

How local authorities adapt or mitigate the possible impact of Climate Change

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The policy response to climate change nationally and internationally is two-fold: firstly, in accordance with international obligations, mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions, that are exacerbating climate change, and secondly, adaptation to the impact of climate change.

Climate Ireland underlines that mitigation and adaptation are two complimentary approaches employed in responding to climate change. 'Mitigation aims to tackle the causes of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases or by enhancing the capacity of carbon sinks, e.g. through afforestation. Adaptation has been defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as "The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate stimuli and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects" (IPCC 2013).

To address the mitigation challenge, Ireland aims to meet its national and international greenhouse gas mitigation commitments through the adoption of a series of five yearly statutory National Mitigation Plans (NMP). The NMPs will identify and track the implementation of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A similar long term process, operating in parallel with and informed by the mitigation plans, will form the process of adapting Ireland to the impact of climate change.

Role of local authorities

National Adaptation Framework

In launching the National Adaptation Framework on Friday, January 19th, 2018, Minister Denis Naughten T.D. announced funding of €10m over a five year period to establish 4 Local Authority Regional Climate Action Offices to support the implementation of national climate policy. The establishment of the regional offices represents a key action under both the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) acknowledge that 'the local government sector plays a pivotal role in planning for, and responding to, emergency situations. Given their close relationship with the community, local authorities can react faster and more effectively to local climate events than other government agencies. This has been demonstrated in their response to extreme weather events in Ireland over recent years. They have essential local knowledge of the natural and manmade environment and have a critical role to play in managing climate risks and vulnerabilities and identifying

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adaptation actions. They also deliver key services to the public either directly or on in partnership with other Government Departments such as housing, planning, sanitation and maintenance of local roads, parks and waterways.'

DCCAIE stress that 'local authorities are mandated under the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) to prepare local adaptation strategies, the subject matter of the guidelines launched by the Minister. The guidelines, which were commissioned by the EPA and prepared by UCC, are designed to assist local authorities to develop their own adaptation strategies which will be distinct and separate to the NAF and will complement adaptation plans to be prepared by Government Departments on a sectoral basis. DCCAIE point out that 'the National Adaptation Framework will support local and regional adaptation action and the development of local authority climate change adaptation strategies. The work undertaken to develop a local adaptation strategy should inform development plans and other statutory plans of the local authority.' They also point out that 'the National Adaptation Framework sets out the context for local adaptation strategies and also explore how local authorities might adopt a joint or regional approach to adaptation planning. The joint/regional approach, based on an analysis by the local government sector, harnesses the potential to group certain local authorities based on similar geographical/topographical characteristics and on the basis of existing synergies in addressing threats and impacts of severe weather events and ongoing climate change risks. Therefore it is based on climate risk assessment with a focus on the predominant risks in each geographical area.'

Source:
<https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/topics/adapting-to-climate-change/national-adaptation-framework/Pages/default.aspx>

Stefan Gray, author of the EPA Research Report 164 entitled 'Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guideline' (2016) highlights that 'the purpose of this guideline is to support local authorities in the development of a local climate change adaptation strategy. In its structure and content, the guideline draws heavily on the 2013 Guidelines on Developing Adaptation Strategies provided to European Union Member States by the European Commission (SWD(2013) 134 final), with the aim of fostering coherence between strategies developed at local and national scale.' Gray (EPA, 2016) points out that the guidelines describe, in six steps, the tasks that a local authority needs to complete in order to develop, adopt and implement an adaptation strategy. The six stages are as follows:

1. Forming an adaptation team and preparing the ground.
2. Assessing the current adaptation baseline.
3. Assessing future climate risk.
4. Identifying, assessing and prioritising adaptation options.
5. Developing an adaptation pathway map and drafting the adaptation strategy.
6. Mainstreaming, monitoring and reviewing the adaptation strategy

Overall, Gray notes that 'the key components from these guidelines will assist in the development of coherent and rational decision making based on an adaptive management planning cycle, namely by:

- Outlining the initial steps required

in launching a strategy development process, describing key roles and who can fulfil them, and setting out important factors to consider at the early stages of strategy development

- Explaining how to assess the role that weather extremes and climatic trends currently play within the local jurisdiction, and describes why doing so is a fundamental element of working toward a more climate resilient future
- Identifying future climate risks, describing a staged risk assessment process and positioning the adaptation strategy within more detailed risk assessments undertaken during shorter term decision making processes such as statutory plan-making
- Describing the types of adaptation options that are available to address the risks identified in the previous chapter, and outlines how each might be assessed and prioritised for implementation
- Outlining the steps required to move from a phase of planning to one of implementation, and explaining the importance of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring the strategy is achieving its anticipated adaptation outcomes'

The research provides Ireland with a set of local authority adaptation strategy development guidelines, which will build capacity at the local level for effective climate change decision making. (Gray, EPA, 2016)

Source:
<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/climate/researchreport164.html>

National Mitigation Plan

The first National Mitigation Plan according to DCCAIE, represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required. (https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/national_mitigation_plan_2017.pdf) They state that it is a whole-of-Government Plan, reflecting

in particular the central roles of the key Ministers responsible for the sectors covered by the Plan – Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture, as well as, drawing on the perspectives and responsibilities of other Government Departments. According to DCCAIE, the measures implemented through this first Plan will lay the foundations for transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. To support this ongoing work, the Plan also includes over 100 individual actions for various Ministers and public bodies to take forward as we move to implementation of what will be a living document.

The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Mr. Denis Naughten T.D., on Friday, May 25th, 2016 launched the Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Guidelines. The guidelines, which were prepared on behalf of the Environment Protection Agency by UCC, are provided to assist local authorities to develop local climate change adaptation strategies, which will assess local vulnerability to climate risks and identify, cost and prioritise adaptation actions. The Minister stated at the launch that while climate policy has and must continue to be primarily focussed on the issue of reducing emissions in accordance with EU and international obligations, adaptation is also an urgent policy priority. The Minister pointed out that potential impacts for Ireland are serious, including, "storm surge events may increase in frequency; there is likely to be increased flows to river catchments; sea level may rise; and rainfall amounts may increase in winter and decrease in summer. These changes, in turn, will impact on a number of sectors including agriculture, energy, infrastructure and water resources. The challenge for policy-makers is to understand these climate change impacts and to develop and implement policies to ensure an optimal level of response by

way of adaptation." In terms of how to mitigate the impact of climate change, Professor Frank McDermott (UCD) in an interview in April 2014, outlined "the need for a behavioural change in society to reduce the level of CO2 in the atmosphere by reducing emissions levels, this would require policy change, e.g. climate policies, energy policies to change people's behaviour. In terms of hurdles to overcome because of climate change." Looking at some impacts of climate change and sustainability, Professor Eugene O'Brien of UCD School of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering and UCD Earth Institute in an interview on 'Sustainable cities' in April 2014, highlighted that "there are real challenges with developing sustainable materials. For example, steel and concrete are both highly carbon-intensive materials and steel requires a huge amount of energy to make it and there is a limited amount. You can recycle steel but, again, it is quite energy intensive. Concrete is a very carbon-intensive material, the making of the cement releases carbon apart altogether from the energy requirements. The aggregate non-renewable resources of stone (aggregate made from stone that is a non-renewable resource. And concrete is the second most used material in the world after water –in volume terms, it is used a lot. And bitumen then for road pavements and pavements and road surfaces is a by-product of the oil industry so we need to find alternatives for all these things. We have made some progress you can use ash now as an additive to cement which can replace a lot of cement. You can use recycled materials in concrete road pavements, add things like, glass to road pavements in limited amounts and it works quite well."

Reflecting the need for a whole of Government approach, Minister Naughten noted that the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 provides that relevant Ministers will be required to develop sectoral adaptation plans which will be undertaken under

the terms of a statutory national adaptation framework to be approved by Government. Local authorities will be mandated under the national framework to prepare local adaptation strategies, the subject matter of the guidelines launched on May 25th, 2016. In relation to the involvement of the local government sector, the Minister stated that "devolution of decision-making to the local level is appropriate – the impacts of climate change, and the capacity to respond to them, are very different in different areas of Ireland. Rainfall shortages in one region may not affect another; local knowledge of how to rapidly implement temporary flood defences in one area may be lacking in another, which has no living memory of flooding. There is no uniform impact regime or adaptation response that can be managed centrally; local understanding of and sensitivity to change is crucial to getting adaptation right."

In the latest assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014), changes in climate recorded over the last 100 years are considered unprecedented and as a result of human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels which results in increased atmospheric concentrations of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs). The build-up of GHGs in the atmosphere since the start of the industrial revolution has enhanced the Earth's natural greenhouse effect and resulted in an increase in average temperatures globally. A one degree global warming is significant as it takes a vast amount of heat to warm all the oceans, atmosphere and land.

The IPCC report (2014) notes that 'greenhouse gases are vital to life on earth but increasing atmospheric concentrations of GHGs as a result of human activities, fossil fuel combustion in particular. This is resulting in changes in average global temperatures (source: NASA). Greenhouse gases keep the Earth warm through a process called the

‘greenhouse effect’. In the absence of this effect, the earth would be a much colder place than it is today. The evidence of human induced climate change is clear and 97% of scientists agree that recent climate warming trends are due to human activities (burning of fossil fuels), levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases are now 30% higher than at any time during the last 800,000 years and this has enhanced the natural greenhouse effect and resulted in warming of the planet; Over the last 100 years, global mean temperature has risen by 0.74°C and this increase has a wide range of effects on the oceans, weather patterns, snow and ice, and plants and animals. Ongoing and projected changes in climate will have both direct (e.g. temperature related mortality) and indirect effects (e.g. changes in water quality) and can be of both slow (e.g. drought) and sudden (e.g. hurricane) onset. The difference between weather and climate is a measure of time. Weather relates to the conditions of the atmosphere over a short period of time while climate refers to average weather patterns experienced over long time periods (minimum of 30 years). When we talk about climate change, we are referring to changes in long-term averages of daily weather.’ (IPCC, 2014)

Climate change impacts

DCCAIE acknowledge that ‘Ireland is vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change, in terms of increase in average temperature, changes in precipitation patterns, weather extremes (storms and flooding, sea surges, flash floods) and sea-level rise. Climate change will have diverse and wide ranging impacts on the environment, society, economic sectors and natural resources. These include managed and natural ecosystems, water resources, agriculture and food security, human health, coastal infrastructures and marine environment. These impacts are expected to increase over the coming decades.’

This is also highlighted in an interview of Professor Frank McDermott (UCD) on climate change in April, 2014 where he stated that “international studies on

climate show that the atmosphere is getting warmer with the oceans taking up more carbon dioxide (CO2) and as conditions get warmer, sea ice in the Arctic is melting at ten times faster rates, leading to decreasing sea-ice distributions. The oceans are getting more acidic, as salt is in higher levels and more CO2 in the atmosphere is dissolved in the oceans leading to greater levels of carbonic acid.” McDermott (2014) further outlines that in terms of the impact on Ireland it is more difficult to say what will be affected by sea level rises. “A warmer atmosphere, we know, we are more likely to be hit by more frequent extreme events, for example, more frequent storms and more frequent floods, which will result in added pressure on crop production. The climate systems are becoming more energetic, there is more energy in it, a warmer atmosphere, holds more moisture, more precipitation and extreme events. When looking at regional effects of climate change, it is a bit more difficult to determine. When we look at climate models, winters are getting wetter and summers are getting drier. The impact of climate change will be on crops, ecology, animals and the population.” Climate Ireland emphasises the findings of the recent IPCC (2014) report that “warming of the climate system is now unequivocal with human influence being the dominant cause since the mid-century. Warming of the atmosphere and oceans have resulted in changes in the water cycle, reductions in snow and ice and changes in sea level.” (IPCC, 2014) They note that climate change is ongoing with evidence of these changes at global and national levels. Projections of future changes indicate that the situation is serious and that adaptation will be essential. Climate Ireland stress that ‘climate change presents a unique challenge for Ireland economy, environment and society. Uncertainty around timing and magnitude of impacts and short-term concerns stand out as two key stumbling blocks for adaptation action. However, it is now clear that to avoid the adverse impacts of these changes and take advantage of any opportunities, we must now begin to proactively plan for projected climate change and impacts. Recent experiences

have demonstrated the impacts of weather and climate changes at global, national and local scales. The effects of climate change will be differentiated at local, regional and national scales and also across economic sectors. As a result, adaptation will require place-based and targeted responses. Climate change will exacerbate existing vulnerability and will pose new threats and opportunities for Ireland.’

Similarly, DCCAIE highlight that ‘research at national level has shown that changes in Ireland’s climate are in line with global trends. Even if Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions fall to levels required to stop the worst impacts of climate change some changes are still likely to occur. This is because the climate system is slow to react and some changes are already locked in. For Ireland, climate change impacts are expected to increase over the coming decades and could include the following: sea level rise; more intense storms and rainfall events; increased likelihood and magnitude of river and coastal flooding; water shortages in summer; increased risk of new pests and diseases; adverse impacts on water quality; and changes in distribution and phenology (the timing of lifecycle events) of plant and animal species on land and in the oceans.’

Asked about what are the biggest risk factors in terms of the impact of climate change, Professor McDermott (2014) suggests complacency or doing nothing is the biggest hurdle. The climate is changing and there is need to communicate this better. Dr. Fiona Doohan (2014) School of Biology and Environment Science at UCD Earth Institute highlights that ‘we need to plan for and adapt to climate change. This was also recommended by The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review on climate change published on 30 October 2006. The Stern Review concluded that ‘the benefits of strong and early action far outweigh the economic costs of not acting. Using the results from formal economic models, the Review estimates that if we don’t act, the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year, now and forever. If a wider range of

risks and impacts is taken into account, the estimates of damage could rise to 20% of GDP or more. In contrast, the costs of action – reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change – can be limited to around 1% of global GDP each year.’

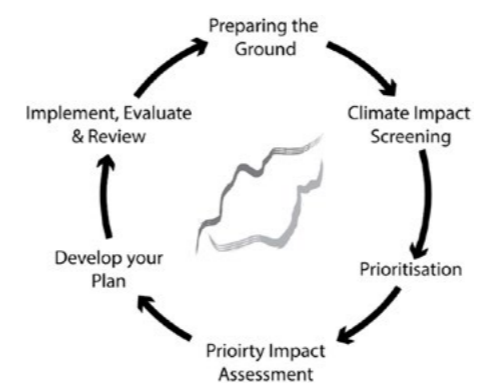
The main findings of *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review* (2006) included:

- there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now;
- climate change could have very serious impacts on growth and development;
- the costs of stabilising the climate are significant but manageable; delay would be dangerous and much more costly;
- action on climate change is required across all countries, and it need not cap the aspirations for growth of rich or poor countries;
- a range of options exists to cut emissions; strong, deliberate policy action is required to motivate their take-up; and
- climate change demands an international response, based on a shared understanding of long-term goals and agreement on frameworks for action.

Source:

http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407163608/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/Summary_of_Conclusions.pdf and

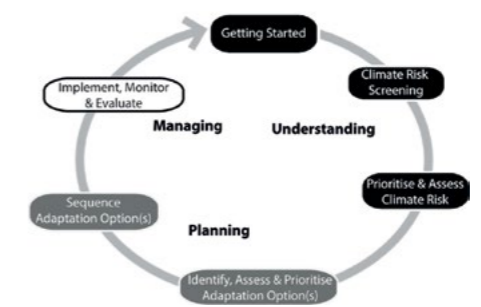
(<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publication/the-economics-of-climate-change-the-stern-review/>)



Climate Ireland’s Local Authority Adaptation Wizard helps to gather the information and understanding required to develop an adaptation strategy for your local authority and the area under its jurisdiction. This tool is based on international experiences of planning for climate adaptation (e.g. UKCIP Adaptation Wizard (<http://www.ukcip.org.uk/wizard/#.VeQ0X9NVhBd>) and Climate-ADAPT Adaptation Support Tool (<http://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/adaptation-support-tool/>) and the Local Authority Adaptation Guidelines developed by Gray (EPA, 2016).

Climate Ireland explain that the Local Authority Adaptation Support Wizard consists of three key stages:

1. Understanding - As part of this stage, you will lay the groundwork for a successful adaptation process and increase your understanding of your vulnerability to ongoing and projected future climate impacts;
2. Planning - This stage focuses on identifying, assessing and prioritising adaptation options for your key climate risks;
3. Managing - This stage aims to help you manage your current and future adaptation actions.



Climate Ireland note that ‘the Local Authority Adaptation Support Wizard also provides access to information, tools and resources that will assist in planning for adaptation to climate change. Adaptation aims to ensure that we are better prepared to respond to current and future climate change impacts. As our climate changes, we will need to make adjustments and adapt to the changing climatic conditions. This might involve making changes to our buildings to ensure that they keep cool during hot summers or using water resources more efficiently.

Planned adaptation aims to create more climate resilient communities by taking proactive steps to prepare for the impacts of projected climate change.’

ClimateIrelandoutlinethatvulnerability to climate change is determined by three factors: exposure to hazards (such as increased rainfall), sensitivity to these hazards (for example, where houses are located in flood plains), and the capacity to adapt to these hazards (for example, where emergency response measures are in place). Adaptation actions aim to reduce vulnerability to climate change by lowering sensitivity or building adaptive capacity. Adaptation actions can be ‘grey’, that rely on technological or engineering solutions, ‘green’ that make use of nature, and ‘soft’ that aim to alter human behaviour and styles of governance. In reality, adaptation will involve a mix of adaptation responses or ‘combined adaptation actions’ that will include grey, green and soft adaptation actions, autonomous and planned adaptation.

Developed to support Local Authorities in preparing for climate change adaptation, Climate Ireland’s Local Authority Adaptation Primer provides an overview of the what, when and how of adaptation. In general, available frameworks and tools revolve around a number of key steps including: defining objectives; risk assessment; an examination of adaptation options; developing, implementing and monitoring an adaptation plan. Adopting a step-by-step approach to planning, Climate Ireland’s Local Authority Adaptation Wizard has been designed to support you through the process of developing a local level adaptation plan and in accordance with the requirements of the National Adaptation Framework.

National and international case studies

A selection of adaptation case studies (3 are outlined below) on how other organisations are planning for and adapting to climate change are contained in the CIRCLE-2 Adaptation Inspiration Book (<http://www.circle-era.eu/np4/552.html>) published in 2013, which includes 22 case studies of early adaptation in Europe.

Coastal Areas & River flooding: UK & Ireland
Towards a more balanced management of a harbour through a Local Authority-Academic Couplet in Cork (<http://ec.europa.eu/ourcoast/index.cfm?menuid=4&articleid=6>)

This case study examines the steps taken towards achieving more balanced management of a multi-use harbour: Cork Harbour. It includes the management of climate change impacts and safeguarding of coasts/coastal systems, through the establishment of a strategic alliance (couplet) between the local authority and multi-disciplinary academic experts. This innovative relationship resulted in the adaptation of an Integrated Harbour Management Strategy established with the consensus of stakeholders, and a strengthening link between science and policy at the local level.

A more holistic approach to beach management by a Local Authority-Academic Couplet (<http://ec.europa.eu/ourcoast/index.cfm?menuid=4&articleid=25>)

County Donegal has a varied coastline that is dominated by long stretches of rocky cliffs interspersed with sandy beaches and dune systems, some of which have some form of conservation designation attached. The increasing importance of recreational use which has resulted in a decline in conservation status and amenity value in some locations. This case study examines the implementation of a more holistic and less site-focussed approach to ICZM leading to the development of an appropriate management strategy.

Tackling Flood Risk in Leicestershire (<http://www.climate-em.org.uk/images/uploads/cem-leicestershire-5-a4.pdf>)

Leicestershire has a long history of localised flooding (river and surface water). Projected climate changes for the UK suggest that the area will

likely see an increase in levels of winter precipitation and that this is likely to increase the risk of surface and river water flooding. This case study describes the measures taken by Leicestershire County Council in planning for future flood risk.

Some further examples of projects to adapt to or mitigate climate change: United Kingdom

Project: Kirklees Council use of solar panels as part of their green ambition

Kirklees Council have a green ambition to cut carbon emissions by 30 per cent between 2005 and 2020. As part of that, Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) has installed photovoltaic (PV) panels on several estates. This case study looks at a project installing 60 PV systems on Croftlands Estate in autumn 2009. Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) is an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) responsible for managing Kirklees Council's housing stock. KNH chose poly-crystalline panels because - although they are not as efficient as mono-crystalline - they are less expensive and were suitable for the limited roof spaces on Croftlands Estate.

Funding: In 2008, Kirklees Council agreed a capital investment of £13.9 million for renewable energy projects on housing stock managed by KNH. This came from housing revenue account (HRA) reserves. The £13.9 million is a total asset cost. The council aims to attract 40 per cent external funding and so reduce its capital outlay. At October 2010, the council has installed £2.8 million of assets and achieved 54 per cent of external funding. The project on Croftlands Estate cost £399,000 (including VAT). It was half funded by the capital investment scheme and half by the Low Carbon Buildings programme.

The capital investment fund for renewable energy is part of Kirklees' Green Ambition to cut carbon emissions by 30 per cent between 2005 and 2020. KNH are keen to tackle fuel poverty,

so they targeted one-bedroom flats and bungalows - the homes of elderly couples who do not go out much. This means that electricity generated by the PV panels is used by tenants and reduces their bills rather than being fed back into the national grid.

Benefits: On the Croftlands Estate any unused electricity goes back into the national grid. In future on similar projects, KNL will benefit financially from the feed-in tariff. Tenants are saving from £100 to £150 a year on electricity bills. The tenants are proud of the PV panels, which look smart and have raised the collective self-esteem of the estate. Installing the panels has also prompted tenants to think more about energy efficiency and green issues.

Contact: Chris Moorhouse, Energy Team Manager, Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing, Perseverance House, St Andrews Road, Huddersfield HD1 6RZ, Email: chris.moorhouse@kirklees.gov.uk

Source: <https://www.local.gov.uk/kirklees-use-solar-panels-part-their-green-ambition>

Project: Islington Council heats up a borough-wide network

Islington Council aims to set up a borough-wide heat network that could potentially reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent. Islington Council plans to create a borough-wide district heating network, initially to supply cheaper and greener heating to more than 700 homes and two leisure centres in 2011 using a gas-powered combined heat and power energy centre. The council will procure and own the heat network, giving Islington the option for expansion in the future.

Funding: An external grant of £2.3 million for the first phase has come from the Greater London Authority's Targeted Funding Stream. In October 2010, the council's Executive approved a further £1.9 million of Growth Funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. The entire project is expected to pay back the initial investment over 20 years.

Benefits: The key driver for the scheme is reducing fuel poverty. Residents' heating bills could fall by up to 40 per cent once the plan is implemented, meaning they could each save around £200 each year. The council also has a target of a borough-wide 40 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 (based on 2005 levels). Along with savings on residents' bills, the energy costs of running the leisure centre and baths will be cheaper; a saving that can be passed on to local people. The heating will be more reliable because new CHP engines are more efficient. In future, the network can easily be extended to reach a larger part of the borough. The borough-wide scheme will contribute to reducing carbon emissions, potentially by 60 percent.

Contact: Lucy Padfield, Energy Services Manager, London Borough of Islington Council, Email: lucy.padfield@islington.gov.uk

Source: <https://www.local.gov.uk/islington-heats-borough-wide-network>

Project: Barnsley sets off biomass boilers

In 2004, Barnsley Metropolitan Council made a commitment to consider biomass heating systems for all new and refurbished buildings. Work done since has enabled a small wood-chip supply business to start up. Barnsley is also powering their main depot with wood-chip supply from tree waste in their parks. Smithies Lane Depot is Barnsley's main operational depot, running services such as waste collection, highways and parks. About 400 staff are based at the depot. The biomass boiler runs the heating for the offices and the canteen. In 2006, the boilers at the Smithies Lane Depot needed renewing and, because of council policy, were replaced with biomass boilers. A 700-tonne store was also constructed to allow storage and air-drying of the wood-chips. The council uses its own tree waste from parks and gardens.

Funding: The Bio Energy Capital Grants Scheme contributed 25 per cent to the £100,000 cost of the boiler plant.

A £30,000 Forestry Commission grant covered half the costs of the drying shed. The council had already approved its Biomass Implementation Policy in June 2004.

