research survey said that they always dispose of their gum correctly which is a considerable jump from the reported 54% when the campaign first began.[18] Moreover, an observable shift in public behaviour has been evident, illustrated by the fact that gum litter as a proportion of all litter has decreased by 64% over the lifetime of the campaign.[19]

A global problem with local solutions

It is important to note that this issue is not unique to Ireland. Covering seven comparable locations, Brussels, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Oslo, Stockholm, and Zurich, a survey conducted by the *Clean European Network* suggests that not only was litter present at all of these sites, but that the same type of items are being commonly littered.[20] Litter pollution is a major global problem that must be addressed by inclusive and extensive national strategies.

As litter stands to threaten the very ecosystem on which we depend, it is essential that we take better action and fast. We all bear a collective responsibility for taking care of the environment and have a responsibly for disposing of our waste correctly, however, there is a particularly important role for local authorities to play in tackling this issue. They are uniquely positioned to reach a diverse range of community members which can help to discourage people from littering. As noted earlier, our sense of responsibility for a location can be an important influence on our attitudes regarding litter and this is perhaps key to finding a solution. Local authorities can encourage people to develop deeper connections with their local environment and educate them on the importance of keeping shared spaces healthy which, in turn, should lead to citizens treating the environment more responsibly and thoughtfully. The phrase *think global, act local* comes to mind here as it is evidently going to take a conscious, collaborative, and community effort to comprehensively clean up our act.

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PILLARS OF REFORM

Public Involvement in the Development of Local Authority Projects

By Toby Finch, UCD public policy student and IPA research intern.

Introduction

December 2017 saw the framework *Our Public Service 2020 (OPS2020)* published. It was intended to drive development and innovation across Ireland's public sector whilst increasing transparency and accountability within the sector's decision-making processes. The framework comprises a number of pillars of reform with associated headline actions. The *Delivering for Our Public* pillar, for example, includes the action to 'significantly improve communications and engagement with the public'. Another pillar, *Innovating For Our Future,* sought to promote collaboration and a culture of innovation. OPS2020 was followed by the public service innovation strategy *Making Innovation Real*, launched in 2020, as a coordinated effort to grow innovation across the public service. Both of these pillars, and the recent innovation strategy, mirror a trend seen in public sectors worldwide, an increasing desire to get citizens more involved in the policy development and service delivery design processes at all levels of governance.

Benefits and challenges

This desire for greater citizen involvement in policy development and the design of services comes at a time of increased democratic malaise, particularly in Ireland, where levels of public distrust in politicians remains higher than in many other western European nations.[1] Including the public in the development of customer-focused local authority projects can rekindle relationships between local governance and citizens who may feel that the outputs of their local authority are not reflective of their wants and desires. Citizens are the people with everyday experience of utilising services provided by local authorities and thus their involvement can help improve the efficiency of information flow between local authorities and the citizens whilst also providing a diversity of opinion that can provide helpful feedback on existing services or potential trials of new projects.[2] Public involvement in local authority projects can also enhance the capacity for innovation at the local level as increased levels of dialogue and engagement creates

opportunities for idea sharing to occur. Despite these benefits, there are potential challenges that local authorities may face. Asking citizens to give up their time to participate in dialogue events will undoubtedly create an issue for some people in terms of their availability and may result in a small sample size of the public getting involved. Ensuring that citizens are involved in meaningful issues is also something that local authorities may have to consider. Whilst engagement in small scale projects is important, local authorities do need to be cognisant of not creating what is known as the 'Park Bench Problem', where citizens are granted decision making power but only on a very limited scale, for example, in choosing the colour of a new park bench, thus trivialising their participation.[3]

More public involvement: international examples

This global desire for more public involvement in the development of public services and policies has led to a growth in the number of initiatives (such as policy/innovation labs and public service design centres) around the world to encourage collaboration between citizens and public officials. A 2016 report compiled for the European Union Commission Joint Research Centre, identified 64 forms of policy labs across European Union member states at all levels of governance.[4] Some of the examples that were found included an innovation lab in the city of Nice in France aimed at simplifying administrative processes for disabled and elderly persons, an innovation lab in Amsterdam seeking to promote social inclusion among seniors and youth in Dutch cities, and a Leeds City Council initiative to create new policies through open data driven initiatives. Northern Ireland has also seen the establishment of an innovation lab within the Department of Finance and Personnel, under the purview of public sector reform, which aimed to drive innovation in policy development and service delivery. A review of the innovation lab in 2017 described it as a trailblazing scheme that allowed for an incredibly successful incubation of ideas, that not only added value in monetary terms based on its return on investment figures, but also in transforming the understanding and synergy between the public and the Northern Irish Civil Service.[5]

