

# LOCAL AUTHORITY TIMES

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**IPA**  
AN FORAS RIARACHÁIN  
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

**WHAT DOES  
THE NEW  
YEAR HOLD?**

**2020**

**2021**

**Inside:** Local government in numbers ■ SHE network ■ Housing Forum

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Mobility has been a key feature of the response to Covid-19. This feature looks at some recent reports from Europe and Ireland that can help local authorities in planning for sustainable urban development

# WHAT DOES THE NEW YEAR HOLD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

In our final edition of Local Authority Times for 2020, we can see the impact that Covid-19 has had in so many ways. We have all had to adjust our ways of working during 2020. For many, including our contributors to this edition, that has meant going online: Dr Michelle Maher writes about how the See Her Elected network has embraced online meetings and successful carried out their SHESchool events online; Cian Rohan gives an overview of launching the IPA's new Housing Forum during Covid-19, and; Siobhan Bradley provides some insight on building trust while working remotely.



Of course, it is important to remember that we do not live in a virtual world. Local authorities have worked tirelessly to maintain essential services, improve infrastructure, enhance the public realm, and support communities during this pandemic. Elected members too have adjusted to the realities of Covid-19 and continuing their vital work with communities on the ground. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of all local authority staff and elected members, as well as the countless volunteers and community representatives across the country for their work throughout 2020.

So, what will 2020 hold? While there is hope for the year ahead, the events of 2020 will have a lasting impact. We can see this, for example, in the trend for local authorities to increase the base rate of Local Property Tax in their areas. Covid-19 has impacted local authority finances in a drastic manner, with much uncertainty remaining for 2021. Budgets are currently being prepared by all local authorities, with reports of major funding gaps and struggles to balance the books. Hard decisions will be made and this will impact what local government can achieve in 2021.

Local government has also shown it can step up the plate when needed. Local authorities continue to play a key role in campaigns and initiatives to support people and communities to mind their physical and mental health (see page 10). While many of these activities and initiatives are not new to local authorities, their prominence and importance has been brought to the fore in 2020. Given the funding gaps mentioned above, it must be considered if local government can continue to sustain services over and above their core responsibilities.

The New Year will no doubt present many challenges, new and old, but also further opportunities for the local government system to demonstrate its strengths and value to our local communities.