Benefits: Smithies Lane Depot has a half megawatt boiler, so it generates half a megawatt of heat every hour. This has displaced about 200 tonnes of coal and saved nearly 500 tonnes of CO2 a year since 2006. The depot makes all its fuel from tree waste that would otherwise have gone to landfill. Carbon emissions from Barnsley's buildings portfolio were 70,000 tonnes in 1990. This was down to 33,000 tonnes for the financial year 2008/09 due to biomass boilers and changing the heating systems.

Contact: Richard Bradford, Retired Principal Designer (Building Services) at Barnsley Council, Email: r.bradford@blueyonder.co.uk

Source: <https://www.local.gov.uk/barnsley-sets-biomass-boilers>

In order to adapt effectively, organisations will need to assess the risks posed by climate change and develop an action plan to address these. As a result, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2010) published a guide entitled, 'Adapting to climate change: A guide for local councils,' London: DEFRA, page 17 contains a diagram of possible actions that may be taken by Councils: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218798/adapt-localcouncilguide.pdf

Also the powers and functions of Local Councils to support action to adapt to climate change impacts are provided on the DEFRA website, www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/action/localauthorities.htm. Further guidance for councils was published on the new indicator process <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/about/what/localgovindicators/ni188.htm> and is designed for use by councils to help in planning for NI188 but is also likely to be useful for local councils. Local authorities in England who are working towards performance indicator NI188 (included

as a priority indicator in 56 Local Area Agreements) will have to assess and manage climate risks and opportunities, and incorporate appropriate action into strategic planning, including developing and implementing a climate change adaptation plan. There is also a climate change partnership in each of the 9 English regions. Their programmes of work vary but their key roles include raising awareness of the impacts of climate change, informing and advising on the challenges and opportunities of climate change in the region and developing practical adaptation responses. They work to influence the strategies and plans of key partners and work with stakeholders across key sectors to enhance the region's resilience to the impacts of climate change. Links to the website for each partnership is available via UKCIP (www.ukcip.org.uk)

See also the local council adaptation guide: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218798/adapt-localcouncilguide.pdf

New Zealand

There are some useful lessons to be gleaned from mitigation and adaptation strategies that have been implemented since 2004 in New Zealand. Overall, Bennett (2014) notes post 2009, there is a shift toward climate change adaptation focus and the Local Government Position Statement on Climate Change advocates adaptation rather than mitigation strategies. Dr Hayley Bennett, Public Health Medicine Specialist Member of OraTaiao: The NZ Climate and Health Council. in a presentation entitled 'How should local government respond to climate change?' emphasises why it is important for local government to respond to climate change given that cities and urban areas are estimated to account for c.80% of global GHG emissions. Local Government is responsible for a range of functions and decisions that can affect climate change, and are affected by climate change: land use, transport, refuse and recycling, buildings, civil defence emergency management and water management. Local Government is a major sector of the economy with annual operating income & expenditure of over \$7 billion and contributes to around 4% of New

Zealand's GDP, employs about 23,000 (fte) staff and owns assets worth \$110billion. Since 2004, the Resource Management (Energy and Climate Change) Amendment Act, has included a reference to climate change: local authorities are required to have regard to "the effects of climate change" and "the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy." Local government can consider the potential effects of climate change BUT "most appropriate" to address air discharges at the national level. Prohibits Councils from considering the effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on climate change in making rules on air discharges. Courts have also ruled against consideration of climate change in land use consent. The Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act 2012 sets out the purpose of local government: "to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses." Given that RMA and LGA increasingly constrained by legislative amendments and legal interpretations, Bennett looked at how local government approaching climate action. There is a reasonable amount of council mitigation action from 2004-2009. Looking particularly at the Communities for Climate Protection Project in New Zealand (CPP-NZ) project, delivered by ICLEI (International Local Governments for Sustainability), covering 34 councils or 83% of NZ population and provided a strategic framework by letting councils determined own actions to reduce GHGs in terms of both Corporate or Community actions in terms of energy, waste, transport, land use, planning. Bennett (2014) highlights that there are five milestones in Communities for Climate Protection Project:

1. Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, analysis, and forecast.
2. Set emissions reduction goals.
3. Develop a local action plan to achieve these goals.
4. Implement and quantify the benefits of policies.
5. Monitor progress towards the reduction goal

One example Bennett (2014) looks at is CCP-NZ: ChCh City Council and she sets out the main feature of corporate and community actions of this project, as follows:

CORPORATE ACTIONS

- Landfill gas to heat and power QEII recreational centre.
- Replaced coal heating in Centennial Pool with ground-source heat pump.
- Used-vegetable oil to heat Halswell Swimming Pool instead of diesel.
- Upgraded to energy saving traffic lights technology.
- Green building principles for retrofits of council buildings.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- Greater ChCh Urban Development Strategy – plan to intensify.
- City wheelie bins to separately collect organics, recycling & refuse.
- Community energy efficiency initiatives and housing retrofits.
- Offered free inner-city bus service.
- Established 13km of cycle lanes.

Other examples from CCP-NZ CORPORATE

- Solar/LED street lighting trials.
- Water and sewage pumping efficiency initiatives.
- Council buildings – changes to temperature set-points, and de-lamping.
- Vehicle fleets -new vehicle purchase criteria. COMMUNITY
- Park and ride initiatives.
- Door to door giveaway energy efficient light bulbs.
- Considering solar water heaters loan scheme.
- Pensioner units – insulation and solar hot water.
- Council sustainability advisors.

In relation to CCP-NZ, Bennett highlights that it was no longer funded after 2009. Continuation of mitigation activity is dependent on political make-up of Councils and some are doing well in this regard (PNCC, Dunedin), but, some have let emphasis go. Therefore, mitigation action is patchy and not monitored or reviewed. It is not joined-up and there is no national leadership.

Bennett (2014) notes (post 2009), there is a shift toward climate change adaptation focus and the Local Government Position Statement on Climate Change emphasises responsibility for adaptation.

Adaptation Planning Examples: Hawkes Bay Regional Council Regional Coastal Environment Plan:

Hawkes Bay Regional Council Regional Coastal Environment Plan sets out the creation of "inundation risk zones" that have a risk of a 1/50yr flood. These zones are where building would be banned or restricted and boundaries taking into account possibilities of a sea level rise. In terms of adaptation, there is a difficulty planning over long time-frames. There is uncertainty regarding risk and changing risk, therefore a need for flexible planning. Organisational arrangements between regional & district councils is creating gaps in implementation.

Case Study: Auckland Unitary Council Auckland contains a third of New Zealand's and its transport is responsible for 40% emissions. One Auckland council aims to integrate plans and policies across the region.

Auckland Plan (May 2012)

Auckland Plan (May 2012) identifies climate change and energy security as challenges for region over next 30yrs. It provides a Strategic direction on how to 'contribute to tackling Climate Change and increasing energy resilience.' It

contains targets to lower GHG emissions (10%-20% by 2020, 40% by 2040, 50% by 2050).

Auckland Energy Resilience and Low Carbon Action Plan

There are fifteen 'particular areas of focus' for this Action plan (identified in Auckland Plan), such as, public transport, travel demand management, alternative fuels, pricing mechanisms, integrated land-use and transport patterns, waste management and new technologies. But, Bennett notes that there have been numerous delays.

Proposed Unitary Plan (Sept 2013)

The Proposed Unitary Plan (Sept 2013)

replaces the existing Regional Policy Statement and 13 existing district and regional plans. The unitary plan will be the rulebook, e.g. – what can be built and where – how to create a higher quality and more compact Auckland. But, Bennett underlines that it should come after Low Carbon Action Plan!

Overall, Bennett (2014) acknowledges that there have been brave attempts, but she highlights some criticisms: 'Auckland Council seems to be working on high level statements without adequately linking them to regulation in plans and bylaws. There have been repeated delay of the Energy Resilience and Low Carbon Action Plan and it is aspirational, but difficult to achieve given current structures and political climate.'

In conclusion, Bennett (2014) provides some ideas on what more could be done by Local Government, including,

- For example, re-thinking the balance of land-use in the region e.g. Rotorua District Council created a Land Innovation Challenge to identify innovative and viable land uses for the Rotorua catchment area and win \$20,000
- Advising/supporting farmers to manage wet soils to reduce nitrous oxide formation.
- Setting nitrogen limits - lower stock numbers and lower methane and nitrous oxide.
- Making renewable energy options for homes easier (e.g. loans for solar hot water)

Source:
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/presentation/5632/98b23c49b43c6bab887f9db-95515c370d7d1.pdf>

New South Wales (NSW)

The NSW Government outlines that 'Councils, along with Commonwealth and State Governments and other stakeholders, have a responsibility to prepare for climate change. Councils can play a key role by adopting policies and practices in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, targeting both council operations and services to the community.' They highlight that 'climate change has the potential to damage council assets, can cause serious disrup-

tions to the delivery of council services, generate unbudgeted financial impacts and affect the wellbeing of the community, particularly those vulnerable to weather extremes. Councils need to prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change (adaptation) and have a significant role in reducing the degree of climate change which may occur (mitigation). NSW councils are key players in adaptation to climate change.

They have responsibility for a broad range of functions that are likely to be affected, such as public infrastructure, local emergency responses, building regulation and planning, public health and environmental management. With each local government area having a unique set of geographical, environmental, economic and social circumstances, the effects and risks of climate change will differ. Early planning and preparation can minimise long-term economic, social and environmental costs to communities.'

For this reason, the NSW Government has provided resources and information for councils to help residents understand, prepare for and minimise the impacts of future extreme events and hazards caused by climate change:

A Guide to Climate Change Risk Assessment, <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/adapting-to-climate-change/local-government/identify-risks-and-vulnerability>

- Integrated Regional Vulnerability Assessments <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/adapting-to-climate-change/regional-vulnerability-and-assessment>

- Adaptation Planning for Local Government checklist, <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/4ab70431a89c49b0aac726b19d278b52>

- Minimising the impact of extreme heat: A guide for local government, <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/a515a078100c-4181835ca6259dccb226.ashx>

- Submission to Environment for Future funding package, https://www.lgnsw.org.au/files/imce-uploads/122/submission_environment_future_funding_package.pdf
- Building Resilience to Climate Change Grants program, <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/climate-change/building-resilience>

- Leading land use case studies by local government, <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/climate-change/land-use-planning-changing-climate>

- The NSW Adaptation Research Hub, <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/adapting-to-climate-change/adaptation-research-hub>

- The NSW Local Government progress and needs in adapting the climate change Survey 2015, <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/9da9caa0c3f3478087b-6c39ba88324c4.ashx>

Conclusion

Using the policy tools of adaptation and mitigation in dealing with climate change and having regard the information and resources available nationally and internationally in the policy documents and case studies highlighted in this article, should ensure that local authorities are well able to identify, assess, measure the possible impact of climate change and associated need for energy efficient processes and other innovative developments (solar panels, biomass, road surface & buildings new substitute materials) to tackle GHG emissions and also to protect against potential risks (flooding, drought, coastal erosion) that lie ahead.

Useful resources and sources of information:

Adapting to climate change (Australia) <http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/Adapting-to-climate-change/Local-government-and-Policy-on-climate-change>: <https://www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/climate-change>

Contact: Denise Anderson, Senior Policy Officer, Environment, email: denise.anderson@lgnsw.org.au

Climate Ireland documents: <https://www.climateireland.ie/#/aboutAdaptation/climateChange>

<https://www.climateireland.ie/#/aboutAdaptation/climateChange/evidence>

<https://www.climateireland.ie/#/aboutAdaptation/adaptation/howToAdapt>

<https://www.climateireland.ie/#/resources/caseStudies>

<https://www.climateireland.ie/#/tools/sectoralTool>

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) documents: <https://www.dcca.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/press-releases/Pages/Local-Authority-Climate-Change-Adaptation-.aspx>

<https://www.dcca.gov.ie/documents/CCAC%20Response%20to%20Draft%20NMP%20May%202017%20Letters%20to%20Sectors.pdf>

<https://www.dcca.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/topics/adapting-to-climate-change/national-adaptation-framework/Pages/Localadaptation.aspx>

<https://www.dcca.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/topics/adapting-to-climate-change/ireland-s-climate-in-the-future/Pages/default.aspx>

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) UK: DEFRA (2010) Adapting to climate change: A guide for local councils, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218798/adapt-localcouncilguide.pdf

DEFRA, Climate Change (including climate change risk assessment and projections) <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/adapting-to-climate-change>

DEFRA, Flood Risk Management: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-management-information-for-flood-risk-management-authorities-asset-owners-and-local-authorities>

DEFRA, www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/action/localauthorities.htm

Environment Agency (UK), <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/default.aspx>

Climate change and renewable energy, <https://www.local.gov.uk/climate-change-and-renewable-energy>

Professor Frank McDermott from the UCD Earth Institute gives an interview on Climate, published on Apr 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ejo4TtHf_kU&list=PLK8_Avek3IAC8llccr-l-tGBLA4RZw8MH&index=5

Professor Fiona Doohan from the UCD Earth Institute gives an interview on Crops for the Future, published on Apr 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAOauY-ite_A&index=6&list=PLK8_Avek3IAC8llccr-l-tGBLA4RZw8MH

Professor Eugene O'Brien from the UCD Earth Institute gives an interview on Sustainable Cities and Regions, published on Apr 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkgvSqRUv9U&list=PLK8_Avek3IAC8llccr-l-tGBLA4RZw8MH&index=4

EPA factsheet on GHG indicators, https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/indicators/epa_factsheet_greenhouse_v2.pdf

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) Merger a Success

By Joanna O'Riordan, IPA

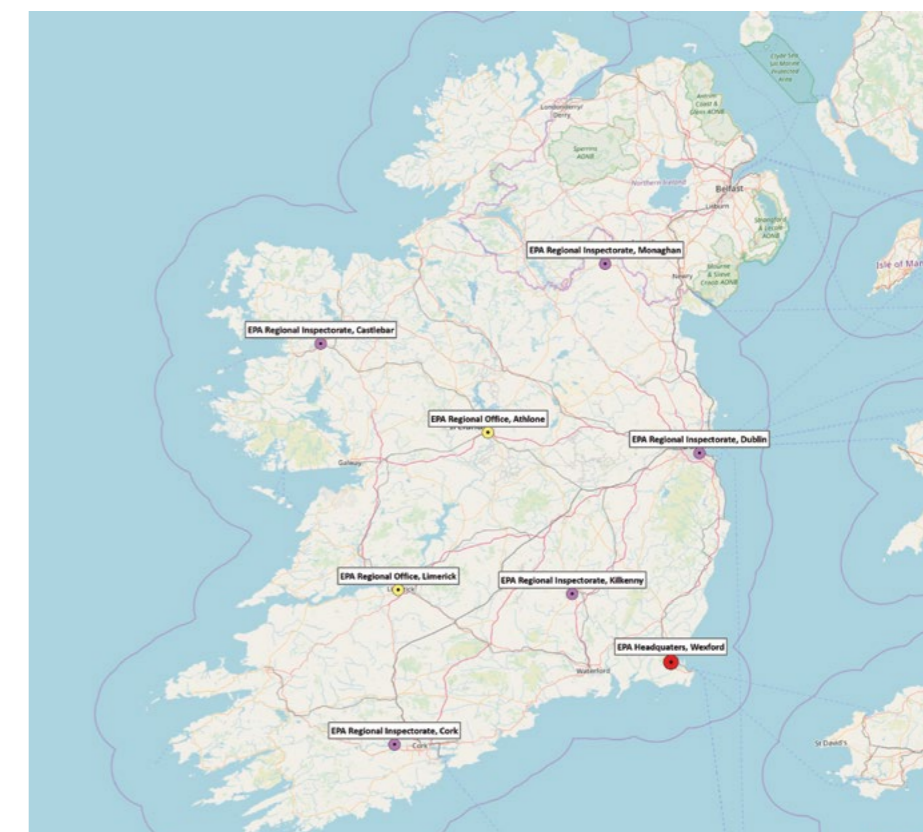
In summer 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), asked the Research Division of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) if they would carry out a case study of the merger of the EPA with the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) which took place in August 2014. The case study was published in May 2018 as part of the IPA's State of the Public Service series.

The objectives of the case study were to document the EPA-RPII merger process and review outcomes to date, to inform the EPA in respect of areas where consolidation is still required, and share learning gained from the merger with other public service bodies. It is, however, recognised that a full assessment of the merger will not be possible for a number of years.

The merger of the EPA and RPII came at a time of public service cutbacks and agency rationalisation. Initially, there was little enthusiasm for the merger in either organisation. However, once it was announced, staff in both organisations committed to the merger process with a high degree of goodwill and engagement. It is widely acknowledged that the structures and processes put in place to bring about the merger were highly effective.

The merger happened on time, within budget, while maintaining services and without any significant customer

complaints. Three years after the merger, staff consulted indicated that on a personal level they are happy with the merger. These are significant outcomes. However, notwithstanding the considerable achievements and effort to date, the work of the merger continues. An ultimately successful outcome, whereby the EPA is more than the sum of its parts, is dependent on the realisation of benefits and synergies from the merger that will result in enhanced productivity and better public service. There is evidence that this transformation is taking place. By the end of 2017, many benefits have been realised – improvements in corporate service areas, such as, HR, IT and health and safety, and also in a number of work areas, for example, laboratory integration, emergency planning and air quality monitoring. The merger has also been a catalyst for change in organisation culture. The more collaborative and consultative approach evident in the development of the vision, mission and values of the EPA, the new



Statement of Strategy, and the Senior Management Network, is very much an outcome of the increased scrutiny on the organisation culture of the EPA as a result of the merger.

Ongoing consolidation and effort will be required for many years to come. However, the EPA appears well-placed to achieve a successful merger, an outcome that regrettably often eludes many merger processes. As noted by the Cranfield University School of Management (2002:57), 'You start out with a merger and end, perhaps many years forward, with a new organisation and a new culture.'

The report identifies a number of lessons learned from the merger process which are likely to prove of value to public service organisations engaged in mergers or other change initiatives.

The process matters

It is perhaps obvious to say that process matters. However, given a context whereby neither body instigated the merger and where negotiations are very challenging, it is helpful to have a process that includes a governance structure, an action plan and a timeline to facilitate progress being made.

The terms of reference provided by the Department were seen as helpful. In particular, the indication that radiological protection would be incorporated into the EPA as a fifth office is regarded as having taken any debate in respect of the new organisation's structure 'off the table'. Similarly, with regard to negotiations on the name of the merged agency, when agreement could not be reached by the Merger Working Group, it does appear to have been helpful to be able to 'fall back' on a political decision that public servants were required to accept.

Those involved in the merger regarded it as absolutely necessary that the work involved in preparing for and implementing the merger was carried out by EPA and RPII staff. They knew the organisations and therefore, were best placed, with occasional technical assistance, to identify and make the required changes. It was also essential in facilitating ownership of change. Rather than a change being imposed by external consultants, there is more likely to be acceptance of proposals developed by colleagues. In addition, working together on project groups facilitated getting to know each other and helped build trust.

The merger is only the beginning

The merger of the EPA and RPII was successful to the extent that it happened on schedule and within budget in summer 2014. However, the real success of the new organisation will be determined by whether it becomes more than the sum of its parts, in other words, whether the new organisation performs better than either of the old organisations would have if they had been left in place.

Notwithstanding the considerable work done to date, in many respects the EPA-RPII merger has only just begun. Ultimately a successful outcome is dependent on effective merger consolidation, improved productivity and customer service, and the creation of a new organisation and organisation culture. This outcome will take time and continued commitment, being led from the top.

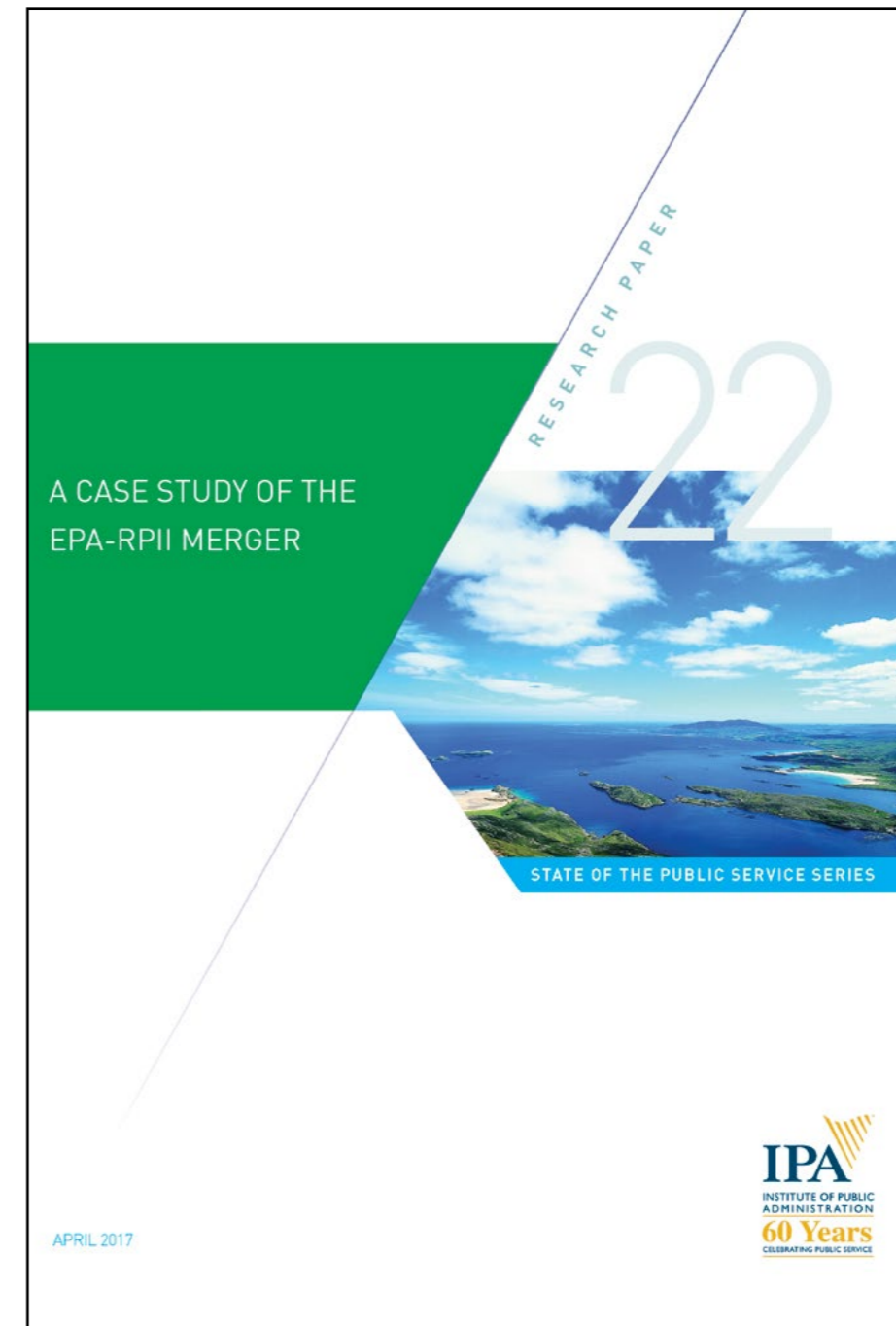
Managing the post-merger aftermath is relentless and requires careful balancing. The work effort has been huge but the full benefits have yet to be realised. There is a need to continue to motivate staff who may be experiencing

change fatigue. The risk of inertia from people that feel 'the merger is done' is considerable. While there is a desire for further integration, the level of disruption involved for staff needs to be managed. It is also important to balance preserving existing competencies with the need for change and adaptation in response to emerging requirements. Lastly, as new ways of working and a new organisation culture emerge, it needs to be recognised that changing behaviours takes time. A key learning from the EPA is that this process – the merger aftermath – needs to be intensively managed. It will not happen organically.

Keep an eye on the people issues

Harnessing the ongoing support and goodwill of staff is essential for a positive merger outcome. For the EPA-RPII merger, this was led from the top of both organisations, with engagement with staff at all levels prioritised. Achieving a single grading system represented a significant achievement of the merger and was the result of extensive negotiation. It greatly facilitated the integration of all staff in the merged organisation.