More recently, a collaboration in the Netherlands between academics, RIVM (the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and Environment), the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Finance used the method of Participatory Value Evaluation (a form of survey designed to elicit the preferences and recommendations of citizens regarding potential policies) to allow 30,000 citizens to advise the Government on relaxing lockdown measures for the period of 20 May to 20 July 2020. The Participatory Value Evaluation included both open and closed panel samples allowing for as accurate a representation as possible and was completed online. Almost 80% of those surveyed found that Participatory

Value Evaluation was a good method for encouraging public participation in the policy making process. Overall, the citizens supported some degree of relaxed lockdown measures, but not to the point at which the healthcare system became heavily overloaded; the Participatory Value Evaluation method proved that public engagement in the policy process can be achieved even in the midst of a pandemic.[6]

Such examples reflect the international popularity of innovation labs that seek to drive innovative thinking across public sectors in an effort to help bring about new or improved decision-making processes and services.

With *Our Public Service 2020* encouraging greater innovation in public service delivery and increased engagement with the citizenship, some of Ireland's local authorities in recent years have undertaken their own experimental initiatives to achieve these goals. Cork County Council, in collaboration with Cork Institute of Technology, established Service rePublic in 2017 to foster innovation in service delivery within Cork County Council and in doing so they created the country's first public sector innovation centre.[7] It aims to maintain an outwards facing approach to project design by remaining in consultation with citizens and all relevant stakeholders for the duration of their projects' development. To date, Service rePublic has organised workshops on the future of government, forms of participation and public service delivery, and brought together staff, members of the public and politicians to redesign the Community Fund Process in Cork County Council. [8]

Dublin BETA

Dublin City Council launched its own initiative in 2012 to increase citizen participation in the co-development of local authority projects called the Dublin Beta Projects. This was initially created as an internal means to encourage innovation within Dublin City Council, but it also had a strong emphasis on finding innovative solutions to help address issues in the city; however, it quickly expanded to involve citizens in trialling projects across Dublin city. In response to issues that were arising within the city, the council used Beta Projects as a means of trialling potential solutions. Essential to these trial solutions was a high level of involvement from citizens and local businesses that were affected by the issue being addressed. By trialling these efforts in the city before attempting a full scale introduction of the idea, Dublin City Council was able to utilise public feedback as well as data from the trials to change direction and make adjustments if necessary. This approach meant that by 2016 the initiative had run 14 projects in total, half of which were suggested internally within Dublin City Council and half of which were public suggestions, of which six were scaled-up and one became a standalone project. [9] Its continued success saw Dublin Beta Projects receive some 350 project suggestions in 2019, with

nine of these initiatives being explored by staff from across 12 sections of the city council. [10] **(http://dccbeta.ie/)**

One prominent initiative that has emerged from the Dublin Beta Projects is 'Dublin Canvas', where previously grey traffic light boxes are now transformed into colourful displays of art, often depicting a landmark or person relevant to the area. 'Dublin Canvas' was rolled out on a trial basis in 2015 in the Rathmines, Camden Street and Baggot Street areas of Dublin city. At the end of each trial period, Dublin City Council produces a Beta Project Report Card where the success of the pilot project is evaluated. According to the report card for 'Dublin Canvas', the project came at no significant additional cost to the Council and required close to zero maintenance, while the reaction from the public was overwhelmingly positive. This report paved the way for the trial to be expanded and scaled up, and as of 2021, over 600 of these public displays of art have been completed across Dublin city.