**Laura Shannon, Editor**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NUMBERS

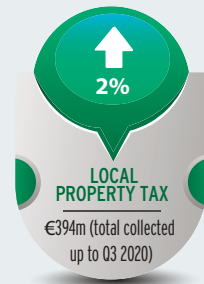
### Key Quarterly Data, November 2020



Down 4.7% on Q2 2019  
Source: Department of Finance

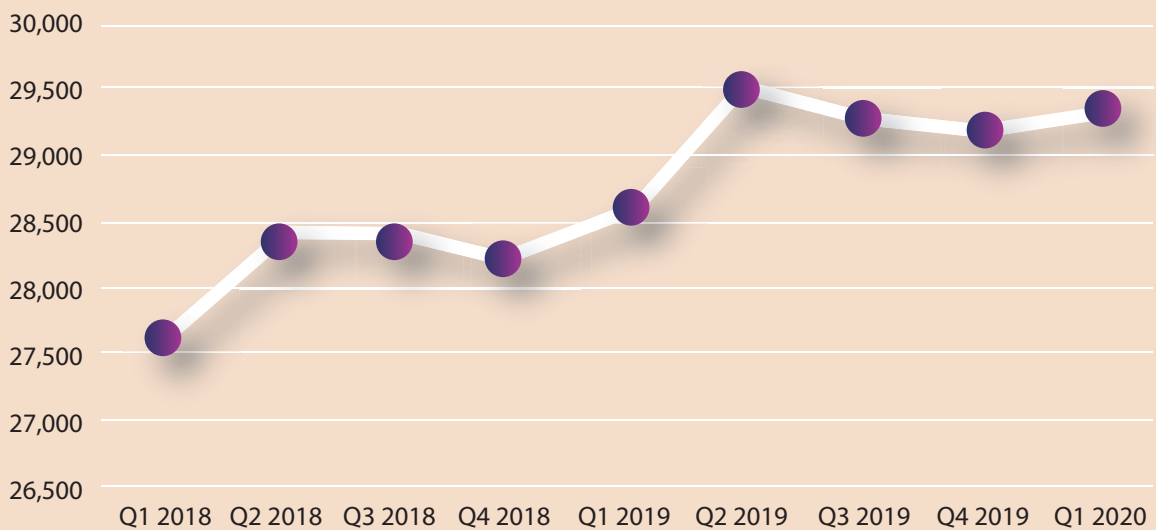


Up 4.8% on Q2 2019  
Source: Department of Finance



Up 1.8% on the same quarter last year  
Source: Revenue

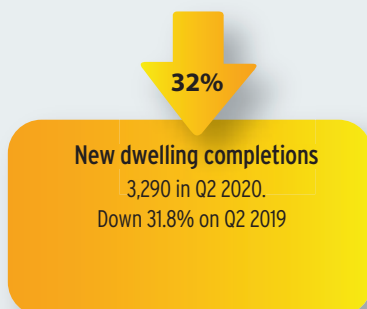
### Total number of local authority staff



Number of staff in Q1 2020 was **29,403**. This is a slight drop since Q2 2019, when staff numbers reached the highest peak since 2011. However, they still remain much lower than 2008 levels.

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

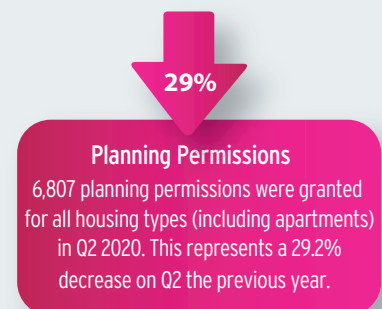
### Housing & Homelessness



Source: Central Statistics Office



Source: Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government



Source: Central Statistics Office

# SEE HER ELECTED

How a Department funded project aimed at supporting women into political life adapted to Covid-19

Dr Michelle Maher is the Regional Development Officer with See Her Elected



Among the 949 councillors emerging victorious from local election counts across the country in May 2019 were 226 women, meaning that our city and county councils remain predominantly male.

**A**s many as 44 of our 166 local electoral areas have no female representation. The arguments as to why this is a concern are well documented. One concern draws on a political theory of democratic representation that holds that elected representatives should resemble the group they claim to represent. In other words, any representative body should be a microcosm of its larger society in terms of social class, gender, ethnicity, age and so on. This would indicate that our councils should at least have an equal number of men and women. Another concern is about decision-making. The argument for more women councillors is not because women necessarily have different qualities and values to men. It is because making sure that decisions bring about equitable outcomes can only really occur when the people in the room

start to think about how the experience of policy decisions and policy outcomes can be different for men and women. For that to happen we require people in the room who experience policy decisions in different ways. Both of these concerns are also why there is a need for more diversity in politics overall.

Concern at the over-representation of men in rural county councils of the North West - Midlands region was the catalyst for the formation of the See Her Elected (SHE) project in 2019. It is a joint initiative between 50:50 North West and Longford Women's Link and is funded by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. SHE is a feminist, community led, rural initiative to support women into political life. With a focus on the 2024 local elections, project planning for 2020 included both a strong emphasis on encouraging women in rural communities to engage in politics, and exploring how best to support women councillors in the North West - Midlands region.

SHE planned to connect with women in their communities with a view to building up networks of women interested in politics. We wanted to do this in a way that was creative, and would attract women who would not otherwise be instinctively drawn towards politics, yet had a curiosity about how councils work. We also wanted to engage women with an interest in local politics, and who may have a degree of knowledge and experience of local government through either being a council employee or through membership of the Public Participation Networks. Workshops, classes and events were all in various stages of being planned when Covid -19 required a rethink to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. From that rethink, the idea of SHESchool emerged as a way of providing

community education to women in their homes, free and online.