In the immediate aftermath of the merger, career progression issues were significant. In particular some staff were frustrated when promotion opportunities, which they believed would be available in the larger merged organisation, did not materialise. However, feedback from promotion competitions and a greater understanding of the process appear to have helped to address these concerns. The vast majority of staff have now adjusted to the merger to the extent that they can see many benefits from the merger and are increasingly positive about the outcome.



The importance of merger communication and consultation

Staff and stakeholder communication needs to be structured and planned throughout the merger process and beyond. In the case of the EPA-RPII merger, notwithstanding the number

of staff involved and the regional nature of the EPA, the consensus appears to be that communication and consultation was given a high priority. Initiatives in this regard were commenced early in the merger planning process, were led from the top of both organisations

and involved a variety of methods. The investment in this area, in particular direct engagement through joint planning and working groups, helped build up a high level of familiarity between the staff of both organisations by the time of the merger.

In the course of the research for this study, two aspects of merger communication were identified by staff consulted as challenging. Firstly, some research participants referred to an 'over-promising' or 'over-selling' of the merger, particularly in respect of career progression opportunities. In a bigger organisation there are more opportunities but equally there is more competition. It is very understandable, in a context where those involved are trying to promote the merger and present its benefits, how this tendency to 'over-sell' can arise. However, it can result in dissatisfaction when the reality post-merger is not as envisaged by staff.

A further aspect of communication some staff interviewed had difficulty with, was the whole concept of 'a merger'. In practice, an organisation of 40 people joining with one almost ten times the size is never going to result in complete parity of treatment at an organisational level. Stating this does not in any way take from the huge effort that was put in to ensuring on an individual level that all staff would be treated equally. Rather, the ongoing references to a merger created expectations within the RPII that could not be fulfilled. However, responsibility for this matter does not rest with the EPA; rather it reflects a wider policy issue of how public service reform is communicated.

The importance of vision

When first announced, there was a strong perception among staff of both the EPA and the RPII of the proposed merger being driven by the

adverse financial climate rather than strategically motivated. However, the importance of determining a vision for the merged organisation was immediately recognised by the EPA and the RPII.

The work done on the vision, mission and values of the merged organisation in 2013/14 was critical in helping to identify for staff that there was 'more that united them than divided them'. The debate and subsequent decisions in respect of a new EPA vision also provided a degree of certainty with regard to the future direction of the merged organisation. In addition, on a personal level, it helped staff from both organisations to get to know each other and to build trust.

The collaborative approach adopted in developing the new vision for the merged

organisation, and the positive feedback in respect of this, was influential in a similar approach being adopted for the new EPA Statement of Strategy, 2016-2020. Together these initiatives signal a transitioning to a new organisation culture at the EPA.

Leadership.

Strong leadership is critical to a successful merger outcome. The commitment and leadership of the two chief executives and the two management teams was critical to the successful delivery of the EPA-RPII merger. The development and ongoing implementation of the new EPA strategic plan provided an opportunity to strengthen the combined senior leadership in the merged organisation and in doing so pursue common goals. In some respects public service organisations have an advantage in this area as the concept of public service encompasses a commitment

to implementing government policy. However, a high capacity for leadership is still required post-merger, to reap the full benefits of the merger.

Mergers demand the time and commitment of the management teams of both organisations, but in particular the heads of the organisations involved. For the merger to ultimately be successful it is important that the leaders have a clear vision for the merger, and an appreciation of the need to bring about changes in how the merged organisation works and in its culture. It is also vital to be able to communicate this, possibly to more reluctant management colleagues, and also to staff in general. There is a need to be open and sensitive and to appreciate that changing behaviours takes time. However, at times it is also necessary to be resolute. Ultimate ownership of the merger rests with the management team and more especially its head.

Water or wastewater one of our most sustainable valuable Resources

By Patrick Moran, MIEI, Executive Area Engineer, Tipperary County Council

The EU is to take action against Ireland, as areas of the country have non-compliances in relation to the quality of sewer/wastewater discharges to water bodies and waterways.

To quote Richard Buckminster Fuller, American inventor, designer and author, 'Pollution is nothing but the resources we are not harvesting. We allow them to disperse because we've been ignorant to their value.'

On one of the themes of 2017 world water is highlighting the symbiosis between water and wastewater to the environment and wastewater as a valuable resource to the economy. This subject which I am about to cover is a very broad area so in the interest of brevity here is a taster/sneak preview of some of the potential in this area.

Public service workers the professional providers leading a

Sustainable Future

I work with extraordinary people, driven by a deeply held belief, desire to make a difference to people's lives. These fine pragmatic dignified people work tirelessly year after year of their lives to deliver the top class water services they continue to provide. These are the people continuing to pioneer, develop, and innovate to serve the public providing the efficient essential services they need. In public service, our creativity, achievements continue to touch each community's lives in a meaningful way.

Water & Climate change

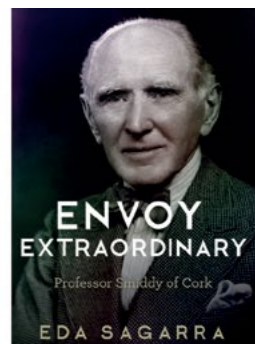
"Water the prime essence of all life..... it's too valuable to be wasted, used just once."

Water is nature's gift to us, but, unfortunately, civilisation's pollution has led to water needing considerable treatment to make it potable. Like the air we breathe, water is essential for human life, so we need to protect it. One of the

biggest problems facing us today, are pollution and climate change.

The way we use resources, produce and use our energy lies at the heart of the effort to tackle climate change. Water and wastewater infrastructure is a significant consumer of energy and reductions in usage could be a major contributor in meeting the public sector 2020 vision of improving energy efficiency by 33%. Reducing water demand fundamentally results in savings in water treatment, water pumping, wastewater pumping wastewater treatment, and environmental savings due to reduced assimilative demand in watercourses, water bodies.

With renewable energy sources (RES) using home grown energy from renewables, we can cut our dependence on imported fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our carbon footprint.



Envoy Extraordinary Professor Smiddy of Cork by Eda Sagarra



ISBN: 978-1-910393-22-2 Pages: 200 Price: €20.00

Professor Timothy Aloysius Smiddy (1875–1962) – academic, economist, diplomat, public servant and businessman – had a remarkable career spanning six decades in both the public service and the private sphere. This is the story of an eminent son of Cork, whose career was closely interwoven with the early history of the Irish state. Despite his unique role as adviser to Michael Collins, W.T. Cosgrave and Éamon de Valera, and his many achievements, Smiddy has remained an elusive figure in documented Irish history. This exhaustively researched biography sets that right. Having been educated in Ireland, France and Germany, Smiddy started and concluded his working life in the world of commerce. Fifteen years as an academic were followed by over twenty years as a public servant in various roles. He served on several high-profile committees and commissions between 1923 and 1956, some of which he chaired. Following his retirement from the public service at the age of seventy he continued to make a significant contribution, and was a successful chairman of the board of Arklow Pottery. Smiddy provided financial expertise to the Irish delegation to the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations (1921) and to the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State. He was the first representative of a Dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations to the United States and Canada, from 1924 to 1929. Unusually for an important figure in the nascent Free State, he had not been involved in the conflicts of 1916–23. As an accomplished linguist with an international outlook, Smiddy helped to steer the Free State away from a narrowly insular mindset. In shedding light on his life and times, this biography also illuminates twentieth-century Irish history.

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*level of treatment depends on the reuse application



As part of Tipperary County Council our achievements to date include reducing energy consumption and dependency on grid electricity, generating renewable energy, reducing our costs and environmental footprint (greenhouse gas emissions and climate change and recycling our water services sludge as a natural fertiliser.

There is also the potential for using bio methane from sludge digestion, as a transport fuel to further reduce CO2 emissions. Our innovations with sludge management also reduces costs to the taxpayer, improves water quality, reduces the volume of sludge being removed off our sites reducing truck movements thus reducing transport CO2 climate changing emissions.

By thinking globally, acting locally, we are also helping reduce the vulnerability of the world population to climate change.

The term wastewater:

Wastewater (used water) : A combination of one or more of, domestic effluent consisting of blackwater (excreta, urine and faecal sludge)and grey water (kitchen and bathing wastewater), water from commercial establishments and institutions, including hospitals: industrial effluent, storm water and other urban run-off: agricultural, horticultural, aquaculture, either dissolved or as suspended matter.

The basic aim of this treatment is produce an effluent (and sludge) with appropriate quality to be released to the environment or re-used. More than 99.5% by mass of used water consists of water, representing an enormous pool of recoverable resources. With the treatment processes available today, used water can be treated to the extent for any given reuse purpose, including recycling as drinking water as done in other countries.

Only around 4% of treated water is used for drinking or cooking the rest goes down the toilet or drain. Through the natural water cycle the earth has recycled and re-used water for millions of years, but in order to aid and accelerate this process to meet our needs we have to work with nature using technology. It is estimated at present that 40% of average household demand could be met using grey water.

Used water, new water:

The term wastewater incorrectly gives the impression that water is considered waste, when in fact it is used water. I propose wastewater should be viewed through a new paradigm-as 'water that is wasted.' Treated water from recovery facilities should then be called new water.

Used water a vast potential resource:

Used water contains potentially marketable products such as proteins,

volatile fatty acids, biodegradable polymers/ plastics, cellulose, construction materials, metals including precious metals such as silver, adhesives, enzymes, Bio-fuels from algae or cooking oils, etc.

Let's focus on recovery and valorisation of what is currently considered waste, by (using biological resources for the production of value added products, such as bio-energy, fuels, chemicals, bio-based products fertilisers and much more.

Directive's Environmental Legislation programme governing this area:

The drivers are to address the water framework and nitrates Directives, sludge directive 2008/98 EC (WFD 75/442/EC), 91/676/EEC, (86/278/EEC) and EPA water research programme 2014-2020, respectively.

Benefits of used water management/treatment:

- Managing used water is linked to the entire water cycle. Studies have shown that in terms of discharges from waste water treatment plants they can account for a high proportion of the receiving water in winter and a higher proportion of receiving water in summer in terms of its load of solids organic matter and nutrients.
- Used water management treatment should be a productive process in which a desirable output (treated water) is obtained together with a series of undesirable outputs (suspended solids, heavy metals, nutrients, etc., using inputs (labour, energy, etc.).
- Used water treatment facilities are critical infrastructure for urban societies and provide essential protection for both the aquatic environment, human health and ecological benefits.
- Used water management can be grouped into two general categories market and non-market benefits.
- Consideration from this production process perspective also makes it

possible to estimate the shadow prices of the undesirable outputs/pollutants, etc. A shadow price for these undesirable outputs is the equivalent of the environmental damage avoided if these pollutants are removed or recovered i.e. an estimating of the environmental benefits gained from the treatment or recovery process.

- Environmental effects, can include, eutrophication, ecosystems, degradation etc.
- Inadequate used water treatment can potentially lead to pollution of water bodies that are sources for drinking water.
- The cost of no action/ doing nothing is the shadow prices of pollutants and potential negative health effects.
- Therefore, the discharge of used water, with inadequate treatment involves generating significant costs, including environmental and social ones as well as potential benefits and revenue lost.
- Personal care products which contain Micro plastics, Diclofenac, Tonalide, Galaxolide, Sulfamethoxazole, Ethinyl Eatradiol have significant effects on the environment and in some countries the shadow prices compared with the environmental cost of removal is being look at.

Costs currently associated with treatment and options:

- Sludge (bio solids) management is the most important cost factor in used water management and can account for up to 40% of the plants operating and maintenance costs including sludge removal off site.
- Treatment Facilities total operating and maintenance costs include (energy, staff, reagents, waste management and maintenance.
- Energy and maintenance costs are a high proportion of operating and maintenance (O & M) costs followed by substantial reagent costs associated with chemical dosing nutrient removal.
- In addition to the cost of chemical

dosing the sludge quantities produced can be increased by up to 25% thus increasing sludge removal cost also. Less energy intensive, lower lifecycle costs are available using biological treatment systems to recover nutrients in constructed wetlands, red beds etc.

- In addition external social costs non-monetary green-house gases (e.g. CO2, CH4) environmental nuisance such as noise, odours etc., should be factored in as added benefit of resource recovery.
- To subsist overall treatment plants running cost there may also be future options to sell treated water / new water to agriculture or industry among other uses.

Current unsustainable issues facing us which present great opportunity:

- Biological nitrogen nutrient removal in used water treatment plants is a significant resource recovery anthropogenic source of nitrous oxide emissions with global warming potential some 300 times that of CO2
- Nutrients discharged have the environmental effects of eutrophication, ecosystems, degradation reduced biodiversity due to growth of algae, etc.
- Nutrient recovery can be divided into three sections accumulation, release and extraction in which nutrient products are recovered in the last step.
- Phosphorus is vital for plants and crops it is limited and diminishing and there is currently no substitute for it.
- Phosphorus production is anticipated to enter a long slow decline once the peak has been reached, which is estimated to occur by year 2033.
- Phosphorus is mined from non-renewable elemental deposits and 90% of the world's phosphate reserves can be found in just five countries.
- Mining of phosphorus rock increases the amount of cadmium to

the biosphere which also results in severe local environmental effects.

- Phosphorus can be recovered from used water, urine, and ash and sewage sludge.
- Phosphate recovery can achieve full cost recovery through savings in maintenance costs avoiding unplanned p crystallisation in pipes and valves while p crystals can become a valuable resource for the fertiliser industry.
- The main focus on nutrient recovery to date has been on chemical phosphorus products, which are proving very expensive, increasing sludge removal costs with no financial gain from the phosphate resource.
- Recapturing of used water derived phosphorus and selling it to industry seems to be a clear solution for closing the phosphorus cycle thus protecting the environment.
- Crystallization has been proven to be the established technology with the highest percentage of recovery resource for phosphorus, with a recovery rate exceeding 90% and appears to be the most effective process is obtaining struvite in which nitrogen is recovered in addition to phosphorus. The recovery of struvite also greatly reduces blockages in plants, thus reducing running costs.

Some options: Recovery and Opportunities:

- The cost of inorganic fertiliser continues to rise.
- New innovation for nitrogen recovery is via ion exchange membranes.
- In terms of the agricultural, economic value of the organic phosphorus and nitrogen contained in the dry sludge collected from wastewater plants this is significant, excluding the economic value of centrates and digestates.
- Supernatant (digestate from digestion and centrates could also be made available as a slow release fertilizer, and provide a potential source of revenue.

- Current factors, such as, transportation and land application are additional costs that also need to be case studied to direct recovery options, in addition to border agricultural restrictions on land spreading.

Recovery of Metals:

It is predicted that the supply of nickel and zinc will be exhausted within 50 years. Also reducing these and copper loadings significantly will improve recreational fishing in the discharge river, boosting tourism. In Ireland, the driving force for metals recovery could be the EPA stipulation, such as, the levels of cadmium and nickel in soil must be less than 1mg/kg and 30mg/kg respectively for use of sludge to be applied to land. Common methods of removing metals involve physical adsorption, electro dialysis and through biological and membrane processes the latter becoming more widely employed.

Further potential resource recovery & facilities:

- Wastewater typically contains many times more energy than is needed for treatment.
- High energy from combustion of the organics in typical domestic wastewater is 6000mj/1000m³.
- The majority of recovered energy from used water treatment plants can be used on site in the form

of electricity and heat (thermal energy) for processes.

- Start co-digestion using feedstock, from council sites, etc., as an energy crop, to feed our existing anaerobic digesters, to increase production of both electricity and heat.
- Use of inlet screenings as a resource, fuel rather than disposing as a waste.
- Public Water services sites also have potential for the installation of renewable energy technologies including micro turbines, DifGens on pipe networks, solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, etc., to subsidise power demand on site and export power to the grid when surplus to site demand.
- In the future Instead of consuming energy wastewater treatment could also use MFC's (microbial fuel cells and other technologies to turn treatment plants into power plants.
- Due to agricultural restrictions in relation to the use of wastewater sludge in the production of fruit and vegetables crops for human consumption, it is prudent to look to other alternatives outlets, such as, bioremediation - applying used water sludge on biomass energy crops, willow & miscanthus, forestry, cereals for animal feeds, etc.
- Budget 2017 allows relief from carbon tax for solid fuels that include biomass to incentivise increased usage of greener fuels.

- Biomass is currently the most cost effective way to produce renewable liquid fuels.
- Biodiesel is one such fuel which works well in diesel engines and does not produce as much air pollution as burning petroleum fuels. Used cooking oil, often thrown into sewers can also be converted to biodiesel.

Residual Products:

Once optimum energy and optimum resource recovery have been achieved from used water there remains marketable products. In the case of alum sludge from potable water treatment plants one such re-use option being used abroad is in the cement industry, which will also lead to reduced CO₂ emissions.

Learning, Future, Credits:

Our track record of accomplishments speaks for itself. We are venturesome and are keenly trying new ideas using entrepreneurial, intrapreneurial spirit. The course of continued innovation will involve commitment as did our previous innovations. We are best placed in providing this service as we continue on this wonderful journey. I would like to thank our senior management for their assistance and support, in all that we have achieved so far. Finally, I would like to thank all those who gave their time in contributing.

Local Economic Development

By Laura Shannon, IPA

In recent years, the economic development role of Irish local authorities has been strengthened, in line with international trends towards place-based growth. This article, based on a recently published IPA Local Government Research Series report, provides an overview of the role of selected subnational governments in local economic development.

The OECD (2013) define local economic development as “a cross cutting and integrated activity where the physical development of a place is linked to public service, place management, and wider drivers of change such as employment, skills, investment, enterprise, innovation, productivity, quality of life, and positioning” (p. 9). Local government plays a key leadership role in this kind of local integration.

Local government in Ireland traditionally plays a significant role in relation to economic development, from planning and development services, to provision of transport, water and environmental infrastructure. In 2014, as part of the wider reform process, this role was strengthened through the creation of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) as offices within the 31 local authorities to provide enhanced resources to support start-ups and microenterprises in their areas. LEOs provide a range of financial and non-financial support to their clients. The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC, 2018) reported that in 2016 LEOs assisted businesses to create an additional 3,355 whole time equivalent jobs, and provided one-to-one mentoring to 7,564 participants, while 1,141 small businesses were approved for the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which offers financial assistance along with training and

advice to promote online trading.

In 2016, local economic and community plans (LECPs) were adopted in all local authority areas, expanding the role of local authorities in economic development further. LECPs represent a coordinated approach to local community and economic development, led by the city and county councils. This approach improves the alignment of the actions of the local authorities, agencies and local community and voluntary groups involved in the economic and community development of their areas, ensuring that they are working to common objectives and shared goals. Local authorities, working with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, are also coordinating the implementation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs.

As noted in an OECD review of local development in Ireland (OECD, 2013), the reforms presented Ireland with the opportunity to follow the path of many OECD countries in creating new environments for economic development.

Role of selected local governments in economic development

In general, a trend towards bottom-up local and regional development can be observed globally alongside devolution of powers to the subnational level and shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’. These trends have resulted in the reform of subnational governance and the increasing role of local authorities in economic development. Alongside this, local service integration is resulting in the increasing use of one-stop shops for employment and job creation at the local level. A snapshot of the activities of local governments in three different jurisdictions is provided below.

Northern Ireland

Local government in Northern Ireland was extensively reformed in 2015. Structurally, 11 ‘super councils’ replaced the existing 26 councils. With the exception of Belfast City Council, which was extended, all other councils were formed by merging two or more existing local authorities. The new councils were also provided with additional responsibilities and powers primarily in the areas of local planning, local economic and tourism development and off street parking. Specific functions impacting economic development transferred to the new councils are outlined in Table 1.

Alongside the devolution of specific functions, councils were also provided with a new general power of competence to allow a council to act in its own interest and develop innovative approaches to help improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area, unless there is a law to prevent it from doing so.

Councils are also leading a community planning process. The new duty of community planning requires councils as the lead partner to be responsible for making arrangements for community planning in their areas. They will work with statutory bodies and their communities to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of an area, community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens. The plans intend to encourage sustainable development by linking service delivery, long term objectives of an area, and physical planning and regeneration.

Knox and Carmichael (2015) note that, in the absence of key functional responsibilities, community planning



and the general power of competence offers significant opportunities for local government in Northern Ireland. The first set of community plans are beginning to emerge following extensive consultation with citizens. The representative body for councils, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), while welcoming the additional powers transferred in 2015, believe that further functions should be considered for devolution including further economic development functions such as coordinating skills development, and regeneration powers (NILGA, 2016).

England

One of the key focuses for central government in England in their approach to local growth is the shift of power to local communities and businesses. In recent years, there has been a varying range of devolution measures put in place.

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 provides the legal framework for the implementation of devolution deals with combined authorities and other areas. The Act is intended to support delivery of the Government's manifesto commitment to devolve powers and budgets to boost local growth in England, in particular to devolve far-reaching powers over economic development, transport, and social care to large cities which choose to have elected mayors.

The Act also provides for an elected mayor for a combined authority's area. On 5 May 2017, six mayors were elected for the first time to lead combined authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the Tees Valley, the West of England and the West Midlands. Devolution deals had previously been agreed with these areas.

While devolution has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis, all parts of England are covered by (at least) one Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). These are voluntary bodies, established in 2010-

11 to coordinate economic development and growth policy in local areas. They have a close working relationship with local authorities (and any combined authority) in their area, frequently with councillors sitting on their management boards, but they are not formally accountable to local authorities. There are currently 39 LEPs across England.

LEPs are the primary mechanism for channelling a £12 billion Local Growth Fund. This funding is negotiated between LEPs and central government through 'Local Growth Deals'. Alongside this share of the Local Growth Fund, LEPs also have responsibility for drawing up investment plans for over £5 billion of European Structural and Investment Funds for 2014 to 2020.

New Zealand

Local government in New Zealand consists of 61 territorial councils (11 city councils and 50 district councils), 11 regional, and 6 unitary councils (which are territorial councils with regional council responsibilities). Regional councils are primarily concerned with environmental resource management, flood control, air and water quality, pest control, and, in specific cases, public transport, regional parks, and bulk water supply. Territorial authorities are responsible for a wide range of local services including roads, water reticulation, sewerage and refuse collection, libraries, parks, recreation services, local regulations, community and economic development, and town planning.

Councils, however, can differ widely in relation to activities they undertake, as long as they have consulted their communities in making the decisions. As a result, there is considerable diversity in the range of activities that councils provide, reflecting the different circumstances that cities, towns and communities find themselves in. For the 2014-2015 financial year, New Zealand's local government sector spent an estimated \$248 million on the delivery of economic development services. A survey by LGNZ in late

2016 demonstrated the wide range of economic activities provided for by councils, including, but not limited to:

- Economic development strategy development
- Visitor marketing and promotion, i-SITES
- Events
- Information and intelligence, data gathering on local economic state
- Infrastructure projects aimed at growing a specific industry
- Case management of businesses through council processes
- Main street development programmes
- Investment attraction
- International relations
- Skills and talent initiatives
- Grants for economic development
- Government contractual relationships
- Enterprise development services
- Industry development
- Incentives for businesses
- Innovation support services (LGNZ, 2017).

The survey also indicated a wide range of institutional arrangements for managing the economic development work programmes. Most councils reported having in-house economic development expertise located within a single team or unit, or within multiple teams or units. The second and third most common arrangements were regional tourism organisations and council controlled organisations.

Conclusion

The literature and case studies examined in the report highlight the international trends towards place-based economic growth and devolution of functions to subnational governments. There is strong rationale for broadly based systems of local government, with a wide range of functions and fiscal autonomy, to be the drivers of growth in their local areas. These international trends are, to some extent, mirrored in Ireland's recent reform of local economic development at subnational level. Local authorities have been provided with increased responsibilities

Table 1 – Additional economic development related functions transferred to local government in Northern Ireland in 2015.

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local development plan functions • Development control and enforcement
Local economic development (transfer from Invest NI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows • Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire) • Social Entrepreneurship • Investing for Women • Neighbourhood Renewal funding relating to enterprises initiatives.
Local tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale tourism accommodation development • Providing business support including business start-up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes • Providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues

for economic development through the establishment of Local Enterprise Offices, the preparation of Local Economic and Community Plans and their involvement with Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The possible introduction of metropolitan planning, as outlined in the recent National Planning Framework, provides a further opportunity for local authorities to drive growth and provide better environments for their citizens.