DLR BETA
More recently Dún Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council announced the creation of their own Beta Projects in April 2021, inspired by the success of the various Dublin City Council initiatives. Speaking at the launch of DLR Beta, Cathaoirleach Una Power described DLR Beta as an initiative *'which will help us to engage with you, the citizens, and get your ideas for small changes that might have a bigger impact on the areas in which we live'* and Cathaoirleach Power explained how *'Trialling good ideas will give us a chance to see what can make a difference and how we might be able to expand it in the future'.*[11] The Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown scheme has already resulted in the trialling of two new projects, the establishment of 'Parklets' in

Sallynoggin and the introduction of bins specifically for the disposal of pizza boxes in Blackrock and Dún Laoghaire, of which the trial period is ongoing. They have also created a website, **www.dlrbeta.ie**, to enable citizens suggest potential new projects for their area.

Conclusion
Robert Watt, the former Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, published a piece in the *Administration* journal outlining his reflections on leading public service reform. In the article, he called for the delivery of *'more citizen-centric innovative services in order to keep pace with the public's ever-increasing expectations'.* With *Our Public Service 2020* also advocating for an improved engagement with citizens and the delivery of better public services, participatory projects between citizens and local authorities are seen to be capable of expanding and strengthening local authorities' relationship with the citizens that they provide for. These projects can concurrently foster a greater spirit of innovation and collaboration within local authorities themselves, creating promising prospects for future public engagement in local authority projects in Ireland.

The final progress report on *Our Public Service 2020* noted the 'real progress' made across the public service in delivering the transformation agenda, however, it concludes that the next wave of reform will need to consider wider and longer term trends such as changing demographics and the evolving public needs, values, and expectations.[13] Improving the responsiveness of local authorities to meet changing public needs through innovation and engagement will remain central to future reforming efforts in the local authority sector.

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A TERRIBLE BEAUTY IS BORN

Exploring the stories behind the *War of Independence* across the country's Local Authority Museums Network

L ocal authority museums all over the country have been investigating the stories which make up the dramatic and at times tragic experiences of people who lived through this violent and historic period (1919–1921) in recent Irish history. This countrywide network of local authority museums, through their work, reflect the history and heritage of the regions that they serve and have been at the forefront of remembrance and commemoration during this island wide *Decade of Centenaries*. We have worked with our communities to develop a broad range of exhibitions and events which can engage and challenge our visitors. This article reveals some of the incredible displays and programmes that local authority museums across the country have created and adapted during this difficult time of the Covid 19 pandemic.
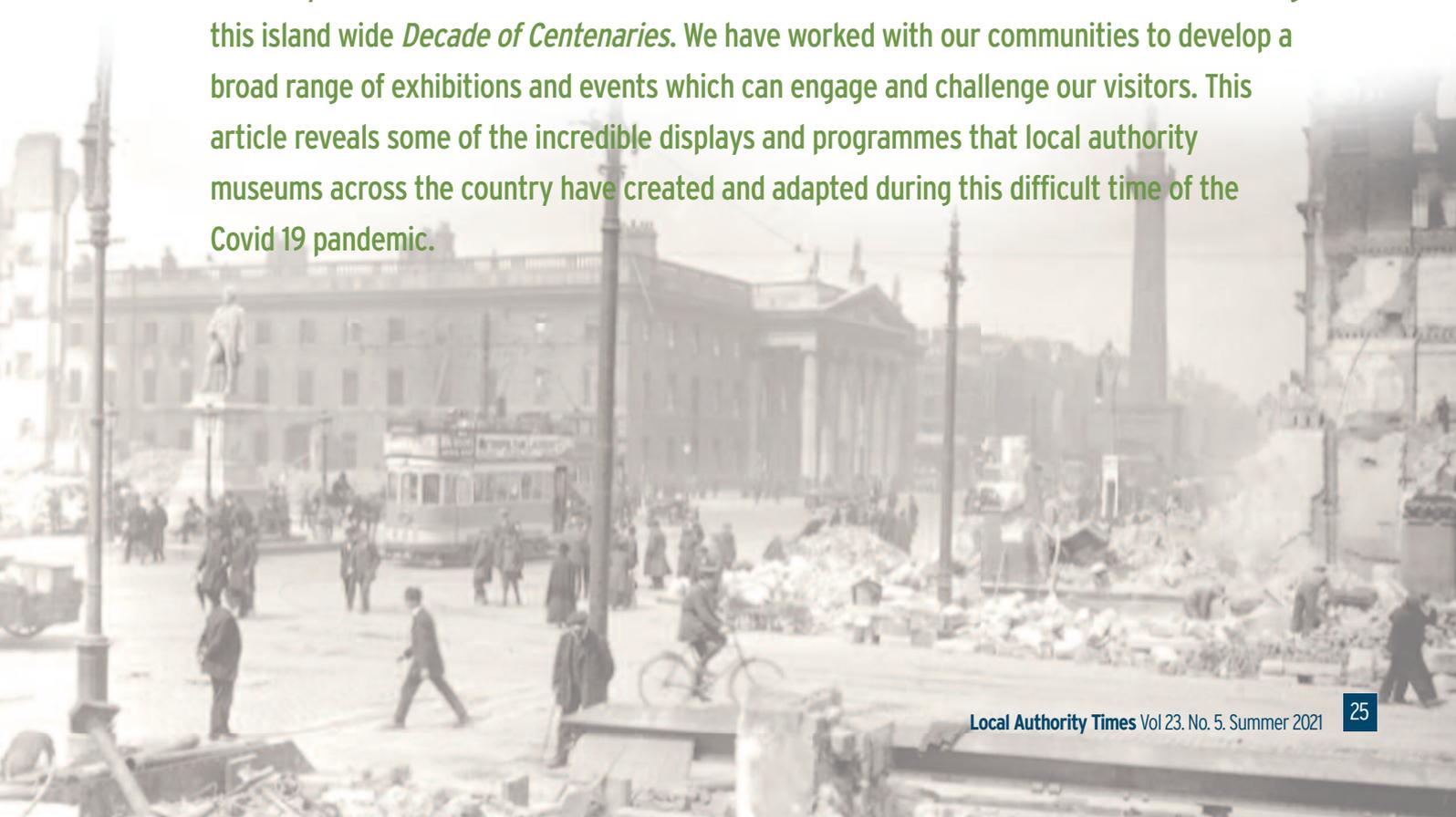
Carlow County Museum