### SHESchool

We positioned SHESchool as 'demystifying local politics' and pitched it as a relaxed introduction to politics. We wanted women to get to know the structures of local government and what the role of the councillor entailed. We also wanted to highlight how women could get involved in local government decision making without ever running for election through membership of committees such as the Strategic Policy Committees and the Local Community Development Committees via Public Participation Networks. We also sought to address an acknowledged discouragement to women being engaged in politics - the often impregnable nature of political language. The first class was on active citizenship, followed by two on county councils and councillors. The last class was on political language - focussing on left and right in politics; feminism and patriarchy; and social contracts.

We hoped for between 10 and 20 participants for our first class on the morning of Tuesday 28th April. We immediately had 30, necessitating the running of a second class later in the day. In total 50 women registered for the first SHESchool. Due to demand we ran it for a second time in June with 46 registered, and in July with 29. The 4th rerun of our *Introduction to Politics* took place in October and its enduring popularity means it will remain a stable feature of SHE.

Due to moving online, women outside of our initial rural North West - Midlands region have an opportunity to benefit from our work. We have had participants from across Ireland, and



Michelle Maher, Regional Development Officer with See Her Elected



even Irishwomen living abroad with plans to return to live in Ireland. Almost 75% of participants indicated in feedback that they would have physically attended classes had they been conveniently located to their home, and without any Covid-19 restrictions. This indicates that there is a strong appetite among women to know more about local government meaning what SHESchool has to offer is attractive in and of itself - not just because it was free and convenient. Figure 1 summarises typical feedback.

Promisingly for having more women in politics, over one third of participants who gave feedback said they were now motivated to assist and support the campaign of a female candidate in the 2024 local elections, while over a quarter are now contemplating running themselves.

### Development of SHESchool

One of the areas of feedback that we have already incorporated into the development of SHESchool is the request to hear practical information and advice directly from women who have 'walked the walk' into local politics, especially in rural constituencies. We laid the groundwork for this with an online conversation with Dr Fiona Buckley of UCC who provided an academic underpinning to the need for more women in government. We are keen to support a diversity of women into political life and to amplify voices that are not always heard in political discussions in Ireland. For example, we invited Cllr Peymana Assad to speak to SHESchool. Peymana is a labour councillor in London and the first person of Afghan origin to gain political office in the UK. She spoke about the difficulties