This article is based on a recently published IPA Local Government Research Series report, available on the IPA website at: <https://www.ipa.ie/research-papers/local-government-research.684.html>

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Third Level Campus Identified as a Driver for Kilkenny's Economy and to retain local people in the county

A Report commissioned by Kilkenny County Council finds that there is an educational, social and economic case for locating a higher education campus to cater for 1,000 students in Kilkenny and that all options should be explored including tying into the proposed Technological University of the South East (TUSE) being jointly pursued by Waterford IT and IT Carlow. Minister with Special Responsibility for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD, was in Kilkenny to launch the Report that recommends any third level facility should be based on the County's niche areas to create an international centre of excellence that reflect the county's economic activities and strengths. This would include focusing on education and training in the design, crafts, animation, heritage, tourism and the agri-food sectors, for which Kilkenny is synonymous. Such a centre of excellence would create a competitive context into which a wider range of providers are likely to enter, broadening the potential choices for the Council, and ultimately the prospect of successful, high quality and sustainable education and training provision in the city. "Kilkenny County Council is already developing proposals for centres of excellence in the areas of precision agriculture and design thinking with Waterford IT and IT Carlow respectively. Kilkenny is synonymous with high quality Irish craft / design and the agri-food industry and a third level campus would serve to further build on these areas of expertise and strengthen the County's economy," said Minister with Special Responsibility for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD.

The Council is well aware of the limitations in the Exchequer finances

in funding capital expenditure for third level buildings and associated infrastructure. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council underlined that "we not only have the economic case for higher education, we also have the right space to provide

for a third level campus. The Abbey Quarter urban renewal project in the heart of Kilkenny city would be greatly enhanced with a vibrant academic community, in keeping with the Abbey Quarter Masterplan. Design guidelines have recently been adopted for the



Minister with Special Responsibility for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD at the Parade Tower in Kilkenny with (L-R) Cllr David Fitzgerald, Chairman, Kilkenny County Council and Colette Byrne, Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council launching a Report recommending a third level facility for Kilkenny that would be an international centre of excellence for education and training in the areas of design, crafts, animation, heritage, tourism and the agri-food industry. The Report was commissioned by Kilkenny County Council and demonstrates an educational, social and economic case for locating a higher education campus to cater for 1,000 students in Kilkenny. Picture Dylan Vaughan.



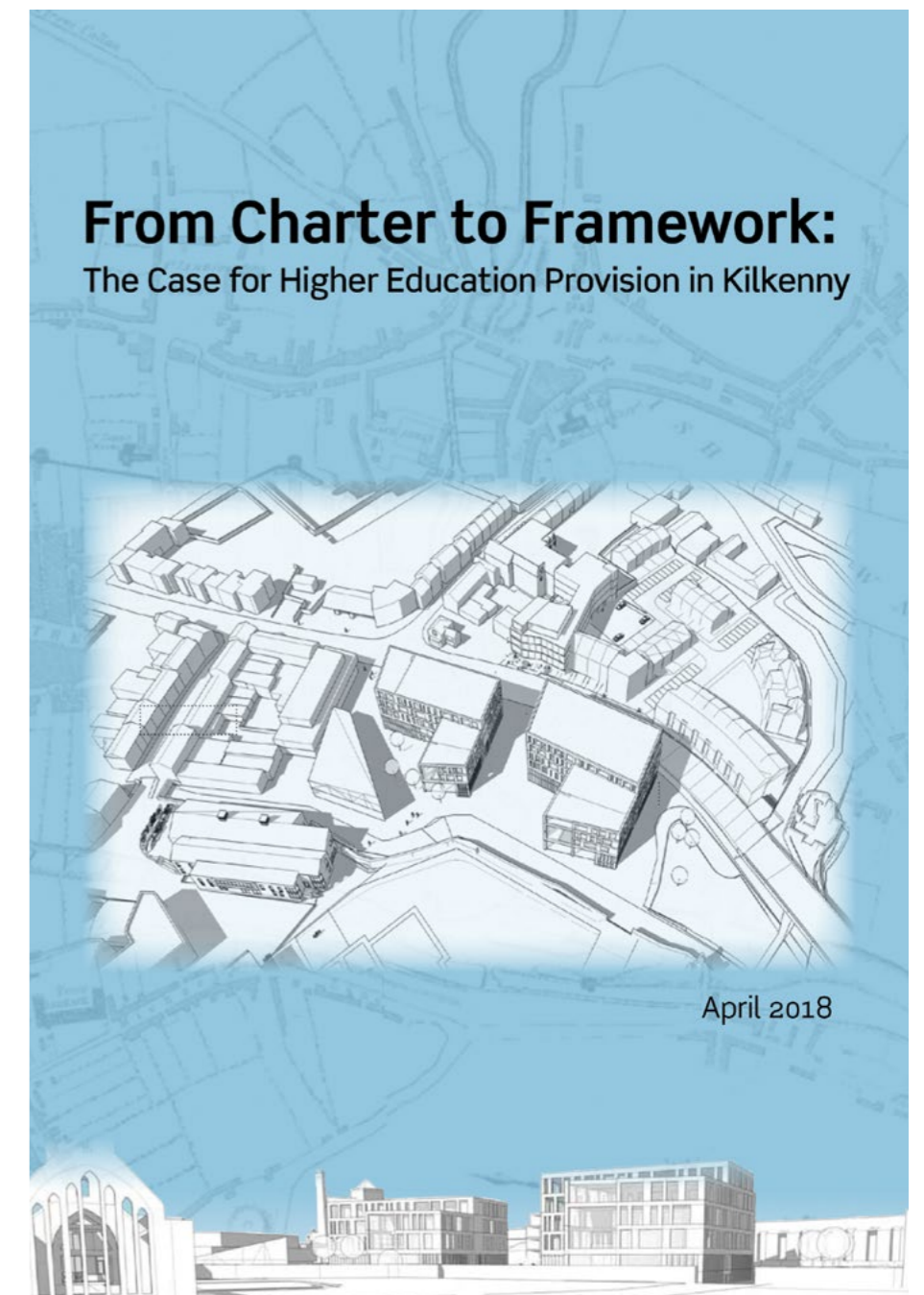
Abbey Quarter, which will support the early delivery of a third level campus."

While no formal arrangements have been put in place to deliver on any of the options put forward in the Report, Kilkenny County Council is committed to fully exploring the potential opportunities identified with the key stakeholders. The Report notes that the Steering Group for the establishment of the TUSE is due to report with its strategy for progressing same by next September. Cllr David Fitzgerald, Chairman, Kilkenny County Council noted that "we will, as recommended, keep an open mind on what would work best for Kilkenny. I acknowledge the general support from Waterford IT and IT Carlow for our Report and I also look forward to hearing how Kilkenny will feature in their joint strategy for the TUSE."

- The report "From Charter to Framework: The Case for Higher Education Provision in Kilkenny", finds that participation in post-secondary education in the South-East region is broadly comparable with national rates with some notable differences. Nationally, 44% of school leavers transfer to higher education, compared with 50% for Kilkenny. The rest of the region also demonstrates participation rates in higher education at or above the national average. In contrast, 28% are enrolled in second level/FET programmes nationally compared with only 23% of Kilkenny students; Tipperary South, Waterford City and Wexford are above the national average.
- The case for a higher education facility in Kilkenny is further reinforced when considered in the context of latest CSO (2016) census figures that show 23% of the County's population is Under 15 years of age (23% of 99,232 total population); 19% of the population (19,377 people) have obtained a third level Diploma / Degree or higher; while a further 14.6%

(14,489 people) have completed a Technical/Vocational qualification, an Apprenticeship / Advanced Certificate or a Higher Certificate. For further information: Neasa Kane-Fine, RPS Group, 087-232 0038 (For Kilkenny County Council)

The report is available at www.kilkennycoco.ie. Sources: Neasa Kane-Fine, RPS Group and Andrea Wesolowski, RPS Group.



Good Practice Seminar For Local Authority Staff Aims To Build On Innovative Approaches Taken To Further Improve Service Delivery

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), in association with local authorities, held a Good Practice in Local Government seminar on Tuesday, 21st November 2017 in Kilkenny Castle. Welcoming the seminar, Minister John Paul Phelan stated that the seminar was addressing a selection of the many initiatives taken by local authorities that highlight interesting, diverse and often highly innovative approaches to addressing the challenges that both local authorities and our communities face. It demonstrates the ability by local authorities to adapt to the many reforms and how it manages demands and constraints, while continuing to deliver excellent services. “Local authorities in Ireland continuously strive to deliver top-class services. This Good Practice Seminar is an opportunity to showcase examples of solutions-oriented approaches to providing public services,” said Pat McLoughlin, Chair of NOAC. “The case studies being presented illustrate the sector’s desire to improve efficiency in the service delivery, engage meaningfully with citizens and regenerate urban and rural areas.”

Speakers from local authorities across Ireland presented case studies, including,

- Monaghan County Council reduced the turnaround time for re-letting its housing from nearly 20 weeks to just 8 weeks thanks to changes in work processes and procedures. This included simple measures such as transferring to a paperless file system and using mobile devices to ensure non-office based staff had instant access to accurate information when and where they needed it.
- Louth County Council has had some



success factors in addressing vacant and derelict homes in private ownership. Louth County Council decided to acquire the housing by the Compulsory Purchase Order process. Once acquired, the Council refurbished them. This solution to dereliction and anti-social behaviour in a housing estate also made more homes available for people on the Council’s housing list. On foot of the initiative, some property owners in the community have renovated and rented out properties that were vacant up to now.

- The introduction of solar powered compacting smart litter bins to address an inefficient litter bin service, had excellent results for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. Web-based technology allows its team to monitor real time capacity and litter levels at each of its 400 smart litter bins. The number of litter bins was reduced but the overall capacity of litter bins was increased. The system has resulted in up to 85% fewer bin collections and operational savings of up to 75% for the service.
- The social and economic regeneration of Kilkenny’s Abbey Quarter involves developing the former Smithwicks Brewery site



adjoining Kilkenny's medieval quarter. The project will create both jobs and high quality public spaces and is an example of the work of local authorities in cities, towns and villages throughout Ireland to regenerate their local areas.

- Many would be familiar with Waterford Greenway. In addition to a tourism product this is part of an initiative being driven by Waterford City and County Council to implement a smarter travel initiative in the County. Dungarvan was selected as a Smarter Travel Demonstration Town, and following investment funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the town has been transformed to support commuters who are walking and cycling to work and school.
- Since 2014 the Skellig Region has been designated as an International Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserve. This is seen as a key attraction for an area that has experienced economic and population decline. Kerry County Council is working with stakeholders to enhance the quality of the experience. The Council itself is retrofitting the street lighting with dark sky LED lighting in the 700 square kilometre reserve.
- Other projects showcased included innovative approaches to budgeting by South Dublin County Council and digital engagement with citizens in Cork County Council, along with examples of evidence based approaches to policy development being used by the sector.
- The research conducted by Kildare County Council, who worked in partnership with NUI Maynooth, to ensure their policies are informed by data, is a fine example of the approach to evidence based policy taken by local authorities throughout Ireland.

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**No Artificial Limits
 Ireland's Regional Technical Colleges**
 by Richard Thorn

ISBN: 978-1-910393-20-8 Pages: 245 Price: €20.00

The late 1950s and 1960s were a pivotal period in Ireland's economic development. Visionary civil servants and modernising politicians led significant changes in Irish society; nowhere was this more obvious than in education. Free secondary education, free school transport and the development of a non-university, technically oriented higher-education system – the regional technical colleges and the national institutes for higher education – combined to create a new dynamic that furnished a missing rung in Irish education and democratised access to education.

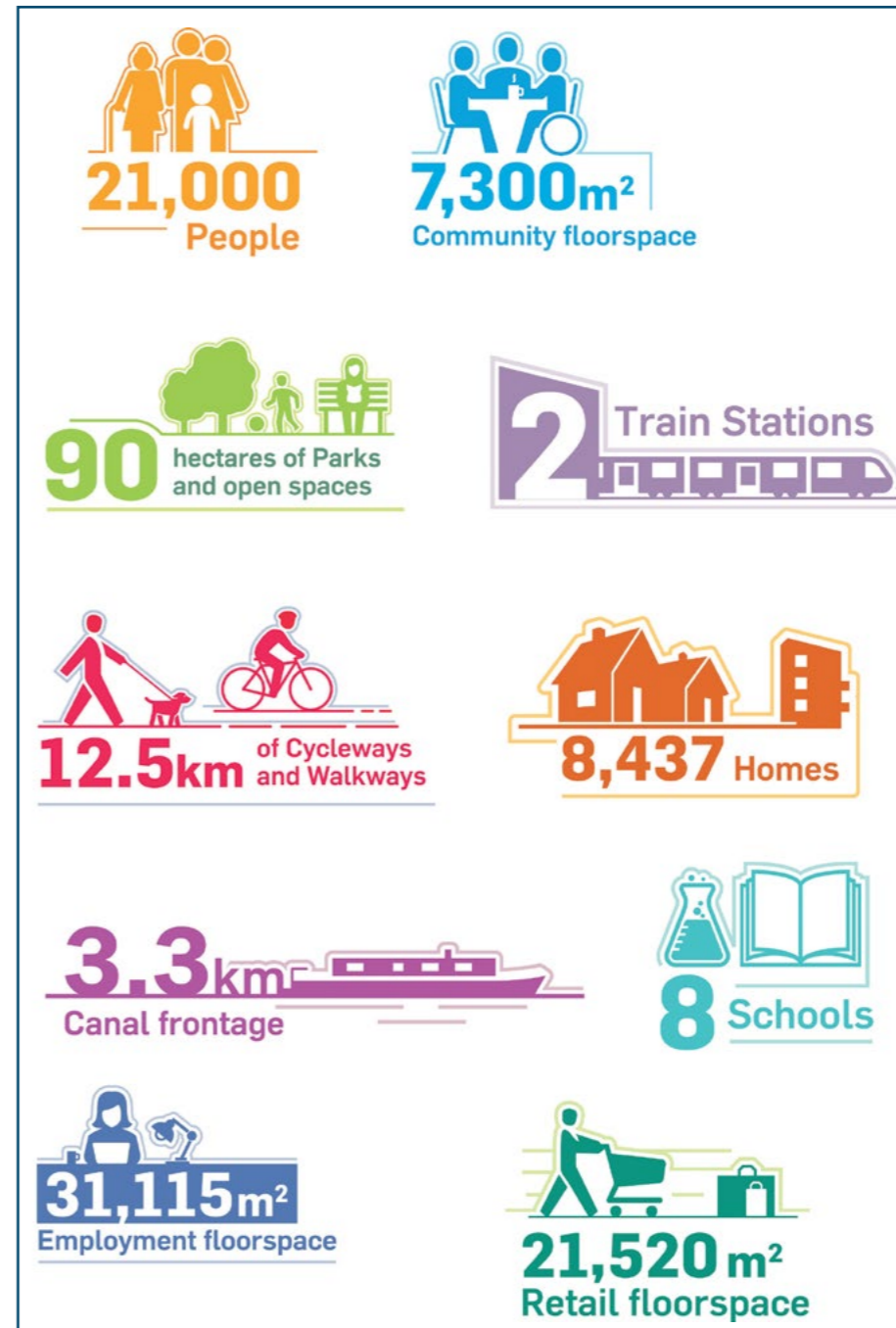
The regional technical colleges, and their successors the institutes of technology (excepting Dublin Institute of Technology), conceived primarily as sub-degree institutions, now stand on the threshold of re-designation as technological universities; they are thus internationally unique.

This book paints the landscape of political chicanery, conflict and control, policy weakness, institutional ambition and autonomy, and the belief in self-efficacy within which the regional technical colleges developed. The book does not draw a map of dates, numbers, statistics, lists and places. In offering a painting rather than a map, it is hoped the book will appeal to those who have come from, or have been associated with, the regional technical colleges and who are interested in the richness of the story of their colleges. It is hoped also that the book will appeal to those interested in education and policy development.

To order your copy contact:
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New community being planned for Clonburris Strategic Development Zone lands



A new community is being planned for South Dublin County on the lands that make up the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone. The SDZ lands, comprising approximately 280 hectares, are located between the established communities of Lucan, Clondalkin and Liffey Valley. The lands have been designated by the Government as a Major Urban Housing Development Site and South Dublin County Council is confident that the Clonburris SDZ will have a central role to play in addressing the demand for new housing in Dublin.

The Draft Planning Scheme for the SDZ lands aims to achieve a shared outlook for the future development of the new community at Clonburris. The scale and potential of the SDZ lands, together with existing unique selling points, which include the Grand Canal, Griffen Valley Park, and the Kildare rail line, offer an excellent starting point for the development of a forward thinking, innovative and vibrant community in South Dublin County.

The Draft Planning Scheme is currently project to deliver a target of 8,437 new homes for approximately 21,000 people, 90 hectares of Parks and Open Spaces, 7,300 square metres gross community floor space, approximately 21,520 square metres gross retail floor space and 31,115 square metres employment floor space. The Scheme will include the provision of three primary and three post primary schools. Approximately 72% of housing will be located within 500m of schools and approximately 98% of residents will be able to access a bus stop within 400m or a train station within 800m, thereby significantly reducing dependence on the private car. The lands will be serviced by two train stations at Kishoge and Clondalkin/



Fonthill, approximately a 15-minute train journey from Dublin City Centre. The lands are also well connected to the N4 and N7 National Routes by three Regional Roads, including the Outer Ring Road.

On 1st of February 2018, the elected members of South Dublin County Council resolved to make the Draft Planning Scheme for the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone, subject to variations and modifications. Public Consultation of the Draft Planning Scheme ended on 20th of April 2018 with South Dublin County Council's Chief Executive, Daniel McLoughlin, now preparing a report on the submissions received for the consideration of the Elected Members. If the Planning Scheme is approved, Clonburris will develop over the next 20 years. The land is in multiple ownerships, so development will take place at different times across the entire site. The speed at which developments will progress may depend on the market.

Mr. Daniel McLoughlin, Chief Executive of South Dublin County Council emphasised that "this Council is committed to achieving the best possible outcome for the development of the SDZ lands, in partnership with SDZ landowners and a range of key stakeholders. The co-ordinated development of the lands at Clonburris represents an opportunity for South Dublin County to directly respond to the demand for new housing in



Dublin. The Draft Planning Scheme for the Strategic Development Zone will allow the construction of housing in close co-ordination with the delivery of public transport infrastructure, schools, community facilities, parks, retail and employment related development".

For further information, please visit www.clonburris.ie

Source:
Niall Noonan, Communications Manager,
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Education alliance to benefit cross border education provision and opportunities

On February, 23rd, 2018, the North West Strategic Growth Partnership, in partnership with the Higher and Further Education and Training Institutions of the North West City Region, announced a new agreement in education, training and innovation for the North West City region with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between education sector providers on both sides of the border.

The MoU is the result of years of successful collaborative working amongst the education sector providers – the Ulster University, Letterkenny Institute for Technology (LYIT), North West Regional College (NWRC) and Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) - with the aim of improving access to higher and further level education and training to students living and studying in the North West City region. The North West Strategic Growth Partnership is led by Derry City and Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council and supported by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) in conjunction with and supported by The Executive Office and The Irish Government.

The Minister for Education and Skills

Richard Bruton T.D. was in attendance at the signing and endorsed this historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stating, "today's announcement is a fantastic development for the North West region. This new partnership will greatly enhance collaboration between the education and training providers in key areas such as research, innovation and education and training. Brexit will pose a significant challenge to our higher and further education institutions. Through our Action Plan for Education, which aims to make Ireland's education system the best in Europe within a decade, we are preparing our education and training providers to respond to this challenge. Talent drives the success of any region and strong hubs will be the engine of regional development. Today's partnership is a very welcome development, which will have a really significant impact on the North West region."

- The North West City Region is comprised of the administrative area of Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council.
- The North West Strategic Growth Partnership is led by Derry City

and Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council and supported by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). It is a unique inter-jurisdictional structure, endorsed by both Governments through the North South Ministerial Council. The NWSGP consists of Council senior leadership and senior government officials from across Government administrations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who meet bi-annually to bring about real and positive change for the North West City region. Using international best practice in place-based leadership for development, the NWSGP provides a joined-up forum and implementation space for collaborative working to release the full potential of the North West City Region. Funding for the work of the NW Strategic Growth Partnership and NW Regional Development Group is being provided by the Executive Office and the Irish Government.

- Ulster University As Northern Ireland's civic university, Ulster University is grounded in the heart of the community and strives to make a lasting contribution to society as a whole. Renowned for its world class teaching, Ulster aims to transform lives, stretch minds and develop the skills required by a growing economy.
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) attracts a mix of 4,000+ students both from the local area and from across the globe. Modern integrated campuses in Letterkenny and Killybegs encourage strong academic learning and career focused practical experience.





- North West Regional College (NWRC) is the largest provider of professional and technical education and training across the city region with some 15,000 full-time and part-time enrolments.
- Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) is the county's largest provider of a broad range of educational and training services including further education and training services for 12,000 full-time and part-time learners; 15 post primary schools and colleges (5,000+ students), outdoor education and training, music education and co-ordination of youth service provision.

An Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council Cllr Gerry McMonagle underlined that the signing of the MoU was hugely significant for the region. "The MoU builds on the excellent collaborative work previously undertaken between the partners to support regional growth through delivering on the higher and further education needs of the North West. It



will allow the partners to work together as anchors of the economy of the region and contribute to the advancement of the North West City Region growth agenda that investments in higher and further education can achieve with added value for everyone." Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Maoliosa McHugh stated that, "this is a significant event for education growth in our region and is in keeping with the objective set out by the North West Strategic Growth Partnership to promote cross cutting regional growth in the education sector. I am confident that the MoU will give the two governments the mechanism with which to engage with the education institutions to deliver on our shared further and higher educational ambitions and further enhance cross border co-operation."

Similarly, Professor Paddy Nixon, Vice Chancellor of Ulster University outlined that "this landmark agreement demonstrates our shared vision to create a regional strategic alliance for the North West, that drives innovation and investment and delivers co-ordinated cross border third level education to the people of this region and beyond. In practical terms, this consolidates the excellent collaboration that is already operating informally and embeds this partnership working model across our regional network. Today's agreement will allow for a more co-ordinated approach to student pathway and progression and marks a step change in our approach to delivery of quality education in the North West." Also Paul Hannigan, President of Letterkenny Institute of Technology noted that the

alignment of a cross border further and higher education cluster in the North West City region is essential if the region is to grow and develop its education offering and maximise the emerging potential for those who wish to live, work and invest in this region. "The signing of the MoU between the education providers in the region is very significant and is testament to the huge amount of positive work that has been done behind the scenes to really look at how we can develop education, research and innovation foundations for the North West region. This alliance will allow us to design and deliver new courses and programmes that will support economic and social development and improve efficiency through shared staffing and facilities on a range of programmes, teaching and research. Key to this alliance is the positive impact it will have on our students and the way it will open up new opportunities for them as well as encourage and facilitate wider participation in education programmes." Furthermore, Leo Murphy, Principal and Chief Executive of North West Regional College said the MoU will contribute greatly to the outcomes of the Further and Higher Education Strategy in the City and Region. "Anything that facilitates student mobility and participation in education is to be welcomed and this MoU will go a long way towards assisting us in facilitating further cross border co-operation in teaching, learning and innovation." Anne McHugh, Chief Executive of Donegal Education Training Board added that she is confident this alliance will provide effective progression pathways for students and graduates to higher education. "This is great news for the education sector in the North West and a really positive collaboration between education providers on both sides of the border. The MoU will assist us in achieving many of the strategic goals set out in our Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-19 to ensure active inclusion, integrated planning and funding and quality provision."

Source:

Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Manager, Donegal County Council, AMCONLON@donegalcoco.ie

Social Housing Construction Status Report and Delivery Targets for Local Authorities 2018-2021 are published

On Thursday, April 19th, 2018, Minister Eoghan Murphy, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government published the Quarter 4 2017 Social Housing Construction Projects Status Report, which sets out the progress made to date in advancing the construction pipeline, as well as social housing delivery targets for local authorities for 2018-2021. At the end-2017, 2,512 homes were completed, 3,650 were under construction and 1,912 further homes were about to go on site, with the remainder progressing through the various stages of planning, design and procurement. The programme includes 850 schemes (or phases) at the end of last year, delivering over 13,400 homes, compared to 8,430 homes in the programme a year earlier.