Carlow County Museum, through the Carlow County Council Decade of Centenaries Committee, held a poignant wreath laying ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of the execution of Kevin Barry from Tombeagh, Co. Carlow. Kevin Barry was executed just over one hundred years ago on the 1st of November 1920 in Mountjoy Gaol, Dublin, for his role in the War of Independence. Kevin was just 18 years old when he was executed and the first execution since the 1916 Rising. Both these factors led to his death receiving near worldwide coverage. Kevin's nephew, Kevin Barry, along with his wife Evelyn and their daughter Niamh, visited Carlow County Museum and in a private ceremony laid a wreath to mark the anniversary of Kevin's execution (pre Covid-19 Stage 5).

Overlooking the wreath laying ceremony is the lovely portrait of Kevin presented to the museum by Marie Comerford, through Esther Purcell. Ian Dowling, of Irish Pickers television show fame, and whom he can call Kevin a cousin, loaned the museum Kevin Barry's death mask, which is displayed beside the Republican's wallet and last cigarette, probably the first time that the items have been together. The death mask was cast very soon after Kevin's death and Ian is very proud that he is the owner of this historic item.
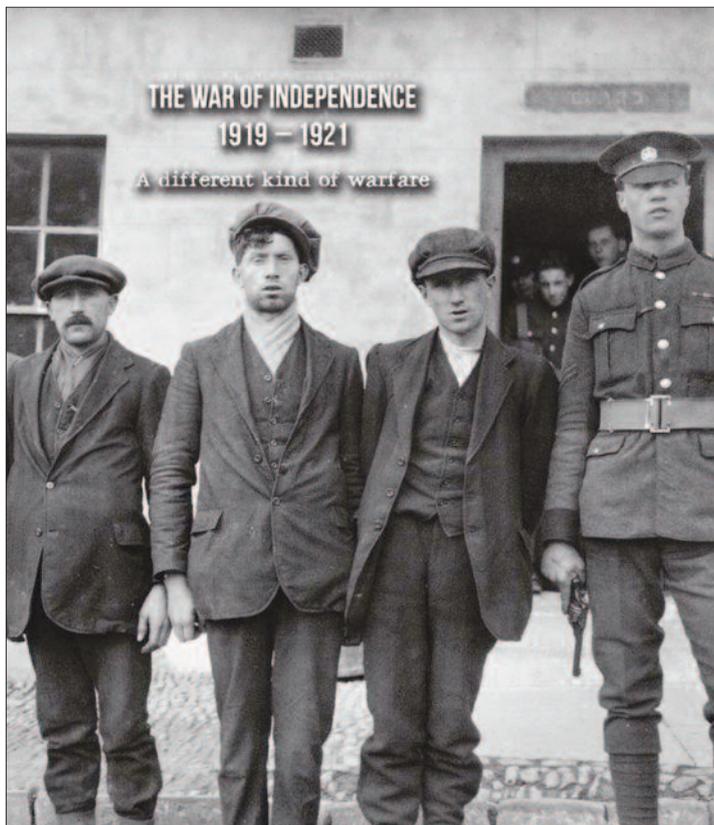
Exhibition poster for Cavan County Museum