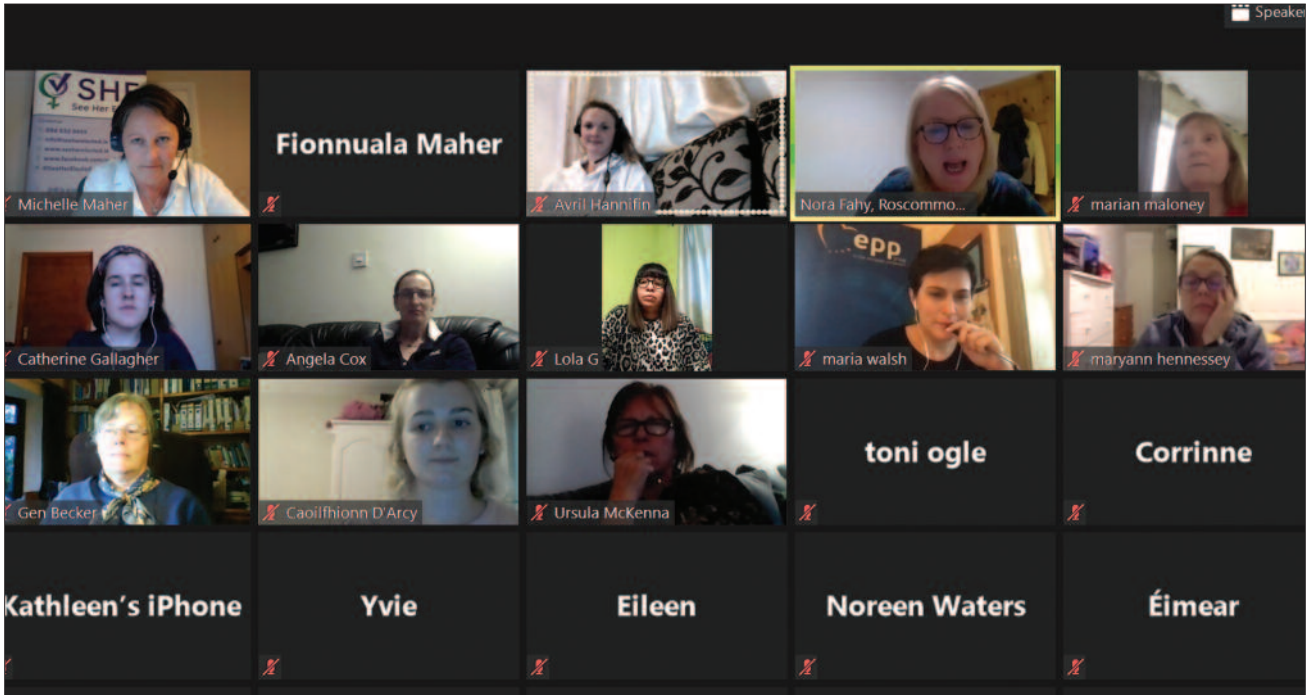
encountered on both ethnicity and gender dimensions, while also allowing us to understand what local government looks like elsewhere. Last month Marian Maloney who lives with a vision impairment spoke to SHESchool about running for Galway City Council, accompanied by her guide dog.

Over September and October we had conversations with women who had run in local elections either as a candidate for a party or as an independent, and from women who had managed campaigns. This month our policy module starts. The aim of this module is to demystify key policy areas to allow women to follow (and contribute to, should they wish to do so!) political debates that play out in current affairs discussions. The first three policy areas we have selected are Pensions, Housing, and Domestic Violence. We will objectively and factually explain what policy looks like, what it means for women, and what an alternative might look like.

All our events are listed on our website: [www.seeherelected.ie](http://www.seeherelected.ie)

### Women Councillors

We recognise that women considering running for local elections will benefit from an array of supports that SHE can provide, but this is not to say that women who have been successful do not require any. The retention of committed women councillors is as important to political equality as attracting new women as candidates. Our funding allows us to work with women councillors in the North West - Midlands region with a view to forming a regional caucus. It also facilitates the running of masterclasses with industry and



SHESchool goes virtual

communication experts. To date we have held classes on social media; video making for social media; and radio interview techniques. Moving online to circumvent Covid-19 restrictions has also meant women councillors from outside the North West - Midlands region can engage with SHE's activities, something that would not otherwise have been possible.

**Other SHE Activities**

Our ambition is for our website to become a resource for women with an interest in politics. Absent from a lot of political commentary is accessible, largely jargon free material that nevertheless delivers important political information and terminology. With our online SHESpeaks articles, we aim to provide clear information and explanation on what might be termed the nuts and bolts of politics, such as the electoral system, Seanad elections, co-options to council seats and so

on. We also cover political concepts such as the gendered nature of political institutions, and feminism. Running alongside our policy module, we unpack policy issues that get a political airing.

SHE's research agenda is underway in the area of candidate selection in the North West - Midlands region. While the formal party position on candidate selection is instructive, it does not capture all that happens in practice. Drawing in the perspective of the people who are involved with candidate selection as it plays out in practice in local electoral areas will provide a complete picture of the candidate selection process in theory and practice in rural Ireland.

**Our Values**

Anyone wishing to engage with any of our activities is required to hold the same values as ourselves. We believe in an inclusive Ireland where women's human rights and equality are respected and protected, and women are not discriminated against. We believe in showing dignity and respect to everyone irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, religious beliefs, political beliefs, ability, and sexual orientation. We believe in working positively and respectfully to change inequality in political participation and are committed to working from a feminist perspective to advocate these values.