Minister Murphy stated that "the building of new social housing homes by local authorities and approved housing bodies is ramping up dramatically as we can see in this construction report. These numbers don't include new builds under Part V, voids, acquisitions or long term leases so the actual stock of new social housing coming on stream is even greater than this". In the latter part of 2017, Minister Murphy secured additional funding to increase the overall level of ambition under Rebuilding Ireland in the period to 2021, and also signalled a rebalancing of the strands of delivery towards construction projects. Overall, the Government has now committed €6 billion to support the accelerated delivery of 50,000 additional social housing homes by end 2021, through build (33,500), acquisition (6,500) and leasing (10,000) programmes.

One of the key outcomes of the second Housing Summit with local authority Chief Executives held earlier in 2018 was a commitment to drive greater

transparency and accountability at individual local authority level on the delivery of the targets under Rebuilding Ireland. On foot of a detailed process of engagement since then between the Minister's Department and individual local authorities, the Minister in a letter to all Chief Executives dated 18th April, 2018 (see below), has advised all local authorities of their minimum Social Housing Targets both for 2018 and also for the multi-annual period to 2021 (see Appendix 2). "Under the targets I have announced today, a minimum of 40,700 homes will be delivered during the 4 year period to end-2021, including over 7,800 this year alone. Taking account of the progress already made in 2016 and 2017, this will ensure that the 50,000 target will be met." In addition, the Housing Assistance Payment and Rental Accommodation Schemes will continue to play an important part in meeting social housing needs; some 18,000 households targeted for support under these schemes in 2018.

Letter from the Office of the Minister to all Chief Executives of Local Authorities:

Dear Chief Executive,
The first quarter of 2018 is now behind us and I know that you and your teams are working very hard to accelerate and drive social housing provision in your local authority areas. It is critical that this work continues and indeed intensifies over the coming months and you can be assured that I and my Department will continue to be here to support you deliver much needed homes in your local area, in whatever way we can.

One of the key outcomes of the second Housing Summit, held earlier this year, was a commitment to drive greater transparency and accountability at

individual local authority level on the delivery of the targets under Rebuilding Ireland. I called upon each local authority to provide a detailed delivery report, which would be used to assess prospective delivery in 2018 and also across the period out to 2021. This also represented an important opportunity to demonstrate the strong delivery to date and enhanced capacity building in each local authority and so, in publishing delivery and targets for the years ahead, we will be able to highlight ambition, commitment and progress.

I wish to thank you for the detailed report provided, which has now been fully assessed by my Department and account has also been taken of the work of the Housing Delivery Office, led by Minister Damien English who have been actively visiting and working intensively with each of you over the past 3 months. On foot of this extensive work, today I am publishing detailed minimum social housing targets for each local authority and the details in respect of your local authority area are reflected in Appendix A.

Later this month, I intend to commence key provisions of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 relating to the establishment of the terms of a new affordable housing scheme, including the scheme of priorities and assessment criteria for eligible applicants, and will also be setting out targets for the delivery of affordable homes for purchase or cost rental to be delivered primarily on local authority lands under the new scheme.

National Targets under Rebuilding Ireland

As you are aware, across the period 2016-2021, the published national delivery target under Rebuilding Ireland is 50,000

additional social housing homes. Of the 50,000, 33,500 (67%) will be built, 6,500 (13%) will be acquired and 10,000 (20%) will be leased properties.

In 2018, the published national delivery target under Rebuilding Ireland is 7,869 additional social homes. This, of course, is in addition to the housing solutions that will be delivered under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and Rental Accommodation Scheme. The 7,869 includes 4,969 homes that will be built, 900 acquired and 2,000 leased properties. Of the build target of 4,969, some 3,819 homes are profiled to come from local authority and approved housing body build programmes, with the balance to come from Part V and Voids.

Local Authority Targets under Rebuilding Ireland.

In January, I wrote to you outlining targets across the period 2018-2021 and also an indicative target for 2018. With 2016 & 2017 now behind us, targets for 2018-2021 have become the primary focus and I am now providing each local authority with a 2018-2021 target that is reflective of the annualised national target for those delivery years under Rebuilding Ireland.

Following analysis and assessment of the information provided by local authorities, it is recognised that the delivery trajectory for individual local authorities may arise in a different blend than the national targeted blend year-on-year and some re-calibration of targets will be required on an ongoing basis to reflect and accommodate this. However, over the period of Rebuilding Ireland it is expected that local authorities will focus their delivery streams, in line with the ratios indicated. This is particularly important in relation to build activity and we need to see all channels of potential delivery under this category harnessed and accelerated. After the September 2017 Housing Summit, I indicated a very clear shift from acquisitions to build, recognising the absolute need to generate additional “new build” housing stock.

The reports provided by each local authority have informed calibration of the national delivery target of 7,869 homes into individual local authority targets, separated into build, acquisition and leasing. The results of this calibration against existing pipelines, will result in a revised 2018 target for some local authorities than the indicative target already provided.

This does not affect the overall local authority target across the period 2018-2021, which is based on the portion of the national Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) appropriate to your local authority. A further annual target setting process will take place early each year, assessing delivery to date, with pipeline activity and national targets.

Splitting of the Targets into delivery streams

Rebuilding Ireland is modelled and costed on a blend of delivery across various delivery streams. It is critical that the targets set reflect the need to deliver using all of these streams.

Build

The build target reflects the existing delivery pipeline indicated by local authorities, validated against Departmental records and Housing Delivery Office feedback and balanced against the national ambition for accelerated build. Build targets include delivery under the various local authority and approved housing body build schemes, in addition to Part V and Voids. New build programmes are now coming through in much greater numbers, in addition to a substantial increase Part V properties arising from increased activity in the private construction market. Given the progress made over the last few years, the number of Voids to be delivered each year is reducing and my Department will continue to work with local authorities in respect of transitioning to a planned maintenance programme.

Leasing

A range of housing options are necessary to ensure a supply of accommodation to meet different types of social housing

need. Harnessing the off-balance sheet potential of private investment in social housing is an important objective of the Government. While it is acknowledged that pipeline visibility is restricted by the shorter lead in times for leased units, the templates included a section for prospective leasing opportunities. Leasing output across local authorities has exceeded annual targets for the last number of years. This is a strong indication of the potential that exists but having regard to the significant increase in the leasing targets for 2018, I am asking all local authorities to carefully re-assess their delivery ambition under this very important delivery stream.

Leased properties can be sourced from a range of different sources, using varying delivery streams, and have the potential to provide faster and more flexible delivery than traditional delivery methods. In order to further support local authorities in delivering on this potential the Department, together with the Housing Agency, recently completed the first Call for Proposals under the new Enhanced Leasing Scheme which will deliver leased properties at scale, on a long term basis. In addition, local authorities will be aware of further opportunities to engage with investors who are in a position to deliver multiple properties under standard long term lease arrangements and the Housing Agency is available to co-ordinate and assist local authorities in developing these opportunities. Leasing targets have been set in line with national targets and both my Department and the Housing Agency will support local authorities to maximise this delivery stream.

Acquisition

As indicated above, the shift in focus from acquisition to build delivery is intended to accelerate in 2018. Accordingly, acquisition targets reflect this national position. This target also includes the pipeline of Housing Agency acquisitions, which will be delivered under the CALF scheme in 2018. While lower in comparison to acquisition outputs in previous years, the acquisition target is not to be seen

as a limit. The ultimate objective is to deliver the maximum number of appropriate units for social housing. Where is it more feasible from a value, or market availability perspective, to deliver a higher number of acquisitions than targeted, and where other delivery streams are not available in 2018, local authorities should engage with the Department as early as possible. In addition, harnessing the capacity of vacant properties for social housing remains a key priority. Where acquisition is the most suitable delivery mechanism, the Department will support local authorities in this regard; however, the possibilities under long-term leasing, the Repair and Leasing Scheme and the Buy & Renew Scheme should also be considered by local authorities when reviewing options for vacant properties in their areas.

Approved Housing Bodies

Over the lifetime of Rebuilding Ireland, approximately one third of delivery is to be secured through AHBs. Partnerships between AHBs and local authorities have been delivering well over the first 2 years of Rebuilding Ireland. Local authorities should continue to engage with AHBs to harness their expertise, capacity and the availability of private finance arrangements to support them in delivering, on a part of each local authority’s targets. In particular, local authorities must consider AHB collaboration on local authority sites, Part V acquisitions and the potential for

long-term leasing of newly built units from developers.

Keeping projects on track

As the programmes across all delivery streams intensify, I am requesting that as Chief Executive, you ensure that your local authority has appropriate oversight and project management systems in place to keep projects on track. It is absolutely critical that the delivery pipeline that is in place for 2018, is delivered in 2018. Delivery teams in my Department, including the Housing Delivery Office, will work in partnership with local authorities to assist with accelerated delivery, and to source and drive additional opportunities where appropriate. The new timelines recently agreed with the CCMA on construction project advancement are critical. They set out the time for each stage of the project and thereby, are a key project management tool and I ask that your local authority works to these timelines on each individual project. Equally my Department is obliged to work within those timelines in relation to stage approvals and I will monitor this aspect.

Publication of progress against targets

I have committed to greater levels of transparency in terms of delivery across each local authority area. The targets for each local authority are now being published on the Rebuilding Ireland website. Delivery against the targets will be mapped on a quarterly and annual basis and published in tandem with the

Construction Status Report.

As I indicated previously, there can be no impediments or barriers to delivery, whether it be social or affordable homes. With our streamlined approval processes, the range of new schemes introduced to support delivery, the additional staffing and enhanced professional fee structure and with capital and current funding of over €6 billion ring-fenced under Rebuilding Ireland, I know we can accelerate the delivery of quality homes speedily for citizens. Indeed, with renewed commitment and urgency on all our parts, I am confident that 2018 will be a year of great progress and delivery.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could provide a copy of this letter to elected members. If you have any queries, please contact Marguerite Ryan at my Department at 053-9117480 or alternatively by email at marguerite.ryan@housing.gov.ie

Yours sincerely,
Eoghan Murphy, TD,
Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government,
18 April 2018

A summary of the Q4 2017 Construction Status report is included at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 A summary of Q4 2017 Construction Status report. Note: *some schemes are being delivered in phases and this is reflected in the numbers in the table

TABLE 1	Q4 of 2016		Q1 of 2017		Q2 of 2017		Q3 of 2017		Q4 of 2017	
	Schemes*	Homes	Schemes*	Homes	Schemes*	Homes	Schemes*	Homes	Schemes*	Homes
Approval Status										
Stage 1 - Capital Appraisal	165	2,687	155	2,555	180	2,804	165	2,847	156	2,946
Stage 2 - Pre-Planning	93	1,279	104	1,675	104	1,512	119	1,658	124	1,715
Stage 3 - Pre-Tender design	32	490	52	539	49	649	58	729	60	613
Stage 4 - Tender Report or Final Turnkey/ CALF approval	63	1,493	82	2,069	92	2,267	92	1,939	93	1,912
Site Start	90	1,829	130	2,378	162	2,711	191	3,660	190	3,646
Site Finish	61	652	84	856	110	1,106	147	1,460	223	2,592
Totals	504	8,430	607	10,072	697	11,049	772	12,293	846	13,424

Local Authority	Output 2017			Targets 2018-2021*	Targets 2018*					
	Build, Acquisition & Leasing	HAP & RAS	Total Output	Target 2018-2021 Build, Acquisition & Leasing	Target 2018 Build, Acquisition, Leasing	Target 2018 Build	Target 2018 Acquisition	Target 2018 Leasing	Target 2018 HAP & RAS	Target 2018 all SH delivery streams
CARLOW	141	268	409	309	160	115	17	28	493	653
CAVAN	64	189	253	335	70	41	14	15	169	239
CLARE	258	520	778	923	164	29	35	100	737	901
CORK CITY	193	864	1057	2067	361	249	12	100	1246	1607
CORK COUNTY	417	1216	1633	2154	416	235	76	105	875	1291
DONEGAL	267	604	871	441	147	104	23	20	134	281
DUBLIN CITY	1520	1100	2620	9094	1763	1045	278	440	4108	5871
DLR	279	187	466	1563	257	183	24	50	253	510
FINGAL	537	551	1088	3415	641	408	67	166	996	1637
GALWAY CITY	122	642	764	1089	145	96	14	35	254	399
GALWAY COUNTY	133	435	568	926	118	64	14	40	414	532
KERRY	226	514	740	1544	248	140	55	53	433	681
KILDARE	428	762	1190	2426	374	217	82	75	728	1102
KILKENNY	123	310	433	599	133	98	7	28	143	276
LAOIS	105	342	447	627	76	58	8	10	393	469
LEITRIM	12	112	124	156	37	23	6	8	154	191
LIMERICK	238	758	996	1365	251	153	18	80	791	1042
LONGFORD	46	152	198	309	69	44	10	15	152	221
LOUTH	169	946	1115	1074	306	225	31	50	519	825
MAYO	80	536	616	576	99	69	2	28	384	483
MEATH	259	847	1106	1190	326	269	7	50	409	735
MONAGHAN	159	203	362	226	109	46	3	60	53	162
OFFALY	57	459	516	437	33	19	4	10	274	307
ROSCOMMON	49	202	251	255	57	41	6	10	154	211
SLIGO	88	319	407	296	60	34	6	20	179	239
SOUTH DUBLIN	310	872	1182	2758	539	397	8	134	738	1277
TIPPERARY	265	882	1147	625	117	50	22	45	154	271
WATERFORD	153	798	951	687	249	165	4	80	373	622
WESTMEATH	107	479	586	801	99	38	11	50	447	546
WEXFORD	255	588	843	1222	231	158	28	45	396	627
WICKLOW	35	437	472	1225	214	156	8	50	391	605
DRHE		1712	1712						1128	1128
Total	7,095	18,806	25,901	40713	7,869	4,969	900	2,000	18,072	25,941

*Over the period 2016-2021 the overall ratio of Build, Acquisition and Leasing is 67%, 13%, 20%.
In addition to Build, Acquisition and Leasing targets, HAP and RAS will deliver a further 58,560 housing solutions over the period 2018-2021

Source: <http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/social-housing/social-and-affordable/minister-murphy-publishes-quarter-4-2017-social-housing>

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) launches the SEAI Energy Awards 2018

Individuals and organisations working towards a cleaner energy future are encouraged to apply

On May 8th, 2017, SEAI began the search for Ireland's energy leaders who are demonstrating innovative approaches to clean energy with high replication potential. The SEAI Energy Awards recognise and reward excellence in all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Businesses, public bodies and communities who are working towards a cleaner energy future for Ireland are encouraged to apply.

Entries may include any combination of electricity, heat or transport initiatives. There are nine categories to choose from including large business, small business, public sector, community, buildings, energy manager or team, and research, which has a bursary of up to €10,000. New to the 2018 Awards programme is the Renewable Energy Award which recognises significant achievement in the deployment of renewable energy at scale in Ireland. This year the Awards have two category sponsors: Gas Networks Ireland (Large Business - Energy Management) and Enprova (Large Business - Energy Project).

Announcing the launch of the awards, Majella Kelleher, Head of Business and Public Sector at SEAI, outlined that "there is truly excellent actions being taken in sustainable energy across our entire economy. The SEAI Energy Awards are a great opportunity for businesses, public bodies and communities to get recognition for outstanding energy achievements. Energy efficiency makes financial, as well as environmental sense. There is growing momentum in Ireland's progress towards a low carbon society. I strongly encourage people

and businesses to enter the SEAI Energy Awards 2018 to highlight their own success and to encourage others to take part."

Last year, entrants to the Awards demonstrated savings of €27 million through innovative sustainable energy projects. The top prize for Energy Team of the Year went to Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) who implemented an organisation-wide approach to saving energy, with staff and students working together. The Institute surpassed its 33% energy efficiency target and is saving an impressive €300,000 per year on energy bills. Speaking on the impact of their Energy Team Award win, Elaine Greenan, Estates Manager from WIT stated that, "winning the SEAI Energy Award in 2017 has raised our profile as a leading organisation in reducing energy-use. We are delighted that the commitment from both staff and students, who have worked hard over a number of years to make our campus a better place to work and study, has been recognised. Receiving the award provided us with media exposure. It has enhanced our brand, made us more competitive and students are attracted to our green campus."

Dairygold took home the Large Business Energy Management Award for completing seven significant energy management projects and delivering annual savings of €300,000. The National Ambulance Service won the Public Sector Award for reducing fuel use and emissions from a combination of driver behaviour change, an eco-anti-idle system and built-in solar chargers.

For further information on the Awards and details on how to enter the 2018 SEAI Energy Awards visit www.seai.ie/

energyawards. Closing date for entries is Friday 8th June 2018. The winners will be announced at a gala event on the 25th of October 2018.

Background information

About SEAI

SEAI is Ireland's national energy authority investing in, and delivering, appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions to help Ireland's transition to a clean energy future. We work with the public, businesses, communities and Government to achieve this, through expertise, funding, educational programmes, policy advice, research and the development of new technologies. SEAI is part-financed by Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programme co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union.

About the Sustainable Energy Awards

The SEAI Energy Awards recognise and reward excellence in all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Fourteen years on, the Awards continue to set the benchmark in energy best practice as exciting and innovative sustainable energy solutions and practices emerge.

Awards Categories

Large Business - Energy Management (sponsored by Gas Networks Ireland) Aimed at organisations with an energy spend over €0.5 million that have embraced structured energy management and have taken steps to incorporate it into the day-to-day running of their business. Entrants should demonstrate successful motivation of decision makers and

energy users to support effective energy efficiency initiatives.

Large Business - Energy Project (sponsored by Enprova)

Aimed at organisations with an energy spend over €0.5 million which have gone beyond best practice in new or upgrade technology solutions. Projects in transport and effective use of renewable technologies and multiple technology deployments are encouraged.

Small Business

Aimed at small to medium industrial / commercial businesses with an energy spend under €0.5 million that go beyond best practice in new or upgrade technology deployments or energy management solutions. Projects demonstrating low-energy buildings and effective use of renewable technologies are also encouraged.

Public Sector

Aimed at public sector organisations that have implemented exemplar energy management approaches, and delivered energy efficiency projects, showing leadership in their own sector, and across the whole public sector. Projects demonstrating sustained reductions in energy demand through structured energy management and demonstrating best practice in energy project delivery are encouraged.

Community

Aimed at partnerships, groups and organisations leading change and championing sustainable energy at community level with a view to delivering energy savings and socio-economic benefits. It will focus on those influencing how the community uses energy individually or collectively. Activities might include energy retrofits, renewable energy upgrades, behavioural change initiatives, development of energy cooperatives and energy master plans.

Buildings

Aimed at architects, developers, builders or building owners who can stimulate our sustainable energy transition through inspiring building design. Entries should be true exemplars which demonstrate the marriage of innovative, beautiful design with superior energy efficiency performance. The building must be constructed and occupied, preferably with occupant experiences reflected in the application.

Research (€10,000 bursary prize)

Aimed at individuals, academia, start-ups and inventors who have researched the potential for future energy demand reduction, enhanced renewable energy use or energy management practices. Research may involve the development

of new systems, services, products or approaches. Entrants will detail the problem researched, the research outcome and the potential impact.

****New Award** Renewable Energy**

This award recognises a significant achievement in the deployment of renewable energy at scale in Ireland. Entrants should have exemplar projects which embrace all forms of innovation across industrial, commercial, residential or community. Among the criteria are replication potential, the degree of influence and, where relevant, the mix of renewable technologies deployed.

Energy Team / Energy Manager of the Year

Aimed at individuals, teams or organisations, across the public, private and voluntary sectors, who have demonstrated leadership and ambition in implementing energy management and delivering significant benefits for their organisation over a prolonged period. Among the criteria are the degree of influence and replication potential beyond their organisational boundaries.

Source:

for further information contact, Áine Roddy, Carr Communications: aine@carrcommunications.ie

€10 Million funding for Energy Efficiency Design Projects

Grant funding can help businesses save 30% a year on energy costs

On the 10th April 2018, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) announced it is accepting applications from organisations planning an investment in a new design project or major energy upgrade. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten TD, secured an allocation of €10 Million in Budget 2018 for the Excellence in Energy Efficient Design (EXEED) programme.

The €10 million allocation will be used to support EXEED projects delivering new best practices in the design, construction and management of buildings and facilities for optimum energy performance. The SEAI EXEED grant will provide support of up to €500,000 per year to successful organisations. The grant is open to all public and private organisations who are planning an investment project of any scale or complexity.

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten TD stated that “Ireland faces very significant challenges in meeting our binding climate change targets and avoiding compliance costs. Businesses have a key role to play in ensuring that they consider energy-use and carbon emissions in infrastructure projects and energy management in operations. The EXEED Certified programme encourages innovation in how we design and manage projects and is driving the adoption of longer-term solutions to the energy challenges we face.”

At the announcement, Jim Gannon, CEO of SEAI outlined that “SEAI is already supporting over 30 businesses in achieving EXEED certification and significantly reducing their energy

consumption. The benefit of EXEED is that energy performance and energy management is considered at the very beginning of the design of a new build or major upgrade project, reducing energy consumption and operational costs over its lifecycle. Projects that implement the EXEED process can save up to 30% in energy use and save on capital expenditure for new investments.”

Last year, SEAI invested €1.6 million in EXEED projects ranging from educational facilities, to pharmaceutical companies to public buildings. Some projects include:

- **The Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) completed a lighting and controls upgrade to one of their multi-storey carparks and three external surface carparks. Lighting in for these carparks accounted for 45% of the airport’s total car park lighting load. With the new controls, DAA have improved ability to control the lighting in these car parks and have been able to reduce the power input to the lights while maintaining the required brightness. The DAA have achieved 78% energy savings in the surface carparks.**

- **The Monasterboice Inn, a restaurant and venue near Drogheda, constructed a new conference centre extension and dramatically upgraded the energy efficiency of their restaurant. They installed high-grade insulation throughout the building and smart lighting in their conference rooms and car park. They designed the new conference centre to maximise natural daylight and provide an attractive bright space. Renewable energy heat pumps, one of which extracted energy from an on-site stream, replaced old gas boilers, providing heating and cooling to the building. Hot air is extracted from the kitchen and harnessed to heat the water. As a result, they expect to reduce energy consumption by 45%, improving profitability, and lowering carbon emissions. The payback on this project is expected to be three and a half years.**

The SEAI EXEED grant application process is now open. For further information on the scheme and details on how to apply visit seai.ie/grants

For media queries, please contact:
Áine Roddy, Carr Communications:
087 777 3688

Expenditure Type	Funding Amount
Professional services to implement EXEED processes This must link to investments which will lead to energy efficiency.	50%
Eligible expenditure to implement EXEED processes	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental capital costs compared to counterfactual investment (Baseline design) • Professional services associated with implementation 	
The EXEED Grant Scheme provides grant support of up to €500,000 per year. The grant level may be extended by 20% for small enterprises and 10% for medium enterprises. All works where a grant has been requested, must be completed by the 19th October 2018.	



37 Communities to Become More Energy Efficient

- Energy upgrades result in warmer buildings and greater employment opportunities
- Special €3 million fund to nurture new community investments

37 communities in 20 counties across Ireland are set to benefit from Government funding for energy upgrades. Funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on March 29th 2018 announced that an initial €22 million will fund energy upgrades to 1,200 homes and 400 community and commercial buildings across 37 communities. The support underpins total investment of €52 million and means the communities will have warmer and healthier buildings, lower energy bills, and reduced harmful CO2 emissions. There are also significant employment and competitiveness benefits locally and nationally.

Denis Naughten, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment emphasised that “community-led electricity and energy projects offer a real opportunity for local economic growth. The community energy grants are an example of a government project that is revitalizing communities. This has brought hundreds of community groups together to take control of their energy usage and make the system work for them, with lower bills, warmer homes and local jobs. I secured €23 million for this Scheme this year, which was a significant budget

increase and marked a new record level of funding for community energy. There are incentives for communities that focus on clean and renewable energy as every application that incorporates solely renewable energy receive bonus marks at project evaluation. Further bonus marks were awarded for those projects that met exceptionally high air quality standards. In addition, more than 100 community groups joined SEAI’s energy community network and entered a partnership agreement with the SEAI to benefit from a special fund worth €3m which supports new community projects. We must do all we can to nurture the great potential that is out there. If you can provide the local knowledge, time and people, the Government will support you with mentoring, energy expertise, and guaranteed funding to support your local energy projects.”