Cavan County Museum

Cavan County Museum has developed a major exhibition on the War of Independence in Ireland and in County Cavan. 'United Under the Flag' was the culmination of over a year of research. As part of telling the story of the war, it includes a section on imprisonment with a large-scale recreation of the gates of Kilmainham Gaol as well as a life-size exhibit on Ballykinlar internment camp. The experience is enhanced with three large scale projections of original film footage from the time and autograph books and documents from County Cavan prisoners who were held in Ballykinlar.

The County Cavan section of the exhibition contains an oral recording of Captain Peter Moynagh from Mountnugent which has been digitised and transcribed so that visitors can hear the voice of someone who took part in the conflict. Amongst the artefacts on display is a signal lamp that was taken from the RIC barracks in Belcoo by local volunteers as well as handcuffs taken from a raid on Ballyconnell Barracks.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is the tricolour flag that was flown over Cavan barracks after the departure of the British military and RIC from the county.

Clare Museum

Clare Museum has an exhibition 'The War of Independence in Clare', featuring objects and documents from the museum's collection from 1919-1921. The text panels tell of the major events and personalities associated with the conflict in Clare. The museum periodically features photographed items associated with people and events in the War of Independence on its Facebook page.

Pictured Righr: This bronze War of Independence Medal was issued to Patrick Keane of Kilnamona in 1941 by the Government of Ireland in recognition of his service during the War of Independence (1919-1921). Pat was attached to the Mid-Clare Brigade of the Volunteers.

Cork Public Museum

Exhibition 1:
SUFFERING THE MOST – THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TOMÁS MAC CURTAIN & TERENCE MACSWINEY
(September 2020 – March 2022)

This exhibition tells the story of Tomás Mac Curtain and Terence MacSwiney, Cork's first two Republican Lord Mayors. This exhibition will focus on aspects of their lives, achievements, and deaths, set against the backdrop of a country at war and a city in turmoil. The exhibition will also look at events such as the Cork hunger strike to highlight how 1920 saw many people 'enduring the most' for the sake of Irish independence.

Tomás Mac Curtain

Terence MacSwiney

Exhibition 2:
BY EVER MEANS AT OUR COMMAND –
The War of Independence in Cork
(October 2021 -January 2024)

Cork played a major part in the War of Independence, witnessing several military engagements that would have a significant impact on both the nature and outcome of the conflict. Using original artefacts, images and documentation, this exhibition will illustrate the roles played by the Republican and Crown forces while exploring their strategies, tactics, equipment and experiences of war.

Exhibition 3:
THE TOM O'NEILL COLLECTION
(November 2021 – permanent)

In early 2020, Cork Public Museum was approached by a well-known historian/collector, Tom O'Neill with a proposal to donate his entire collection to the Museum in 2021. The collection, estimated to be about 20,000 objects, covers Irish military history from Irish regiments in the British Army, to the Irish Republican Army, the Royal Irish Constabulary and the many units and battalions of the Irish National Army, from the Free State to modern times.