Recent events run by See Her Elected

For further information or to find out about upcoming SHE events, go to <https://www.seeherelected.ie/> or email [info@seeherelected.ie](mailto:info@seeherelected.ie)



# NEW HOUSING FORUM

This new forum provides a platform to network and share knowledge

Cian Rohan, Assistant Specialist Local Government Unit,  
Institute of Public Administration



The recently launched Housing Forum is an initiative of the Institute of Public Administration in conjunction with the Housing Agency to create a platform from which persons working in housing can build their knowledge about what is happening in the sector.

In 2012 Dr. Lorcan Sirr, in a reflective piece on the *Housing Policy Statement (2011)*, wrote that 'we need to professionalise housing'. The aim of housing becoming a career choice - buttressed with the supports available to other public sector professionals such as planners and engineers - has been variously at the background and foreground of thinking within housing for many years. The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) has taken a leading role in pursuit of this aim, developing a Certificate in Housing Studies and a Professional Diploma in Housing Studies and currently working closely with the Housing Agency in creating Ireland's first Masters in Housing Studies.

Over a long number of years, the IPA's Local Government Training Unit has similarly played its part in increasing the professional capacity of housing practitioners by providing training in a number of key areas such as rent arrears; mortgage arrears; dealing with anti-social behaviour and social housing, amongst others. And it is not alone in that respect as it has worked hand-in-glove with a number of other bodies; in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage the IPA provides training for staff on improving rental standards for private rented accommodation under the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. The IPA has also worked closely with a number of local authorities in providing training on the *iHouse* system. The Institute is also an active member of the Housing Training Network (HTN), which presently comprises the Housing Agency, Chartered Institute of Housing, Irish Council for Social Housing, Residential Tenancies Board, the Local Government Management Agency, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and the IPA, and is committed to identifying gaps in training for housing practitioners. The HTN Housing Portal provides information on all aspects of housing training, courses and events.

Through these initiatives incremental gains are being made in pursuit of the professionalisation of housing but these must be weighed against the losses that the sector has endured. Due to the nature of recruitment and advancement in local authorities, experienced housing staff continue to leave the area and along with them goes substantial industry knowledge and experience. The same issue affects Approved

Housing Bodies and government departments. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic as well, the opportunities to network and disseminate policy and best practice in a coordinated setting have been severely hampered. The most notable casualty in this respect has been the Housing Practitioners' Conference. The 2019 Conference featured 7 sessions spread over 2 days, with 28 expert speakers from the public and private sector discussing affordability, regulation, sustainable communities, homelessness and other pertinent issues. This lost opportunity for housing practitioners cannot be understated.

#### **Establishing the Housing Forum**

It is in this context that the IPA, with assistance from the Housing Agency, decided to form the IPA Housing Forum. The establishment of the Forum had been mooted previously but in order to offset the aforementioned losses the necessity for a housing platform is deemed more vital than ever. Whilst there have been housing forums established previously, it was felt that the IPA Housing Forum was uniquely capable of taking advantage of the current circumstances and is in the best position to harness the knowledge, network and reputation that the IPA has built over many decades.

The Forum is where persons working in housing will build their knowledge about what is happening in the sector. The Housing Forum offers monthly online webinars; a repository of resource material including reports, research documents, and relevant housing literature and a network for housing practitioners working across the public, voluntary and private housing sectors to develop a platform for best practice. Forum membership is available to organisations and since it was launched in August membership now includes 32 organisations including local authorities, housing associations, state bodies and private sector organisations.

#### **Launching the Forum during the Covid-19 pandemic**

The Forum was officially launched on August 12th with a webinar on the topic of *Housing and the new Programme for Government* chaired by Dr. Philip Byrne with Eddie Lewis, Senior Lecturer in Housing Studies at the IPA. This followed a successful soft launch on July 15th with Deirdre Baber, SEO in Housing in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Colm



Webinars and online training provided by Philip Byrne and Cian Rohan, IPA.