Furthermore, Jim Gannon, CEO of SEAI stated that “SEAI’s community grant scheme enables community-wide energy improvements across a range of buildings, achieving it more efficiently and cost effectively than might otherwise be possible. This means better value for the communities themselves and for the public monies invested. The community energy approach also builds innovative and pioneering partnerships, such as collaborations between public and

private sectors, commercial and not-for-profit organisations, financing entities and energy suppliers. It also empowers the communities to determine their own route to a better energy future.” For this year’s programme, SEAI emphasised the benefits for communities to use renewable energy resources. Successful projects include technologies such as; solar panels for heat and electricity, heat pumps, biomass boilers, a wind turbine and a combined heat and power unit. Concluding Jim Gannon noted that “Clean energy is vital for the health and well-being of our country and future generations. Now more than ever, we are encouraging people to act where they can, even if it is small first steps in the right direction. At the very least, we ask people to find out more about the behaviours they can change, and the supports now available, to see what might be suitable for their home.”

The 37 projects are in twenty different counties across the country. Full list of projects and upgrades proposed are at: <https://www.seai.ie/resources/publications/SEAI-Community-Energy-Grant-Offers-2018.pdf>

Source:
for further information contact, *Aine Roddy, Carr Communications, aine@carrcommunications.ie*

Fáilte Ireland and the Local Authority Management Association Agree Co-operation Deal to Grow Tourism

Fáilte Ireland and the County & City Management Association (CCMA), the representative body for Local Authority Managers on Thursday, March 22nd, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding which commits both organisations to work together in strategic areas including capital investment projects, training supports, information provision and joint marketing campaigns to attract domestic and overseas visitors.

The Memorandum commits both sides to further develop activities under strategic areas, including:

- Building Brilliant Visitor Experiences – Fáilte Ireland will provide festivals and capital investment in Attractions and Activities. Projects identified will deliver on the objectives of the key brand propositions: Ireland’s Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way and the new ‘Midlands’ brand.
- Development of a World-Class Industry-identification and delivery of training supports for Tourism Officers and Local Authority visitor attraction managers
- Ensuring a Visitor Centric Infrastructure and Community – Effective and efficient tourism information provision
- Attracting Overseas Leisure Visitors - collaborative international marketing (including diaspora) opportunities
- Attracting Domestic Leisure Visitors - collaborative domestic marketing opportunities

Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority, was established in 2003 to guide and promote tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy. The tourism

and hospitality industry is of vital importance to the national economy, with tourists spending €7.2 billion in Ireland and employing an estimated 235,000 people.* *Note this value includes spending in Ireland by overseas, domestic and NI tourists. It excludes carrier receipts. The County and City Management Association (CCMA) is the ‘representative voice’ of the local government management network. It is a non-statutory body that works to ensure that the influence of local government Chief Executives is brought to bear on the development and implantation of relevant policy.

Welcoming the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, Paul Hayden, Head of PMO, Education & Policy at Fáilte Ireland outlined that the agreement would strengthen both organisations existing relationship and further develop activities in a number of strategic areas. He stated that “The tourism industry employs an estimated 235,000 people with tourists spending €7.2 billion in Ireland in 2017 and the sector has great potential for regional development. Today’s initiative is aimed at enhancing the positive relationship that has developed between our two respective organisations and is part

of a Fáilte Ireland initiative to develop co-operative agreements and build positive partnerships with key industry stakeholders.” The Chair of the CCMA, Mr Peter Carey, welcomed the agreement within the Memorandum stating that, “Local authorities have traditionally played a role in developing the tourist experience of their areas. Over recent years this has been significantly strengthened with local authorities working with Fáilte Ireland to develop key experiences throughout Ireland that can attract tourists and create employment opportunities in local areas.” Ms Anna Marie Delaney, Chair of the CCMA Economic Committee commented that “local councils are key drivers of tourism, each local authority is implementing a tourism strategy and has a designated tourism officer. Working collaboratively with Fáilte Ireland will ensure that we will maximise the benefits of tourism to the economy.”

For further information, please contact: John Browne, Communications Officer, tel: 086-781 2686 / 01-8847135 or Catherine Whelan, Press Office, Fáilte Ireland, tel: 087-6449572 / 01-8847181

Source:
Catherine Whelan, Press Office, Fáilte Ireland, email: catherine.whelan@failteireland.ie



News items

Launch of HERICOAST - Donegal Coastal Experience WebApp

Well known TV Presenter Joe Mahon was on hand on Thursday 25th January at 11.30am at the launch of the new Donegal Coastal Experience WebApp in Letterkenny Public Service Centre.



Joe Mahon is best known for his incredibly successful and long-running television series, 'Lesser Spotted Journeys' and Leas Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council Cllr. Noel Jordan believes that Joe Mahon is the ideal person to have on hand to launch what is essentially a new way of telling a yarn, sharing stories and capturing the value of intangible cultural heritage from along our stunning coastline. Cllr. Noel Jordan noted that "this WebApp story map is something that will appeal to many people not just those visiting our coastline but for local people who want to share photos and the oral history of their own local communities and I am delighted that Joe Mahon will be there as we launch this app. One of the most appealing aspects of social media is its ability to allow us to share special moments with a wider audience including our circle of family and friends. This WebApp has been specially designed to allow the user to upload this information using mapping technology

and this information will then be used by our own Planning Team to allow them to capture and manage this data which would otherwise be impossible to capture."

This innovative WebApp is being launched by Donegal County Council and has been developed by the inhouse GIS Team as part of the Interreg Europe funded Hericoast project which aims to improve the management and preservation of coastal heritage and landscapes. Project Officer Aideen Quinn notes that "some aspects of our coastal heritage are intangible. For example you could meet someone such as a guide at a specific location and enjoy their stories - this information cannot be readily put on paper but could be uploaded on the App via a photograph or comment and that would engage a wider audience in sharing the experience as well as provide us with meaningful information that could help inform best practice in terms of managing and

preserving our unique coastal heritage and landscapes".

The WebApp does not need to be downloaded which means it will not take up memory on a device. It will work on any device or platform including Android, Windows and Apple. It will not go out of date as it is accessible at all times through the website and designed to be promoted on social media. The WebApp will be available at <http://arcg.is/2qIVZZH> or on the Council's website at www.donegalcoco.ie

- The Hericoast Project is funded through Interreg Europe where the Council will examine on an international learning platform and through the experiences of the partner countries, informed and innovative measures to manage the cultural, environmental, built and natural landscape along the coast of Donegal.
- Claire Mc Callan, Conservation Architect and Alana Green, Executive Planner are joint project managers.
- Further information on the project can be obtained at www.interregeurope/hericoast/.
- The QR code that can be scanned to access the App is



Source:
Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Manager, Donegal County Council, AMCONLON@donegalcoco.ie

Donegal County Council kicks off 2018 with new Tourism Brochure

At the end of January, the new 2018 Donegal Tourism brochure was



Star Wars Stormtroopers with the Donegal Tourism team following the launch of the new Donegal Tourism Brochure on Monday morning in the County House Lifford. Back row l to r: Liam Ward, Chief Executive Seamus Neely, Shane Smyth, Barney McLaughlin, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle and front row l to r: Caroline Britton, Sarah Meehan and Eibhlinn McGuinness.

launched in the County House in Lifford which features everything you need to know about Donegal all in one glossy publication. Councillors and guests at the launch were greeted by two Star Wars Stormtroopers in full regalia who were on hand to help celebrate this brochure launch in an 'orderly manner befitting such an esteemed publication'.

Speaking at the launch Chief Executive of Donegal County Council and Chairman of Donegal Tourism Seamus Neely stated that this brochure gives a flavour of the fantastic facilities and attractions that we have in the county and it brings to life a strong visual image of Donegal for the potential visitor. He outlined that "this is the second edition of this brochure and it beautifully captures many images that display the diversity and majesty of Donegal. It sets out an array of activities, places of interest and services that are available to potential visitors". He added that the new brochure has been increased by an additional four pages bringing it to sixty pages and the circulation of this brochure is now in excess of 20,000 per year, throughout Ireland, UK, USA, France, Germany and indeed the USA. Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

welcomed the launch of the brochure, "it gives me great pleasure to see the investment and commitment Donegal Tourism continues to provide to our county in terms of marketing Donegal on a national and international basis. I truly believe that Donegal is a world class holiday destination for the intrepid visitor and is also a great place to live and do business in". He added "this brochure provides a window in to our beautiful county and has reached out across the world to our Diaspora and tourists alike to come visit and experience a welcome that is second to none. The layout and images are stunning and have received much praise from near and far, not least from other counties hoping to emulate the approach adopted by Donegal Tourism in this brochure".

- The brochure uses over forty different themes and headings from popular activities, such as surfing, golf, and Angling; to unique Donegal amenities and resources, such as local produce, Islands and the Gaeltacht and festivals to allow the reader to easily plan their visit.
- New elements have been added including an extended list of walks in the county, including





Pictured at the launch of the new Donegal Tourism Brochure on Monday morning in the County House Lifford are Seamus Neely, Chief Executive Donegal County Council and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle with special guests Star Wars Stormtroopers.



Pictured at the launch of the new Donegal Tourism Brochure on Monday morning in the County House Lifford are Seamus Neely, Chief Executive Donegal County Council and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle with special guests Star Wars Stormtroopers along with elected members, staff and representatives from the tourism trade.

eighty official walk options, an updated cycling route including the Eurovelo 1, and extended activities - both land and water based, with a focus on the Northern Lights and screen tourism, following on from the success of the latest Star Wars offering that was filmed in part in Malin Head.

- The brochure also offers the visitor six recommended touring routes for different regions of the county in addition to the Wild Atlantic Way route which has seen huge interest in the county.

Head of Tourism with Donegal County Council Barney Mc Laughlin

acknowledged the support received from providers in producing this new brochure, “we are delighted to be able to source many new images for the brochure to showcase Donegal, providers have been so helpful in providing images free of charge and we want to extend a huge thank you to them”.

To find out more about the brochure or to download a copy visit www.govisitdonegal.com

Source:

Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Manager, Donegal County Council, AMCONLON@donegalcoco.ie

New Council alert service for households and businesses in Donegal

Households and businesses in Donegal can now get alerts or messages straight to their phones or tablets via the new free Donegal County Council MapAlerter service. This will include weather alerts from Met Eireann, gritting alerts, information on road closures and weekly planning lists. At the beginning of February, Donegal County Council signed up to the MapAlerter Service that will allow households and businesses in Donegal to sign up for the alert service free of charge. This means that alerts can be sent directly by SMS text message, email, smartphone app notification or Facebook Messenger to individuals and businesses who have signed up for the service.



Donegal County Council Chief Executive Seamus Neely and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle checking out the new Council Map Alerter that will see households and businesses getting alerts or messages straight to their phones.



Pictured at the launch of the new Donegal Tourism Brochure on Monday morning in the County House Lifford are Seamus Neely, Chief Executive Donegal County Council and Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle with special guests Star Wars Stormtroopers along with elected members, staff and representatives from the tourism trade.

An important element of this service is that the alerts are location based, so only those registered users in the vicinity of the alert or who pass through the alert location on a commuting route, will be notified. This saves alerting everybody to issues which might be of no significance to them. Additionally all alerts are mapped and visible to everybody through the Mapalerter.com website. Initially alerts will focus on the Councils gritting programme, Met Eireann Weather Alerts and the Weekly Planning Lists but this service will develop to include other important messages and warnings.

Speaking about the launch of this new service, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle stated that this is a very welcome development from a customer service and communications perspective for the Council. “The Council has been to the fore in sharing public interest messages through social media and online platforms and this is another progressive step to ensuring that the public is kept informed of important public interest messages such as knowing when the roads are being gritted, planned road closures in your area and the weekly planning lists. This service will undoubtedly come into its own during weather events, such as, flooding when it will be necessary to get warnings and information out in advance to the public to allow for households and businesses to take all

the necessary precautions to protect their property and stay safe. I would encourage all businesses and everyone in the county to sign up for this service”.

To sign up for the service, visit www.mapalerter.com/register or download the MapAlerter app. You can also sign up via Facebook Messenger.

Source:

Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Manager, Donegal County Council, AMCONLON@donegalcoco.ie

EU budget - Cuts to regional funding: a severe blow for local government

At the beginning of May 2018, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker unveiled his proposal for the EU’s next long-term budget, the so-called Multiannual Financial Framework, which will run from 2021 to 2027. At stake are drastic cuts in cohesion spending.

Reacting to the Commission’s proposal, the President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), President of Emilia-Romagna region, Stefano Bonaccini, stated: “by cutting cohesion policy by 7%, the Commission

is seriously letting down Europe’s towns and regions. Even on the basis of 2018 prices, this will represent a loss of 41 billion EUR for local and regional governments for the 2020-2027 period.”

CEMR President expressed his surprise that “on top of this, much more clarification is still needed regarding the future programmes and issues such as co-financing of cohesion projects. What does the Commission mean by saying it will increase national co-financing? Will all regions still be able to receive funding? What does the “rule of law” clause mean for local and regional governments?”

“But every cloud has a silver lining”, Stefano Bonaccini pointed out, while underlining: “we are pleased that simplification and flexibility will be two pillars of the next cohesion policy, as towns and regions have long called for. Moreover, the Commission’s decision to include climate, digitalisation, transport or innovation as priorities is definitely a step forward. However, it still needs to say whether towns and regions will have direct access to this funding.”

Next steps

Building on its proposals, the Commission will present, in the weeks to come, detailed proposals for the future sector-specific financial programmes. The decision on the future long-term EU budget will then fall to the Council, acting by unanimity, with the consent of the European Parliament. An agreement should be reached before the European Parliament elections in May 2019.

Source: Pierre Vander Auwera, Adviser – Communication,CEMR, email: pierre.vanderauwera@ccre-cemr.org in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) European section of United Cities and Local Governments, May Newsletter, <http://ccre.org/en/actualites/view/3718>

“Cutting regional funds is a risk to Europe’s future”, EU-wide Alliance warns European Commission

EU cohesion policy must continue to represent at least one-third of the EU budget after 2020 and support all of Europe’s regions. Reducing it risks deepening divides in Europe and would undermine the future of the European Union. This message was delivered today by the EU-wide Cohesion Alliance (#CohesionAlliance) to the European Commission ahead of the publication of its draft future EU budget on 2 May. The #CohesionAlliance is a coalition of those who believe that EU cohesion policy must continue to be a pillar of the EU’s future. The Alliance was created through cooperation between the leading European associations of cities and regions and the European Committee of the Regions. It demands that the EU budget after 2020 makes cohesion policy stronger, more effective, visible and available for every region in the European Union. From national, regional and local governments to SMEs, NGOs, schools, universities, cultural organisations, anyone who believes in EU cohesion policy is welcome to join the #CohesionAlliance by signing the declaration.

Worth over €350 billion between 2014 and 2020, cohesion policy – implemented through the European Structural and Investment Funds – is the EU’s main investment tool that works to reduce regional disparities, create jobs, open new business opportunities and address major global issues such as climate change and migration. It is the only EU policy that covers all of Europe’s local communities involving local stakeholders to deliver growth strategies led by shared EU goals.

As a consequence of Brexit and the need for the EU to fund new priorities such as defense, security and external border control, the financial allocations for cohesion policy risks being cut in the next EU long term budget – or Multiannual Financial Framework –

which sets the EU’s expenditure ceilings for the period after 2020.

To avoid this and raise awareness on the vital role of cohesion policy, the #CohesionAlliance was initially launched by the leading associations of regions and cities - the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) and EUROCITIES - and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in October last year.

The Alliance demands that the EU budget after 2020 makes cohesion policy stronger, more effective, visible and available for every region in the European Union. Since its launch, the Alliance’s declaration has been signed by more than 4000 individual signatories, 100 regions, 70 cities and counties, 50 associations of regional and local governments, 40 Members of the European Parliament, 30 EU sectorial associations.

“Cohesion Policy is traditional but not old fashioned. It will keep playing its role in the next EU budget. We cannot guarantee no cuts but our idea is to limit them to between 5 and 10%” said EU Budget Commissioner Gunther Oettinger, inviting all partners to mobilise and convince national governments that a limited increase of member states’ contributions is needed for the EU to be up to its tasks.

EU Regional Policy Commissioner Corina Creţu, also stressed that: “This is probably the biggest, broadest grassroots campaign on behalf of cohesion policy ever. Through the cohesion alliance, thousands of beneficiaries of this unique policy, representing cities and regions as well as the health, education or business sectors, state loud and clear that Europe and cohesion policy are two sides of the same coin. Europe needs more cohesion”.

Local and regional leaders’ reaction

The President of the AEBR and Minister-President of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Oliver Paasch, said: “Border regions have made a smart use of EU solidarity addressing shared difficulties, building stable bridges between societies, based on trust, across national boundaries. EU cohesion policy should remain a basic piece of the European Project, addressing all territories and all essential policy areas, guaranteeing better coordination and a wider participatory approach for all political levels”.

The AER President, and President of the Region Västra Götaland in Sweden, Magnus Berntsson said: “A strong renewed cohesion policy for all regions is central to the future of the European Union. Cohesion policy is and should remain at the core of the Europe. It is our most powerful tool, improving the quality of life of citizens. It promotes a unified, strong and competitive Europe through investments in both, developed, and less developed regions”.

The President of CALRE Ana Luís, President of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of The Azores in Portugal, pointed out that: “It is time to unite and converge for the defense of European Union’s fundamental principles, such as cohesion and solidarity. That is why CALRE joined the #CohesionAlliance from the beginning. Europe needs a strong and efficient cohesion policy, in each and all of its regions”.

The CEMR spokesperson and Councilor of Malmö in Sweden, Ilmar Reepalu, declared: “The success of the EU’s new priorities, such as social inclusion and climate action, depends on towns and regions’ ability to invest in their territories. These investments cannot happen without cohesion policy. The EU should be consistent and make cohesion policy strong in the future budget”.

CoR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz who stressed that: “If we want a Europe that invests in every community, that is more

effective, visible, less centralised and supports cooperation across borders, we need a strong cohesion policy for all regions and a bigger EU budget. Cutting it will have serious consequences for the prosperity and unity of the future of European Union”.

An issue highlighted also by President of CPMR and of Portugal’s Regional Autonomous Government of the Azores, Vasco Alves Cordeiro: “The future EU budget needs to reflect the ambition and priorities of the EU, providing regions with the flexibility they need to realise the political vision of the European Union for the future of Europe on the ground. Certain priorities can only be achieved by Cohesion policy”.

The vital role of cohesion policy was stressed by the President of EUROCITIES and Mayor of Ghent in Belgium Daniël Termont: “Cohesion policy is the glue that holds the EU together as we strive for a future that is more sustainable, inclusive, democratic and prosperous. Supporting innovation, cooperation and solidarity via a strong cohesion policy will help Europe remain a role model for the world around us for generations to come”.

Source:

Pierre Vander Auwera, Adviser - Communication, CEMR, email: pierre.vanderauwera@ccre-cemr.org in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) European section of United Cities and Local Governments, May Newsletter, <http://ccre.org/en/actualites/view/3694>

Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Galway

Mr. John Paul Phelan T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform, announced on Thursday, 26 April 2018 that the second report of the Galway Local Government Committee in relation to local government arrangements in Galway has been presented to him today by the Group and is available on the Department’s website at: <http://www.housing.gov.ie/>

local-government/reform/boundaries/report-expert-advisory-group-local-government-arrangements-galway
The report endorses previous recommendations for the amalgamation of Galway City and County Councils, to take effect not later than 2021, but recommends that the existing councils as currently constituted should continue for the purposes of the 2019 local elections.

In 2015, a Galway Local Government Committee unanimously recommended the establishment of a new unified Galway authority rather than boundary alteration or retention of the status quo. The Group concluded that this would maximise the potential of the region to maintain, secure, and grow a sustainable economic base into the future, combining the respective strengths of the two existing authorities in terms of resources, staff, and expertise.

Arising from the 2015 report, an Expert Advisory Group was established in December 2016 to carry out further detailed examination and planning arising from the 2015 report and to provide detailed information and any further recommendations considered warranted. It was open to the Advisory Group to vary the recommendation of the 2015 report if that appeared to be warranted by the more detailed examination. In a short Interim Report submitted in June 2017, the Advisory Group confirmed, on the basis of its more detailed analysis of local authority services and related financial matters, the recommendation of the 2015 report for a unified local authority.

The second phase of the Advisory Group’s review has now been completed, dealing with other aspects of its terms of reference, particularly governance and representational aspects, and the report which has now been submitted sets out the findings arising from this work. The main recommendations of the report are as follows:

The Group endorses and confirms the recommendation in 2015 the Galway Local Government Review Committee

Report for amalgamation of Galway City and County Councils, and states that this is now all the more urgent in order to capitalise on the funding opportunities under the National Planning Framework and the Capital Programme and to have the capacity to engage in activity such as capital development funded by borrowings. The Group is unanimous in its view that amalgamation is required to drive the development of Galway, in the context of its regional, national, and international remit. Other key specific recommendations are as follows:

- A Ministerial decision should be taken on the Group’s recommendations and be legislated for as a matter of urgency, to provide certainty.
- The scheduled 2019 local elections should be held to the two existing local authorities as currently constituted, but the amalgamation should happen no later than 2021.
- The members elected in 2019 to each local authority should combine to form the membership of the unified Galway City and County Council on the date of amalgamation, with the first elections to the unified authority to be held in 2024.
- The recommended amalgamation must be preceded by addressing noted deficiencies in both human and financial resources noted by the Group.
- At representational level, the structure of Municipal Districts must be strengthened and their full potential explored and resourced.
- Further work is required in relation to some of the Group’s terms of reference, issues raised in consultations, and the implementation process.

Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Galway - members

Chair: Professor Eoin O’Sullivan, Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin;

Mr. Ned Gleeson, former Limerick and South Tipperary County Manager;

Mr Kevin Kelly, Chief Executive, Galway County Council;

Ms Hannah Kiely (until May 2017), Galway Chamber of Commerce;

Mr Brendan McGrath, Chief Executive Galway City Council.

Professor Eoin O'Sullivan also chaired the Galway Local Government Committee, which reported in December 2015; Ms Kiely and Mr Gleeson were members of the Committee.

Welcoming the report, Minister Phelan stated "I will be bringing proposals to Government shortly arising from the report and dealing also with other aspects of local government structures and governance, including details of the legislation to provide for the alteration of the boundary between Cork City and County". These proposals are among a series of modules on local government matters which will address the requirement in the Programme for Partnership Government for a report to Government and the Oireachtas on further local government reform themes. I would like to thank the members of the Group for the huge amount of time and work they have devoted, on a purely voluntary basis, to this role and the production of two reports which are an important contribution to our proposals on local government reform" said Minister Phelan, who added "I must pay particular tribute to the Group's Chair, Professor Eoin O'Sullivan, for his exemplary leadership both of this Group and the previous review in 2015. His professionalism is matched by his commitment, as a Galway native, to furthering the success of the city and county which has been the key feature of the Group's work."

Source:
<http://www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/reform/minister-phelan-publishes-report-expert-advisory-group-local-government>

Minister Phelan appoints Local Electoral Area Boundary Committees to consider Cork City and Cork County

Mr. John Paul Phelan T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform, announced March 23rd, 2018 that he has appointed the existing Local Electoral Area Boundary Committees to review and make recommendations on local electoral areas in Cork City and Cork County. The review will be conducted on the basis of the revised boundary between the city and county, as proposed by the Cork Implementation Oversight Group and agreed by Government, and which will be given legal effect by forthcoming legislation.

The Committees' reports will be considered by Minister Phelan as the basis for the revision of local electoral areas under his statutory powers. The review of local electoral areas is being undertaken in prospect of the local elections to be held in 2019. In doing their work, the committees are to have regard to the results of Census 2016 and to assume no change in the total membership of each local authority.