Donegal County Museum

Donegal County Museum has developed a new exhibition 'From Conflict To Division, Donegal 1919-1925' which explores the events of the War of Independence, the Civil War and Partition through artefacts, archives and images and reveals the impact of the revolutionary years on the people of Donegal. The exhibition is open until the end of August 2021.
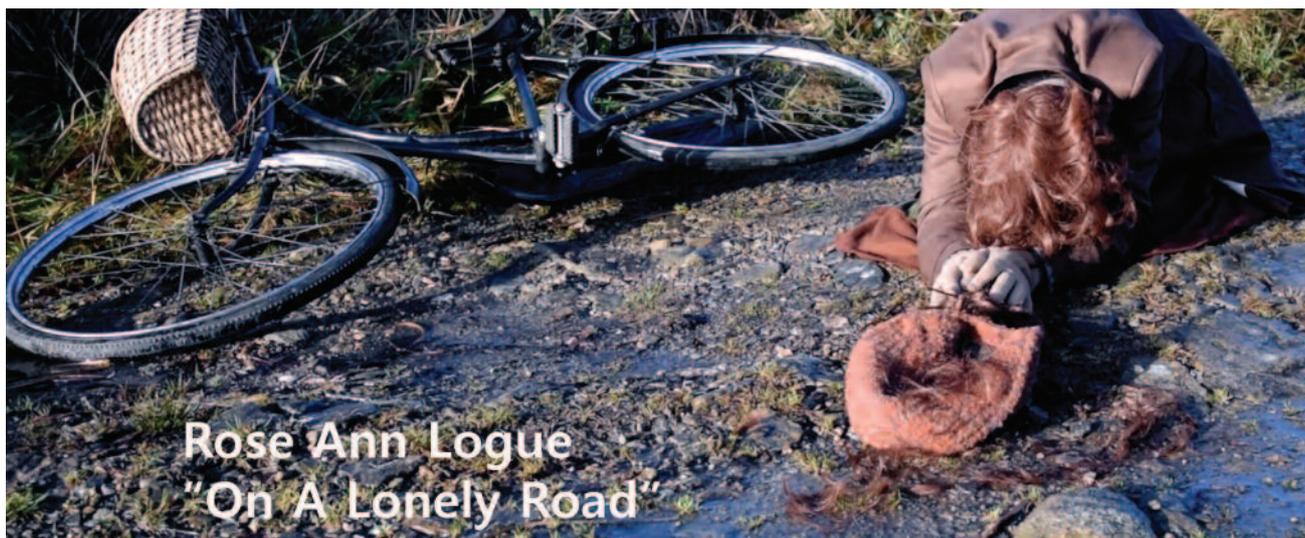
Rose Ann Logue "On A Lonely Road"

The Museum collaborated with the Regional Cultural Centre and the Museum and Heritage Service of Derry City and Strabane District Council to produce a series of six short video pieces highlighting the experiences of women during the Revolutionary Period (1919-1923). The Donegal women who feature are: Eithne Coyle, an active member of Cumann na mBan, Mary Ballantine whose husband, Head Constable Joseph Ballantine of the Royal Irish Constabulary, was shot and killed in their home in Raphoe in May 1922; Rose Ann Logue, an instructress with the Congested Districts Board, who was

threatened by two armed and masked men who cut off her hair. The Derry films feature Lady Lillian Spender on a tour along the newly established border in June 1923. The videos are available to view at:

https://www.youtube.com/user/wwwdonegalcocoie/ videos and www.facebook.com/towermuseum/ The videos were supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 initiative.

County Museum Dundalk

The County Museum Dundalk is currently planning an exhibition highlighting the societal, cultural and political changes experienced in Louth in the period 1916-1941. Of significant interest here is the impact and aftermath of the Rising; the War of Independence, Partition and Civil War leading up to 'The Emergency' itself. Events such as Frank Aiken's jail break, the introduction of the Border, the response to the Belfast Blitz and subsequent bombing raid on Dundalk will be highlighted. It is scheduled to open in December of this year.

Galway City Museum

Galway City Museum has added a new section to its 'Revolution in Galway, 1913-23' exhibition, which features objects and photographs relating to James Quirk, a Volunteer and Gaelic Leaguer, who was killed by Crown forces, near Galway docks, on 9 September 1920. The Museum also created a 30-minute film, entitled 'Terror in Galway – Uafás i nGaillimh, 1920', in which local historians explore some of the incidents that took place in Galway in the autumn and winter of 1920. All the while, the Museum has been researching and publishing, online and in the local papers, a series of illustrated articles relating to

key incidents locally. Funded under the Decade of Centenaries programme, the articles will be collated, translated and made available in a free-of-charge publication later in the year. Finally, the Museum has received grant funding to record a song – 'The Ballad of Michael Hoade' – composed in the memory of a shop-keeper from Caherlistrane, who was killed by Crown forces in January 1921, as a reprisal for an IRA ambush.