Smyth, Principal Environmental Health Officer in Dublin City Council, presenting on *The Impact of Covid-19 on Housing Management*. Monthly webinars are a key component of the Forum's mission to provide expert knowledge and viewpoints to its members. Subsequent webinars have featured John O'Connor, CEO of the Housing Agency, speaking on Affordable Housing and Olivia Foley, Staff Officer with the Limerick City and County Council HAP Team looking at Social Housing Support. The Forum attempts to balance policy and practice when selecting its speakers. November's event on Social Housing Delivery will feature Jim Baneham from the Housing Agency. The webinars are chaired by Dr. Philip Byrne, Head of the Local Government Unit at the IPA. These live events provide housing practitioners with access to speakers' expertise in lieu of the Housing Practitioners Conference. Moreover, it allows them access with greater flexibility as there is no need to travel or take significant time off. The opportunities to ask questions and provide comments are still available and going forward, the opportunity for online engagement through the Forum's webinars and the ease of remote access will be hugely beneficial to busy housing practitioners.

#### Online resources for forum members

The IPA Housing Forum website hosts a Members' Area where webinar recordings are available as well as a repository of documents relating to all sections of housing. As more and more resources and entities are committed to resolve the 'Housing Crisis' there are ever more websites and

organisations to visit and monitor for circulars, research papers and policy announcements. The repository hosted on the Forum is an early attempt to form a database to centralise as much of that documentation as possible and make it easier for housing practitioners to avail of comprehensive material on any housing topic.

The fragmentation of housing policy and practice can also make it difficult for local authority and AHB staff to know where to direct queries, especially within large organisations. The Forum provides a contact form for members to submit queries to the Forum which are then passed on to the correct body or person so that the query can be answered in full. Current Forum membership runs until the end of 2020 with memberships for 2021 being taken from November. The IPA Housing Forum is a new initiative and is still finding its feet in terms of format and features but the appetite and quick uptake in membership from a wide spectrum of housing entities proves its value. The Forum is malleable and will respond to the needs of members as and when they arise. In many respects it is both the culmination of years of effort and a response to the current situation but it could also be a vital step towards the establishment of a professional housing body. And it is another key step forward in the professionalisation of the housing sector.

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For more information on the IPA Housing Forum visit <https://ipahousingforum.ie/> or email [housingforum@ipa.ie](mailto:housingforum@ipa.ie).



# The COMPLETE

information resource and time-management  
aid for the decision-maker.



Ireland - A Directory 2021 will be available in  
the first week of December 2020 from:

Publishing Division  
Institute of Public Administration  
57-61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4.  
Telephone: 01 240 3600  
Email: [sales@ipa.ie](mailto:sales@ipa.ie)  
Website: [www.ipa.ie](http://www.ipa.ie)  
Enquiries: Hannah Ryan/  
Joe O'Malley





# KEEP WELL

Campaign launched to support people and communities to mind their physical and mental health

**T**he Government Plan for Living with COVID-19: Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 highlights the important role that individual and community resilience will play in contributing to our ongoing response to COVID-19. The launch of this campaign is a call to action to everyone across society. It is an invitation to individuals, communities, voluntary groups, sporting organisations, those involved in creativity and the arts, local heritage and history, businesses, as well as local and national government to find ways to support everyone to discover new activities and routines that will do us good.

The initiatives are being implemented through the Healthy Ireland Fund, part of the Sláintecare policy to improving health and wellbeing for all. Local authorities will be a central source of information on local resources and initiatives, working with partners from across society.

Building on the 'In This Together' campaign which happened earlier in the year, the 'Keep Well' campaign is focussed on five main themes:

**Keeping active** - keeping active and being outdoors, even during the winter, is important to help physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Sport Ireland is leading a series of initiatives that will support people to stay active in their own local areas throughout the winter. In addition, sporting organisations and clubs are invited to develop ways to support local communities.

**Staying connected** - staying connected with people, addressing isolation, supporting volunteerism and initiatives that support person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing.