- The Committees are tasked with reporting to the Minister no later than 13 June 2018.
- The review of Cork County will be undertaken by Committee No. 1, who will report and make recommendations in relation to county Cork. The number of councillors will be not less than 5 and not more than 7 for each local electoral area, provided that in particular compelling circumstances, 3 or 4 seat local electoral areas may be recommended.
- The review of Cork City will be undertaken by Committee No. 2, who will report and make recommendations in relation to Cork City. The number of councillors will be not less than 5 and not more than 7 for each local electoral area.

The terms of reference for the Committees in relation to Cork are attached; the membership of each Committee remains unchanged.

TERMS OF REFERENCE IN RELATION TO CORK COUNTY

Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee No. 1

1. To review and to make recommendations on the division of Cork County into local electoral areas and the number of members to be assigned to each such electoral area.
2. For the purposes of the review, the boundary of Cork County shall be the boundary as shown on the map attached to these terms of reference which is to be given legal effect under forthcoming legislation.
3. For the purpose of the review, the Committee should have regard to the population as ascertained at Census 2016, should assume no change in the total membership of Cork County Council as specified in the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and should endeavour, as far as practicable and subject to the other requirements of these terms of reference, to achieve variance from individual average local authority representation within the range of plus or minus 10%.
4. The number of councillors assigned to a local electoral area shall be not less than 5 and not more than 7 provided that in particular compelling circumstances 3 or 4 seat local electoral areas may be recommended, where otherwise the geographic size of the area would be disproportionately large.
5. A distinct urban-focused local electoral area or areas, as appropriate, shall be designated in respect of each town the population of which within the county as ascertained at Census 2016, when rounded to the nearest 1,000, is equal to or greater than 15,000. The number of members of Cork County Council to be assigned to each such local electoral area shall not be less than 5, as far as practicable. Each

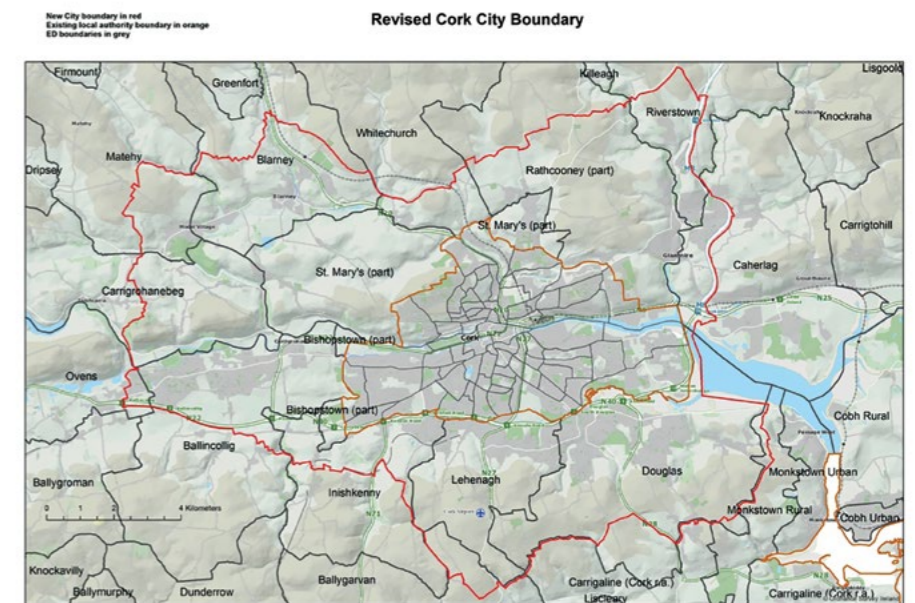
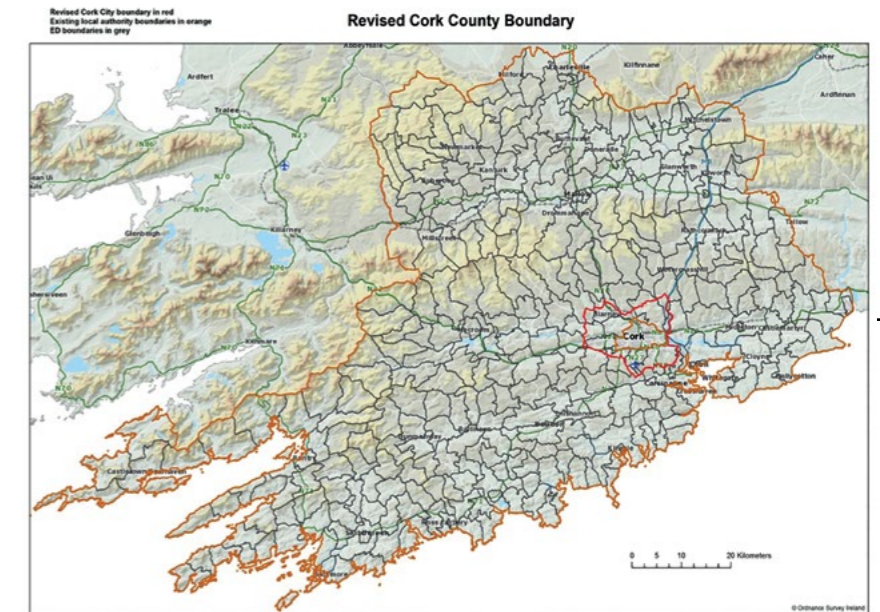
such electoral area shall be based, as far as practicable, on the areas of the "census town" as defined for the purposes of Census 2016.

6. Other local electoral areas should be designed, as far as possible, around urban centres, taking due account of local and community identities and linkages as well as natural boundaries and the need to facilitate the effectiveness of the governance and representational roles of elected members, including, in particular, the need to avoid designating local electoral areas which are territorially very large or extend over very long distances.
7. In making recommendations in relation to local electoral areas the Committee should take account of the following proposals in relation to the configuration of Municipal Districts:
 - (i) Municipal Districts may be divided into 2 or more local electoral areas as the Committee considers appropriate, except where the terms of reference require otherwise, or where the Committee considers that it would not be appropriate.
 - (ii) The number of Municipal District Members for each district shall not be less than 6 save where, in exceptional circumstances (for example, related to population), the Committee considers that it is necessary that a district should consist of a single local electoral area, in which case the number of members shall not be less than 5.
8. The Committee shall have regard to:
 - (i) Government policy in relation to local government, including any further reports, statements or decisions in that regard during the course of the review, and to any further guidance or requirements issued by the Minister;
 - (ii) The recommendations in relation to local electoral areas and municipal districts (in particular at paragraph 12.1.7) in the report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Cork dated April 2017.

TERMS OF REFERENCE IN RELATION TO CORK CITY Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee No. 2

1. To review and to make recommendations on the division of Cork City into local electoral areas and the number of members to be assigned to each such electoral area.

2. For the purposes of the review, the boundary of Cork City shall be the boundary as shown on the map attached to these terms of reference which is to be given legal effect under forthcoming legislation.
3. For the purpose of the review, the Committee should have regard to the population as ascertained at Census 2016, should assume no



change in the total membership of Cork City Council as specified in the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and should endeavour, as far as practicable and subject to the other requirements of these terms of reference, to achieve variance from individual average local authority representation within the range of plus or minus 10%.

4. The number of councillors assigned to a local electoral area shall be not less than 5 and not more than 7.

5. Local electoral areas should be designed, as far as possible, around urban villages or have a neighbourhood focal point (or points), taking due account of local and community identities and linkages and the need to facilitate the effectiveness of the governance and representational roles of elected members, including, in particular, the need to avoid designating local electoral areas which are territorially very large or extend over very long distances or over multiple urban villages, or which divide individual urban villages or natural communities.

6. The Committee shall have regard to: (i) Government policy in relation to local government, including any further reports, statements or decisions in that regard during the course of the review, and to any further guidance or requirements issued by the Minister.

(ii) The recommendation in paragraph 12.1.8 of the report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Cork, dated April 2017, that “A newly expanded Cork City Council should also move to introduce an area- or district based structure for the wider city area, based on five areas (including the city centre). This will allow for the devolution of operational decisions at area level and the representation of distinct areas and communities within the city.”

Note: With regard to article 6(ii), local authorities which do not have municipal

districts, including Cork City Council, have power under section 50 of the Local Government Act 2001 to establish area committees in respect of local electoral areas. It would appear, therefore, that what would be required to give effect to the Advisory Group recommendation is to ensure that the LEAs are appropriately configured to facilitate the proposed arrangement.

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/reform/boundaries/minister-phelan-appoints-local-electoral-area-boundary-committees>

Minister Murphy launches River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

- Plan to result in the protection and improvement of water quality in approximately 726 water bodies in Ireland
- €1.7 billion investment in urban wastewater treatment infrastructure by 2021
- New Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme to promote best agricultural practice regarding water quality in 190 targeted areas

On Tuesday, 17th April, 2018, the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy T.D., today launched the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2018-2021, http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/rbmp_full_reportweb.pdf The Plan outlines the measures the State and other sectors will take to improve water quality in Ireland’s groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters over the next four years. The Government aims to protect and improve water quality in 726 of Ireland’s 4,829 water bodies over the next four years. The Plan is in fulfillment of requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Speaking after launching the Plan at an event for stakeholders, Minister Murphy stated that “today is a seminal day for water quality in Ireland. Environmental water quality is vital to clean water sources, clean food production, good

quality of life and protecting public health and the environment. This Plan represents the most coordinated and ambitious roadmap for improving water quality that Ireland has ever produced. All involved in influencing and delivering it should be proud today.”

Amongst the Plan’s main commitments are:

- Planned investment by Irish Water of approximately €1.7 billion in waste water infrastructure and projects in 255 urban areas by the end of 2021 – protecting both the environment and public health.
- Deployment of 43 specialist local authority investigative assessment personnel, who will carry out scientific assessments of water bodies and drive the implementation of measures at a local level.
- A new Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme, a partnership between the State and the dairy industry, consisting of 30 Sustainability Advisers. Advisers will engage collaboratively with farmers to promote agricultural best practice across the dairy sector in 190 targeted ‘areas for action’. The programme will provide advice and support to farmers, facilitating knowledge transfer and encouraging behavioural change as the cornerstone of the drive towards better farming practice and water quality. The initiative will complement agri-environment measures under the Rural Development Programme, the Nitrates Action Programme and the National Dairy Sustainability Forum. These initiatives will help enhance Ireland’s reputation as a global leader in high-quality food production.
- A ‘Blue Dot Catchments Programme’, a programme to create awareness, promote best practice and focus efforts and resources to protect our highest quality waters, vital to our environment and our tourism and recreation sectors.
- Greater focus on protecting drinking water sources in over 700 public and private drinking water

supplies and €73 million per year in investment by Irish Water to reduce leakage, saving 61 million m3 of water each year (similar to total non-domestic water demand in the Greater Dublin Area every year). This has the effect of reducing the leakage rate of drinking water produced from 45% to 38%.

- Extension of the local authority-led Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems grant scheme: the revised scheme will assist with the cost of septic tank remediation in ‘high status’ (excellent quality) water areas and in areas identified for priority action. The scheme will be promoted in these sensitive water areas to the benefit of water quality. Details will be finalised in the coming months.
- A Community Water Development Fund to support community initiatives to improve water quality. The fund will be administered by the newly-established Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO). LAWCO consists of Community Water Officers located across the country who are already working with the public, communities and stakeholders on measures to improve local water quality.

On the expected outcomes arising from the Plan, Minister Murphy noted that implementation will result in social, environmental and economic benefits. “By implementing this Plan, communities will benefit from improved waste water treatment, stronger protection of drinking water sources and cleaner waters for recreation. Environmentally, water quality will improve and be protected in 726 water bodies, with full recovery in water quality status class expected in 152 water bodies. Economically, water-intensive sectors such as the agri-food, tourism and hospitality sectors - which collectively sustain approximately 400,000 jobs, many in rural Ireland - will also benefit from greater protection of water supply sources and cleaner natural waters. This Plan is underpinned by strong implementation structures and a

commitment to meaningful community and civic participation. I want to thank all those who have contributed to the Plan, including the many who attended public meetings and provided submissions during last year’s public consultation. Today we have a plan. Tomorrow we will continue to make the Plan’s vision a reality and protect this most precious natural resource for current and future generations.”

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/water/water-quality/river-basin-management-plans/minister-murphy-launches-river-basin-management>

Eleven Ireland/Northern Ireland Local Authorities meet Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee to discuss ‘Brexit’

The eleven local authorities that comprise the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border Corridor met with Helen McEntee, Minister of State for European Affairs in Newry on Tuesday 6th March 2018 to discuss the implications of Brexit on the Border Corridor.

A large delegation comprising Chairpersons, Mayors and Chief Executives from all the local authorities who comprise the Border Corridor attended the meeting, the size of the delegation reflects just how important this issue is, not just for local authorities, but for all the people who live and work along the Ireland/Northern Ireland border corridor.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson Councillor Roisin Mulgrew stated that “without a Government in the North of Ireland and negotiations taking place between Brussels and London directly, local authorities felt it necessary to champion the needs of the border region specifically and to ensure that those needs are reflected and prioritised during Brexit negotiations. Our children and grandchildren’s lives depend on decisions which will be taken over the next few years. It is our duty to get this

right. It is the contention of the Border Corridor Local Authorities that in order to do that all aspects of the Good Friday Agreement must be maintained.”

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon outlined that the issue of Brexit was one of the most challenging issues facing the country, with likely impacts at regional and national level. ‘This forum was very useful, as it allowed us to engage directly with colleagues from other Local Authorities in the border area – the communities in this region have very specific concerns in relation to areas such as tourism, enterprise and agriculture, and we need to have a joined-up approach in the local authority sector to dealing with these important issues.’ The first task of the Local Authority grouping was to commission a study to begin to explore what the actual impact of Brexit might be along the corridor. This was not an easy task considering the huge uncertainty around what Brexit actually means. The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre produced a report “BREXIT and the Border Corridor on the Island of Ireland, Risks, Opportunities and Issues to Consider.”

The Report highlights that the Irish border area will be most affected by Brexit and that an economic border would be detrimental to, not only the Border Corridor, but to Ireland as a whole. It also found that whilst economic certainty is important, political certainty is essential for the border corridor to thrive and the Peace Process cannot be jeopardised.

The aim of the meeting is to highlight the need for investment and support for the Border Corridor and to stress two overarching strategic points which emanated from the study:

- Firstly, that Brexit will impact on all aspects of the economy of our region. An economic border post Brexit would be disastrous for our region.
- Secondly, that Brexit will impact on the people and communities of the Border Corridor. The Good Friday Agreement must be protected during Brexit negotiations.

There is no doubt that the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border area will be most affected by Brexit. After Brexit the border will become a gateway both into and out of the European Union. It appears that the UK will exit both the single market and the Customs Union and if this is the case the EU will need to protect their market and therefore enforce controls on the Border. No one wants to see that happening. Controls along the border will impact negatively, not just along the border but Ireland as a whole.

In order to mitigate against the negative impact on the Border Corridor, the Local authorities are requesting investment in Infrastructure (road/rail/broadband/telecoms), Investment in Business support, and a commitment that future EU Funding such as INTERREG and Peace are still accessible to the Border Region post Brexit. This investment will help ensure that the Border Region is better able to deal with the challenges of Brexit, but also to maximise any opportunities that may arise.

Source:
<http://www.sligococo.ie/News/BrexitForum/>

€3M in IT deals with local authorities

- Paradyn works with 25 of Ireland's 30 local authorities, with contract wins worth more than €14M over the last 5 years
- Provider won 10 new local authority contracts in last three years
- Company provides managed network security, wireless connectivity, infrastructure support and managed services

Paradyn is the result of a merger of three leading Irish technology companies, Exigent Networks, Irish Telecom and Netforce. Paradyn is Ireland's only end-to-end provider of managed IT, security, networking and telecommunications systems. It's highly experienced team (of more than 40) works closely with

customers across a range of industries to simplify the building, monitoring, supporting, securing and maintaining of all aspect of their IT, network and telecoms infrastructure. Paradyn brings together the management of 30,000 public and private sector users in 300 active business and public sector customers who utilise upwards of 75,000 devices between them. For more information visit www.paradyn.ie

On Thursday, May 17th, 2018, Paradyn, announced that it won €3 million in new IT and communications contracts with Ireland's local authorities in the past 12 months. Following competitive tendering processes, the company design, implement and manage a number of technical solutions for local authorities. The company now provides managed services to 25 of the country's 30 local authorities, with IT contracts worth in excess of €14 million won over the last 5 years. In the last three years alone Paradyn has won a total of 10 new local authority contracts, including Donegal County Council, Meath County Council and Wexford County Council.



Paradyn has designed bespoke solutions for each local authority, that have enabled them to become more efficient, more productive and benefit from less time spent managing IT. As part of the contract wins the Paradyn team has in some cases completely overhauled the authorities' IT infrastructures, from implementing new wireless WAN infrastructure right through to desktop

and server support. It has also established a managed network security solution to protect its local authority clients from increasing numbers of cyber-attacks.

Cillian McCarthy, CEO, Paradyn, stated that "since we began working with Cork County Council and Galway County Council in 2008 we've steadily built up the number of local authorities we work with to our current position where we count more than 80% of Ireland's local authorities as customers, making us leaders in Government sector solutions. This level of experience gives us a unique perspective on the challenges that local authority typically face and the solutions that work. As Paradyn provides Ireland's only one-stop managed service solution for IT, telecoms, security, network and business connectivity, we manage key elements of the local authority's IT infrastructure. Our solution not only means less complex IT systems, but also our local authority customers spend less time on IT management, which increases efficiency while also improving security. Given the range of essential services that local authorities provide, it's vital that they have a secure, reliable, integrated IT infrastructure. The tailored solutions we design and implement are specific to the exact needs of individual local authorities. We hold an annual event that specifically caters for our Government sector customers. This is an opportunity for us to highlight certain solutions that worked well and share technical updates on particular products and services."

Pictured announcing that Paradyn had won €3 million in new IT and communications contracts with Ireland's local authorities in the past 12 months are (L to R) Cillian McCarthy, CEO, Paradyn, Rob Norton, CTO, Paradyn and Paul Casey, COO, Paradyn. Photo credit: Steve Langan

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/water/water-quality/river-basin-management-plans/minister-murphy-launches-river-basin-management>

Three Digital Hubs opened in Clare

In mid-April, 2018, three digital hub facilities developed by Clare County Council were officially opened in



Kilrush, Miltown Malbay and Feakle by Pat Breen, T.D., Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection. The facilities, which are part of the Local Authority's DigiClare.ie initiative and are among the actions identified in the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026, will support rural social enterprises and the wider community by providing flexible, affordable hot-desks, co-working, conference and training facilities for residents, visitors and entrepreneurs for as little as €10 per day. Over the next 12 months, Clare County Council will be furthering its plans to develop a large-scale Broadband Hub in Ennis, including a hot desk facility and incubation units. A multi-service centre incorporating a Broadband Hub and other social and community services is also planned for Ennistymon.

Minister of State Breen commented, "A few months ago the Government launched its National Action Plan for Rural Development - which outlines a framework of supports at national and local level for both the economic and social development of rural Ireland. Supporting Digital Hubs, like the three



being opened here today and the two others Clare hubs nearing completion, helps not only in the economic development of rural Ireland, but also helps those who may otherwise work in isolation to come together to share ideas and encouragement. I am familiar with many of the businesses already using the Kilrush Hub, and recognise these entrepreneurs as the backbone of our rural economies in Clare. Entrepreneurship and business investment must continue to be encouraged and supported, especially in rural towns and villages, which inevitably face bigger challenges than those setting up in major cities. Digital Hubs provides much of that support



and my department will continue to support rural entrepreneurship through our Local Enterprise Offices and Enterprise Ireland." Mayor of Clare, Councillor Tom McNamara, stated that "on the first anniversary of the opening Rural Development Forum meeting, the official opening of the three Digital Broadband Hubs in Feakle, Miltown Malbay and Kilrush is tangible evidence of the value of developing and implementing a focused Rural Development Strategy in Clare. Today, we have taken a giant stride forward

which I am confident will be the first step in our shared journey to making rural Clare a sustainable and thriving place to live and work."

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said the Digital Hubs have been developed in line with our policy of utilising broadband and digital technology as a key enabler of Rural



Development. The users of these hubs are the lifeblood of the local community and it is in their interest and in the interest of job creation that Clare County Council is committed to further expanding its network of digital hubs." Mr. Dowling confirmed that Clare County Council will launch a Digital Strategy for County Clare in 2018, "the overarching theme of which is supporting Rural, Community and Economic Development. Its key aim will be to bridge the digital divide as well as creating digitally intelligent communities in Clare. While a strategy in its own right, this Digital blueprint is a critical facilitator. It will enable Clare County Council to further the objectives of the Clare Rural Development Strategy across the county."

For more information on the Digital Hubs, visit www.DigiClare.ie or contact DIGICLARE, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare V95 DXP2 on Tel: 065 6846336 / Email: hubs@clarecoco.ie.

Source:

Mark Dunphy, Communications Officer, Corporate Services Department, Clare County Council, email: mdunphy@clarecoco.ie

Clare County Council promotes Europe's first 21st Century University Town

- South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone to create 3,500 jobs

At the beginning of April 2018, Clare County Council sought Government approval to designate the University of Limerick (UL) campus in County Clare and the hinterland of the campus as an economic development zone with the capacity to generate 3,500 jobs. Elected Members and the Clare County Council Economic Development SPC today backed the South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) proposal, which has been targeted and zoned in successive Clare County Development Plans. The Local Authority says the SDZ will be Europe's first 21st Century University Town providing for a full range of living, working, amenity, social, cultural and recreational spaces integrated with a range of University facilities, including teaching, learning and research. The SDZ also will include the redevelopment and integration of the Errinagh canal, thereby providing the final inland waterway link between Lough Erne in County Fermanagh and Limerick City as well as the Shannon Estuary.

Mayor of Clare, Councillor Tom McNamara, commented that he welcomed the fact that Clare County Council is working in close collaboration with the University of Limerick and other agencies in the delivery of an Economic Strategic Development Zone for South Clare. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council noted that "the establishment of a SDZ at this strategic location will be a catalyst for the further economic and social development of Ireland in line with national and regional policy, including the 'National Planning Framework - Ireland 2040' and 'Limerick 2030 - An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick.' The SDZ will establish a zone of substantial scale and strategic importance, advancing the region by creating a prime global site for

investment with consequent high level employment opportunities for 3,500 people. The figure will be achieved by a mix of foreign direct investment (FDI) and enterprise of indigenous origin. The SDZ acting as a homeland for significant investors and leaders of enterprise will become a fertile field of opportunity for entrepreneurs fresh from UL's NEXUS incubation hub to gain partners, raise capital and accelerate their innovative ambitions. The early deployment of these enterprise partnerships will greatly enhance the long-term prospects of young entrepreneurs in this 'Shannon Valley' site as is evidenced in current Silicon Valley models."

The SDZ site comprises the land area located north and east of the existing University campus in County Clare, bounded on its north by the corridor of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road and on its west by the Errinagh Canal. University of Limerick President, Dr Des Fitzgerald, commented, "University of Limerick is delighted to support Clare County Council's application to Government for the establishment of this Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) adjacent to the north campus of the university. UL works closely with both Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council to fulfil its strategic development responsibilities in the Mid West. This designation would position UL as the first university to participate in an economic SDZ, complementing our longstanding commitment to the economic development of our region. A strategic development of this scale, in a position so close to and including the university, would enhance our world-class educational and research proposition, would supplement our ongoing relationships with enterprise, industry and community, and would further establish UL as a hub for innovation. The announcement of the SDZ plan by Clare County Council is another milestone in the story of UL's transformative impact on the economy of the Mid West and we look forward to the implementation of this over the coming years."