Kerry County Museum

Revolutionary Kerry in 100 Objects will explore the lived experience of people in Kerry during the period of the War of Independence and the Civil War, and how they coped with the aftermath. The exhibition will bring together a collection of artefacts that will create a mosaic of what life was like in Kerry during this period.

At the heart of this project is the active participation of the community in Kerry in creating with us a rounded picture of life in the county during this turbulent time. The museum staff will do this through a considered and targeted call-out for artefacts that are still in private collections and have never been seen in public before. This is an opportunity for the community to play an active role in aligning their own family stories with the events of this period.

Taking consideration of the uncertainty created by the global pandemic, it will be produced in 2021 as an online exhibition, with an accompanying printed catalogue. In 2022 it will occupy a physical space within the Museum, with the objects rotating and changing over the course of six years, taking it up to the centenary of the opening of the Ashe Memorial Hall in 2028.

Limerick Museum

Limerick Museum has held a series of exhibitions to mark the War of Independence, in collaboration with various partners. These are as follows: First Dail Centenary Exhibition 2019 with Limerick Library Service; Limerick Soviet Centenary Exhibition 2019 with Limerick Council of Trade Unions and 1920 Local Elections Centenary Exhibition (online) 2020 with Limerick Library Service.

The museum held a series of historical seminars on Limerick in 1919, Limerick 1920 and (forthcoming) Limerick in 1921. The Women in Politics and Public Life Exhibition 1918-2018 curated by Dr Sinéad McCoole was hosted at the museum in 2019. There are several displays in preparation for 2021, which will be featured online. These include an exhibit on the Drumkeen Ambush, a social and economic profile of Limerick in 1921, the role of women in Limerick in 1921 and the Bruree Soviet and Labour agitation in the county.

Monaghan County Museum

Working in collaboration with Professor Terence Dooley of Maynooth University, Monaghan County Museum presented a thrilling new exhibition on Monaghan's War of Independence 1919 - 1921. Using stunning imagery, objects, film and first-hand accounts as well as new research into the history of the conflict in Monaghan. This new and important investigation into what happened in the county during those fateful years reveals a tale, which is more than just a struggle between the IRA and the British forces for control of the county. Stories such as the impact of the conflict on the local population - men and women, sectarianism due to Monaghan's proximity with the Unionist majority counties in Ulster as well as land issues all played a part in the history of the War of Independence in Monaghan.

Tipperary Museum of Hidden Histories

Tipperary Museum just launched its new War of Independence exhibition, which will run until September 2022. The display is a feast of incredible photographs, artefacts and stories of ambushes, rescues and political instability. The timeline of events commences with the Soloheadbeg Ambush in January 1919 and ends with the *signing* of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. The Museum also covers the global pandemic, known as the Spanish Flu of 1918, which was estimated to have killed 100 million people worldwide. They describe the Suffragettes and the 'Cat & Mouse' Act as well as the many methods of intimidation used against women during the war. Many of the photographs are on loan from the National Library and RTÉ archives.

These images, never seen in an exhibition before, were professionally coloured by John Breslin and Matt Loughrey. The size and grandeur of these images create a visual sensation and help to bring the characters and stories to life. The Bloody Sunday Hogan Jersey (worn by Tipperary footballer Michael Hogan in November 1920) takes centre stage in the museum's new gallery and the signed Tipperary commemorative football jersey highlights the incredible achievements of the Tipperary football team of 2020.

The Museum engaged an 'Historian in Residence', Kelly O'Murcada who researched and sourced images pertaining to the War of Independence in Tipperary and across Ireland. This successful collaboration has resulted in a unique and accurate account of this major historical event in Irish history.

Tipperary Museum's exhibition was funded by Tipperary County Council, with support from the Heritage Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Compiled by Liam Bradley, Curator of Monaghan County Museum and current Chairperson of the Local Authority Museums Network

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We are always interested in your views, so if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas for topics that we should address in future issues, please do not hesitate to let us know.

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