The 'Keep Well' campaign is aimed at showing people of all ages how we can mind our own physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to our daily and weekly routines. It will provide guidelines, information, and tips on things that will help us keep well through the coming months. All of this will be available on [gov.ie/healthyireland](https://gov.ie/healthyireland)

Building on the Community Call response earlier in the year, local authorities are being supported to provide a local community helpline and befriending service. Working with partner organisations, including An Garda Síochána, NGOs and Volunteer Ireland, there will be a particular emphasis on identifying and supporting those most at risk of isolation.

**Switching off and being creative** - switching off and being creative or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax can help our general wellbeing.

The local authorities and libraries, with advice from the Creative Ireland Programme, and working with partners at national and local level, will provide a range of initiatives to support individual and community creativity in the arts, crafting, culture and heritage.

**Eating Well** - by nourishing our bodies and minds, we can develop a better connection between the food we eat and how we feel and positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing.

Bord Bia will provide information and resources to support healthy eating this winter. Safefood will implement the next phase of their "START" campaign, focussing on making the most of family time and adding healthy habits. In addition, the network of libraries around the country will facilitate a major initiative with Grow It Yourself in early 2021, to support more people to grow their own food - in whatever small way they can - helping to forge greater connections between growing food and eating well and develop community networks.

**Minding your mood** - equipping people with information on where to go if they need support. This will also be linked with



Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, at the launch of the Keep Well campaign



the local community helpline to ensure that people can access the support they need.

The HSE will launch a series of “Minding Your Wellbeing” resources in the coming days. In addition, the Children and Young Peoples’ Services Committees (CYPSC) around the country are being supported to provide enhanced services to children, young people and families over the coming months.

**Local authorities will be directly responsible for a number of initiatives over the coming months, including:**

**Community creativity**

Local authorities are being supported to offer localised

creative initiatives in their areas. With advice from the Creative Ireland Programme Team, local authorities will adapt their initiatives to local circumstances and interest in activities such as:

- Communities to engage creatively with historical spaces and places in their locality;
- Live, mobile, pop-up creative entertainment in community and healthcare settings;
- To keep our communities connected through creative reading and writing;
- Creativity around the Christmas Tree;
- Creative engagement using phone, post, local media, digital platforms or social media;
- Creative Photography with Fresh Eyes and
- Utilisation of spaces and places for arts in line with Government guidelines

## Online library services, including free access to eBooks and audiobooks, will continue throughout all stages of the Government's Living with Covid-19 plan.

### Community Call and Befriending Service

Isolation of people of all ages is a significant risk during the COVID pandemic, particularly during periods of tight restrictions on movement and social interaction. The Community Call programme was introduced in the spring to provide local helplines through Local Authorities for practical supports, information sharing and befriending. As part of the 'Keep Well' campaign, this will be significantly expanded to be proactive with outreach to potentially isolated persons as the main aim.

You can find contact details for your local Community Call Helpline at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1f06f7-covid-19-community-call-local-authority-helpline-numbers-and-email-a/>

A programme of befriending supports will be developed both at national and local level. This will include phone outreach from Community Call centres, access to expertise in the handling of anxiety, stress or mental health issues, alignment with volunteers or local authority personnel for practical physical supports, one to one buddying with volunteers and neighbours, development of remote group chats between neighbours.

### Rewarding Reads

A new campaign from libraries and the Creative Ireland Programme is celebrating Irish writers while encouraging everyone to discover the joy of reading during COVID-19. Irish public libraries and the Creative Ireland Programme are reminding everyone that they can 'Start a new story' and discover lots of rewarding reads through their library, even while COVID-19 restrictions are in place. Recognising that we might all be looking for a little distraction over the coming winter months, local authorities/libraries and the Creative Ireland Programme are letting everyone know that a wealth of books for all ages and all interests are available through the library, and reading can be an excellent way to relax, escape, boost creative wellbeing or learn something new.