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development explained at the

briefing for Elected Members and the Clare County Council Economic Development SPC that "seeking SDZ designation is logical in the context of driving the implementation of UL's expansion across the River Shannon into Clare in 2001 and its continued expansion in the county in the seventeen years to 2018, the economic impact of universities worldwide on their hinterland, the inevitability that this university hinterland will be developed and the vital role of the site in contributing significantly to the future development of the Limerick Municipal Area. The SDZ also will complement the ongoing implementation of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan. Under this SDZ designation the site has the capacity to become a game changer both regionally and nationally. Orderly, planned development as envisaged in the legislation enabling designation as a Strategic Development Zone will see the site generate 3,500 jobs in addition to the employment generated in construction and spin-off. Investment in both foreign and indigenous industry will partner with the University in expansion, placement, research and careers. The impact on Shannon Airport will be significant as the site's industrial population focuses on international partnerships with the United States, Europe and the East. From a European perspective this is a project of scale. From a national perspective this is an exemplar project enabling an early start to the balanced regional development strategy and creating an early win for the vision set out for the Limerick Metropolitan Area as outlined in the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan." Commenting on the development of Europe's first '21st Century University Town', Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner, Clare County Council, stated, "The 'Town and Gown' environment that we are seeking to engender will be located on the foothold of Europe, merging education, living and employment, modelled on the very best of modern on-campus living. It will be a model of sustainable urban living, education and enterprise, building on the standards of the existing campus. It will offer opportunities for collaboration towards

a world class learning, research and development hub."

Clare County Council submitted a formal application to Government for the designation of the South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) in the weeks that followed. If the application is successful, a detailed masterplan for the area will be developed by the Local Authority, in conjunction with UL, local landowners and other stakeholders.

Source:
Mark Dunphy, Communications Officer, Corporate Services Department, Clare County Council, email: mdunphy@clarecoco.ie

Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit in June examines the role of Social Media in the Public Sector

Public sector communications staff from Ireland and abroad gather in Dublin

Venue: Dublin's Mansion House on Thursday, 14th June, 2018
Who should attend? The summit is ideal for communication staff in the public sector including Government Departments, Health Service, Tourism, Local Authorities, Education Bodies, Policing, Political Staff and non-commercial state agencies. The event is ideal for senior decision makers, managers, marketing, PR, digital, web, social media or communications professionals in the public sector including Government Departments, Health Service, Tourism, Local Authorities, Education Bodies, Policing, Political Staff, Local Enterprise Offices and Non-Commercial State Agencies.

The Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit (<https://publicsectormarketingpros.com/summit>) is set to highlight how public sector organisations can, and should be defending the truth in the era of fake news. The first dedicated digital marketing gathering for public sector professionals in Ireland, it will take a forensic look at how Ireland's public sector is undergoing a digital transformation with in-house marketing and communication staff

embracing social media and digital communications. The Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit takes place on Thursday, 14th June in the Round Room at Dublin's Mansion House and has been devised for senior decision makers, managers, marketing, PR, digital, web, social media or communications professionals in the public sector including Government departments, health service, tourism, local authorities, education bodies, policing, political staff, local enterprise offices and non-commercial state agencies.

Attendees can expect to discover insider tips, key trends, and practical takeaways to help their public sector agency to perform at a higher level in the digital world. There will be a range of speakers focusing on a variety of social media topics including how to integrate real-time social media into emergency response management, how to counteract fake news, millennial and Gen Z engagement and retention, natural disaster response and how best to encourage staff to embrace social media as part of an overall public sector communications strategy. Speakers from a broad range of public sector agencies will contribute to the summit including Mesa Police Department in Phoenix, Arizona, UK Met Office, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, Trinity College Dublin, Beaumont Hospital, Irish Rail, Dublin Fire Brigade, EPP Group in the EU Parliament, safe food, Limerick City and Council Council, Marine Institute, daa and Google.

The first dedicated marketing event for public sector professionals in Ireland, the summit is being organised by Joanne Sweeney-Burke of Digital Training Institute. Following the publication of her first book <https://lawenforcementobserver.com/> on how police forces have embraced social media in 2015, Joanne is currently writing her second book on digital transformation in the public sector. Speaking on the Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit, she said, "I am very well aware of the remarkable strides being made by the public sector on digital transformation and this event hopes to share this innovation and progress with professionals from across Ireland. There is no doubt that the recession and caps on recruitment have taken a

toll on progress, however, right now communications methods are taking a different and more progressive route. The case studies that will be presented at the Summit will highlight the rewriting of the public sector marketing rule book. We will hear impressive case studies on a range of diverse topics from social recruitment to artificial intelligence and machine learning, using social media in emergency response situations and how first-responders enlist the public's help for major emergencies."

The one day event on Thursday, June 14th, 2018 will see leading innovators and public sector marketing professionals and journalists converge for a series of panel debates, practical case studies, and individual keynotes. A digital transformation masterclass takes place on Friday June 15th and will put those learnings into action. More information on The Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit is available at: <https://publicsectormarketingpros.com/summit> and Twitter: #PublicSectorDMS Tickets can be purchased from <https://publicsectormarketingpros.com/summit> with early bird rates currently available. VIP tickets are also available for the Digital Transformation Workshop on Friday, June 15th from 10am to 4.30pm. This exclusive workshop is open to just 30 attendees and will allow you to work directly with Joanne who will review your current digital communications strategy and develop a roadmap for change. The VIP ticket includes entry to the main event on Thursday.

For further information, please contact, Kathryn Byrne, Limelight Communications, kathryn.byrne@limelight.ie and Nora Dunne, Limelight Communications, nora.dunne@limelight.ie

Source:
Nora Dunne and Lorraine Freir, Limelight Communications, email, nora.dunne@limelight.ie; and lauren.freir@limelight.ie

The Digital Economy and Society Index and Report published

On Friday, May 18th, 2018, Minister for Communications Denis Naughten TD welcomed the publication of the



Pictured Joanne Sweeney-Burke, organiser of the Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit and CEO of Digital Training Institute and Sharon Campbell, Deputy Head of Communications, Trinity College Dublin

European Commission's annual Digital Economy and Society Index and Report (DESI) 2018 which shows Ireland has improved its overall ranking to 6th place in the EU, up from 9th place in 2017. Minister Naughten stated that "it is significant that Ireland's ranking has risen to 6th most digitally-advanced society in the EU and is in the highest-performing cluster of countries. The fact that Ireland has also considerably improved its performance in terms of connectivity - now ranked in 11th place among EU countries, compared to 15th place last year - demonstrates the clear progress we are making. Ireland's coverage of fast broadband has grown to 89%, well above EU average, and we have also made inroads on take-up. In order to improve high speed broadband access across Ireland, particularly in rural areas, my priority remains delivering the Government's National Broadband Plan. My Department is in a formal procurement process to select a company to roll-out a new high speed broadband network in the State intervention area and this procurement process is now in its final stages. The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in the meantime, is making considerable progress in removing barriers to investment for telcos, as it continues to identify and implement solutions to improve broadband and mobile coverage services for customers in the short term. Ireland is a leader in several digital areas including the Trading Online Voucher Scheme which is empowering our SMEs to get online and trade online to capitalise on

today's digital opportunities."

The Digital Economic and Society Index (DESI)

The Digital Economic and Society Index (DESI) is a composite index which provides a summary of relevant indicators in relation to Europe's digital performance and tracks the evolution of EU member states in digital competitiveness. The DESI report tracks the progress made by Member States in terms of their digitisation. It is structured around five chapters: Connectivity; Human Capital; Use of Internet Services; Integration of Digital technology; and Digital Public Services. The DESI was re-calculated for previous years for all countries in order to reflect changes in the choice of indicators and corrections to the underlying indicator data. Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands have the most advanced digital economies in the EU followed by Luxembourg, Ireland (in 6th place, behind Luxembourg and ahead of the UK), the UK, Belgium and Estonia. The Index indicates that Romania, Greece and Italy have the lowest scores on the DESI. In 2017, all Member States improved in the DESI. Ireland and Spain progressed the most (close to 5 points as opposed to an EU average of 3.2). On the other hand, there was low increase in Denmark and Portugal (under 2 points).

National Broadband Plan

The Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to ensure high speed broadband access (minimum 30 megabits per second) to all premises in Ireland, regardless of location. The NBP has been a catalyst in encouraging investment by the telecoms sector. Today, almost 7 out of 10 of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland have access to high speed broadband. By 2020, 9 out of 10 premises will have access to a high speed broadband connection. This is being achieved via a combination of commercial investment and a State led intervention. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment is in a formal procurement process to select a company that will roll-out a new high speed broadband network in the State intervention area. That procurement process is now in its final stages.

- Europe's Digital Economy and Society Index and Report 2018: weblink <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/desi>
- DESI report telecoms chapter: weblink <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/scoreboard/ireland>
- DESI 2018 Country report Ireland: link http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2018-20/ie-desi_2018-country-profile_eng_B4406C2F-97C3-AA9A-53C27B701589A4F3_52225.pdf

Source:

<https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/press-releases/Pages/Minister-Naughten-welcomes-the-publication-of-the-Digital-Economy-and-Society-Index-and-Report.aspx>

Project Ireland 2040: four funds launched for rural development, urban regeneration, climate action & innovation totalling €4 billion

On Wednesday, May 30th, 2018, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, and several Government Ministers launched the €4 billion Project Ireland 2040 funds for rural development, urban regeneration, climate action and innovation. The announcement stresses that the four funds are a major innovation in Project Ireland 2040. Rather than allocating funding in a 'business as usual' way to Government Departments, money will be allocated competitively to the best projects, which leverage investment from other sources thereby ensuring that the impact of this investment goes much, much further. The funds will be open to applications from state agencies, local government, business, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, and others, but the ideal applications will be collaborative efforts that break down barriers and silos. The call for applications will open in the coming weeks. The aim of the four new funds is to help to ensure balanced regional development and are designed to stimulate renewal and investment in rural and urban areas, the environment and innovation, preparing Ireland for a future with 1 million more people and 660,000 more people at work. Three quarters of new growth will be outside

Dublin, with 50% of the projected population growth planned for our towns, villages and rural areas and 50% for our cities.

The funds are:

- €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund: will secure more compact, sustainable growth in Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres.
- €1 billion Rural Development Fund: will support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns, villages and their hinterlands that enhance the quality of life of communities and enhance their attractiveness for families who want to live and work there.
- €500 million Climate Action Fund: will support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets.
- €500 million Disruptive Technologies Fund: will see investment in the development and deployment of disruptive innovative technologies and applications, on a commercial basis, targeted at tackling national and global challenges.

At the launch, Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD stated that, "the introduction of these four funds is a major innovation in the reformed funding model outlined in the National Development Plan. The intention is that the funds will play an important role in moving away from providing funding resources to individual organisations, essentially on the basis of current investment patterns, in favour of supporting collaborative bids for funding important projects on a competitive basis. The funds, which total an estimated €4 billion over the 10-year period of the National Department Plan, will be open to submissions from this summer, with funding being allocated from 2019 onwards. I believe the four funds will play a very important role in driving delivery of the National Planning Framework, developing our five cities and the strengthening our rural economies and communities.

In signalling his intention to issue the call for proposals for the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund by

the end of June, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD announced that the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will commence over the summer. "This is a €2 billion fund that will be available to rejuvenate key parts of our towns and cities, to ensure that they become more attractive places in which to live, work, invest and visit. It is the first major national urban regeneration programme for 20 years. Under this first call for proposals over the summer, we are looking to invest up to €500 million in Exchequer funding which is available under the NDP over the four years 2019 to 2022. There will be a requirement for local authorities and other public bodies applying for this fund to invest at least 25% of the total project value from other sources including their own resources and/or complementary investments."

Announcing details of the new €500 million Climate Action Fund, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Denis Naughten TD underlined that it is a significant milestone in how we deal with climate change. "These funds are about turning innovative ideas into practical action. The €500 million Climate Action Fund is a key element of the Government strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy and energy efficiency in our homes and communities. Next month, the first call for applications to the fund will open and a wide range of innovative projects will be supported" Speaking about the €1 billion Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD stated that the launch of this fund represents an unprecedented opportunity to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities. "The €1 billion investment over the next 10 years will be targeted at strengthening the fabric of rural Ireland. It will support improvements in our smaller towns, villages and hinterlands to enhance their attractiveness for families and enhance the quality of life of rural communities. The fund will also support job creation in rural areas. The first call for proposals will be launched in the coming weeks and will focus on

collaborative projects that will add value and have a transformative impact on rural areas. The type of initiatives the fund will support will include addressing infrastructural deficits in towns and villages, encouraging entrepreneurship, and enhancing heritage and community assets in rural areas."

Background information on the Funds: Project Ireland 2040 established four new funds, with a combined allocation of €4 billion to 2027. Please see below additional information on each of the four funds.

€2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund:

The primary purpose of the €2 billion Fund is to secure more compact, sustainable growth in Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres (the 59 eligible cities and towns are listed in the annex). This funding, addition to normal sectoral funding streams, is designed to leverage a greater proportion of residential and commercial development, supported by infrastructure, services and amenities, within the existing built-up areas of our larger urban settlements.

There is a total of €500m Exchequer funding to the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund over the years 2019 to 2022, with €100 million of expenditure available in 2019. An initial call for proposals is intended to be made before the end of June 2018, allowing a 14 week period for development of applications with a targeted closing date at end September 2018.

Proposals will be invited to be submitted under one of two categories:

- 'Ready-to-go' proposals that can be initiated in 2019. Projects in this category will have the necessary consents (e.g. planning) in place, be at an advanced stage of design and be procurement-ready; or
- Proposals that require further development and that subject to approval in principle, may be initiated in 2019 or in subsequent years. It will be necessary to detail, as part of the bid process, the key steps required for further project development to enable project initiation.

The initial 2018 call will invite bids that may be made for funding a large project on a multi-annual basis, in respect of which project expenditure can commence in 2019. There will be further calls periodically, with funding/allocations to be increased incrementally as the programme becomes established.

Bid proposals must be on a co-funded basis and must therefore demonstrate significant stakeholder contribution in the form of a combination of wider exchequer and/or state-sector capital expenditure, local authority investment and/or land, or other asset contributions. The co-funding contribution must comprise not less than 25% of the bid value.

There will also be a requirement for 100% (euro-for-euro) leveraging of committed wider private sector investment in the delivery of homes, community and/or commercial floorspace in urban areas, arising from investment to be made as a result of the Urban Fund.

There is a wide range of projects that will be eligible for this regeneration and development funding, including the acquisition, enabling and/or development of areas, sites and buildings, relocation of uses, public amenity works, community facilities, transport, services infrastructure and/or transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society, in an urban context.

Types of areas eligible for funding may include those that include a concentration of low-intensity uses, such as storage depots or warehousing, underutilised 'backlands' behind streets and buildings, or institutional sites that are suitable for re-development, as part of an overall regeneration proposal.

Eligible Cities and Towns

A list of the eligible cities and towns is included below. This may be reviewed post-2021 following the next Census.

	Cities
1	Dublin City and Metropolitan Area
2	Cork City and Metropolitan Area
3	Limerick City and Metropolitan Area
4	Galway City and Metropolitan Area
5	Waterford City and Metropolitan Area

	Regional/Cross-border drivers
1	Drogheda
2	Dundalk
3	Athlone
4	Letterkenny
5	Sligo

	Towns <10,000 population, >2,500 jobs 2016 (eligible for either urban or rural funds)
1	Gorey
2	Shannon
3	Nenagh
4	Westport
5	Roscommon
6	Monaghan
7	Tuam
8	Thurles
9	Dungarvan
10	New Ross
11	Ballinasloe
12	Carrick-on-Shannon
13	Trim

	Towns >10,000 population 2016
1	Swords
2	Bray
3	Navan
4	Kilkenny
5	Ennis
6	Carlow
7	Tralee
8	Newbridge
9	Portlaoise
10	Balbriggan
11	Naas
12	Mullingar
13	Celbridge
14	Wexford
15	Greystones
16	Clonmel
17	Malahide
18	Carrigaline
19	Leixlip
20	Tullamore
21	Maynooth
22	Killarney
23	Arklow
24	Cobh
25	Ashbourne
26	Midleton
27	Mallow
28	Castlebar
29	Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington
30	Enniscorthy
31	Cavan
32	Wicklow
33	Tramore
34	Ballina
35	Skerries
36	Longford

€500 million Climate Action Fund:

The core objective of the Climate Action Fund is to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets in a cost effective manner. It is important to understand that this fund will be in addition to existing support measures and will seek to support projects that would not otherwise be developed. The fund will be financed from non-exchequer revenues with excess income from the petroleum products levy redirected to the new Climate Action Fund. This levy currently supports the National Oil Reserves Agency in carrying out its statutory duties including storage of Ireland's strategic oil reserve. In the coming years, not all of this income will be required for these purposes providing €500m for the Climate Action Fund over the timeframe of the National Development Plan. In June 2018, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will open the first call for applications for both public and private sector projects. It is intended that the initial round of applications will be assessed and funding awarded by October of this year. In the coming weeks, further information on the Climate Action Fund, including the call for applications and detailed evaluation criteria will be published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund:

The €500 million challenge-based Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund is to be implemented through the Department of Business and its agencies, working with other research funding bodies to develop Ireland's innovation ecosystem and responsiveness. The fund will see investment in the development and deployment of disruptive innovative technologies and applications, on a commercial basis, targeted at tackling national and global challenges. A capital funding allocation of €180 million is being made available to the end of 2022. The first call under the fund will be launched in June with a view to announcing the successful projects in November. The fund is important in positioning Ireland for the future

and we expect that projects approved under this fund will be well-placed to leverage EU funding thereafter. It is explicitly linked to National Strategic Outcome 5 in Project Ireland 2040 (A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills) but it is also envisaged the fund that will support projects potentially linked to several of the National Strategic Outcomes called out in the plan. The Government Decision of 6 March 2018 confirms that the revised Research Priority Areas for 2018-2023 will inform the design of the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund and so our calls will align with the six themes identified in our research prioritisation exercise: ICT; Health and Wellbeing; Food; Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability; Manufacturing and Materials; Services and Business Processes. Within each of these six themes, we have identified specific priority areas including Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented and Virtual Reality, Health and Wellbeing, Advanced and Smart Manufacturing and Smart and Sustainable Food Production and Processing.

€1 billion Rural Regeneration and Development Fund:

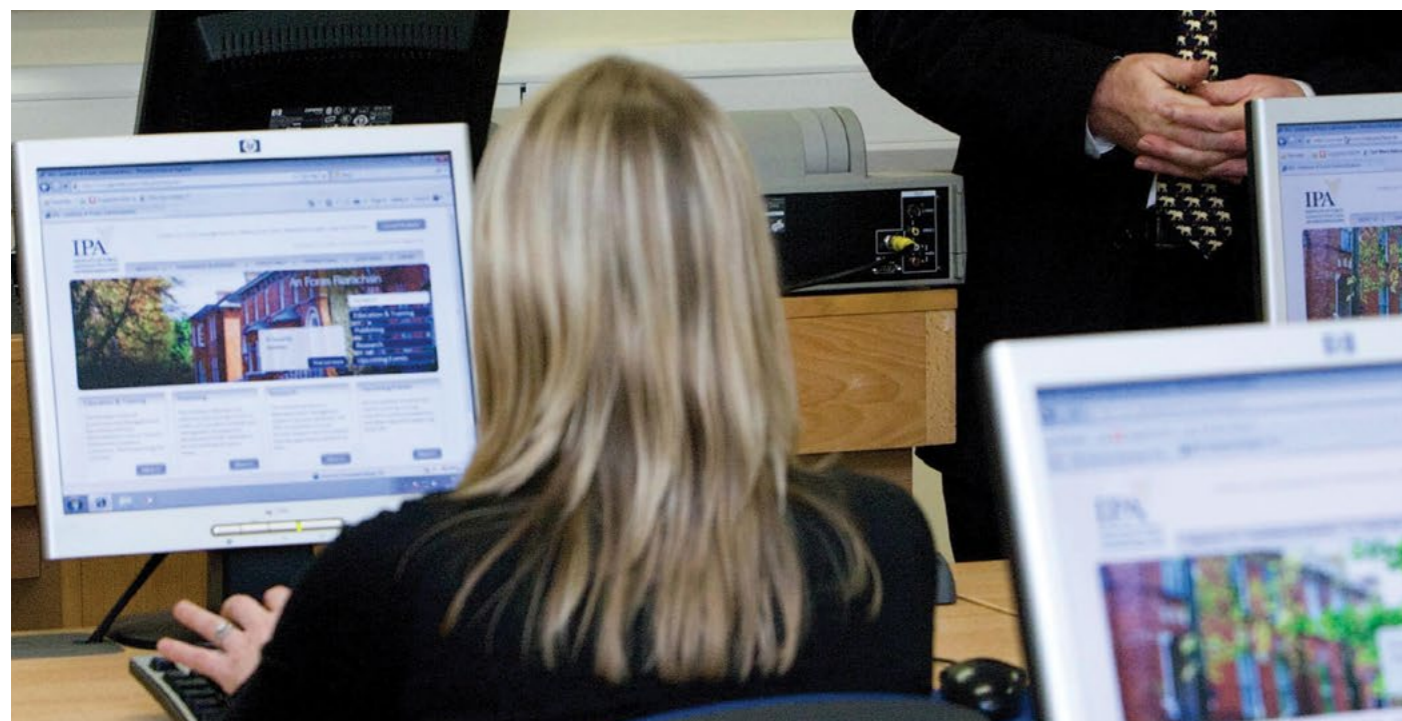
The overall objective of this fund is to deliver the strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040, and in particular to strengthen rural economies rural communities by rejuvenating smaller towns and villages, helping to diversify employment opportunities in rural areas, supporting the development of rural communities and improving their quality of life. The fund will target towns with a population of less than 10,000 people, as well as villages and outlying rural areas.

Detailed criteria are now being developed for the first call for proposals which will be announced in the coming weeks. The fund will encourage collaborative approaches between Departments, agencies, Local Authorities and other public bodies, and the private sector, where appropriate, to pool their assets and work with communities to transform our rural towns and villages and their outlying areas. Proposals will be expected to be consistent with the National Planning Framework objectives and

provide a strategic integrated approach which is consistent with regional and local plans for the area. Projects must demonstrate a capacity to add value to other public investments. There will be a requirement for a co-funding contribution from other public or private sources – expected to be of the order of 25%. The first phase will also allow for technical supports for preparatory groundwork for future phase investments, through Local Authorities and other locally based organisations.

Source:

https://merriionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Releases/Project_Ireland_2040_Government_launches_four_funds_for_rural_development_urban_regeneration_climate_action_innovation_totalling_€2.82_billion.html



Chambers Ireland welcomes EIB €500m investment in National Broadband Plan

Speaking at the announcement on Friday, 13th April, 2018 of a €500m investment by the European Investment Bank towards the National Broadband Plan, Chambers Ireland Chief Executive Ian Talbot commented that “inadequate broadband coverage is a significant issue facing many rural businesses and leaves them at a serious disadvantage relative to other parts of the country. Rural businesses have been long awaiting the now severely delayed National

Broadband Plan and this funding from the EIB confirms the necessity of investment in rural broadband in Ireland. We have an opportunity through the National Broadband Plan to revitalise rural Ireland and harness the potential of businesses in every corner of the country to grow and succeed. This funding is a vote of confidence in the National Broadband Plan and Government must now act to make the Plan a reality. Rural Ireland and rural

businesses have waited far too long.”

For further information, please contact, Gabriel Doran, Communications & Public Affairs Executive, email: gabriel.doran@chambers.ie

Source:

<http://www.chambers.ie/media/news/2018/04/13/chambers-ireland-welcomes-eib-%E2%82%AC500m-investment-in-national-broadband-plan/>

Chambers Ireland welcomes Launch of Flood Risk Management Plans

On Thursday, May 3rd, 2018, Chambers Ireland welcomed the launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans accessible via the new website: www.floodinfo.ie from the Office of Public Works. Speaking at the launch, Chambers Ireland Chief Executive, Ian Talbot noted that the “launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans marks a concerted effort by Government to commit to a holistic, nationwide approach to flood defences and to develop greater infrastructure to prepare for more frequent occurrences of adverse

and disruptive weather conditions. Several of our members have been particularly affected in recent times by the increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, which has resulted in considerable cost to local businesses in their region. While some progress has already been made in a number of towns, clarity around the time frame of implementation of the plans announced today is essential for members throughout our Network, particularly for the Chambers situated in the heavily flood-afflicted areas

of Ireland. More detail is required to provide an assurance and relief to homeowners and local businesses nationwide.” For further information please contact Gabriel Doran, Communications & Public Affairs Executive, email: gabriel.doran@chambers.ie

Source:

<http://www.chambers.ie/media/news/2018/05/03/chambers-ireland-welcomes-launch-of-flood-risk-management-plans/>

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: rboyle@ipa.ie

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