Online library services, including free access to eBooks and audiobooks, will continue throughout all stages of the Government's Living with Covid-19 plan. All library members have access to these services completely free, and anybody can join online at [librariesireland.ie/join](https://librariesireland.ie/join) or by contacting your local library.

Find out more at: <https://www.librariesireland.ie/news/enjoy-some-rewarding-reads-with-your-library>

## NEWS

## Statutory council meetings can now take place remotely

Councils around the country had to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing rules just like everyone else. While many meetings took place online, meetings where statutory matters were being decided had to take place in a physical location. Many councils could not facilitate full council meetings in their chambers, and had to locate to different venues such as hotels and sports halls.

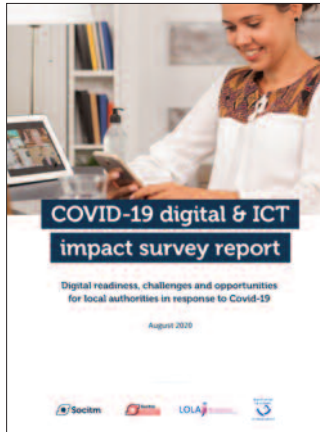
The signing of this order by Minister Darragh O'Brien will allow county and city councillors to hold meetings and vote remotely. The Minister signed a separate order for regional assemblies which means they can also convene remote meetings. It will be a matter for each council and regional assembly to decide how and where they hold meetings. Many local authorities have adopted a hybrid form of meeting with some aspects taking part online and votes taking place in a physical location.

These new measures have been welcomed by many, including the National Womens Councils who have advocated for the use of remote technology to support women's participation in local government. The AILG have also welcomed the order, while stating their preference that meetings of the councils in a physical location should always be the default and preferred option where statutory decisions are being made.

Of course, we are not alone in Ireland in facing these new challenges; The UK Local Government Association has put together a hub containing resources on remote council meetings, which can be accessed at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/remote-council-meetings>

Cork City Council held its first online ordinary meeting of the council on Monday 9th November. This also presented the Council with the opportunity to live stream the meeting to the public.

## International ICT survey highlight impact of Covid-19 on local government



A recent survey involving international organisations has demonstrated how local authorities worldwide responded during lockdown and identifies opportunities emerging from the pandemic.

Socitm, a UK-based society for innovation, technology and modernization, launched the report with findings from more than 2,500 questionnaires collected from the UK

and other countries including New Zealand, Australia, Germany and Ireland. The report, jointly produced by Socitm and Socitm Advisory, reveals the swift and decisive action taken by councils throughout the pandemic, adapting ways of working to maintain delivery of vital services and protecting the vulnerable.

Key partners in undertaking the survey were international organisations LOLA, MCE and the Republic of Ireland's IS Managers' Group. By attracting responses from around the world, the survey uncovers common and disparate themes in how local governments are supporting their organisations and communities.

The survey also reveals opportunities presented by new ways of working and improvements to the efficiency of services that need to be secured to avoid falling back to old ways.

Socitm regional director Dave Sanderson said: "Councils around the world have acted quickly in the most challenging of circumstances. In doing so, they have protected the vulnerable, continued to support communities and paved the way for new ways of working that benefit both citizens and council staff".

Headlines from the report include:

- Prior to lockdown only 5% of staff worked from home. That figure is now more than 80%.
- More than 40% of staff felt they were more efficient and productive because of flexible working.
- There is significant work for local authorities to do to train staff on the ICT tools they need for remote working.
- Around the world, improvement in work-life balance was reported by up to 58% of respondents and up to 57% have adopted new ways of working that benefit citizens.

Download the report here: <https://socitm.net/download/covid-19-digital-ict-impact-survey-report/>

## First female president of AILG elected

The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG), which represents councillors across the country, announced its new president for the 2020/21 term recently. Councillor Mary Hoade

becomes the first woman to be elected to the position. Cllr. Hoade was elected during the association's virtual AGM - another first!

Cllr. Hoade said that it was an honour to be elected the first ever female president of the AILG, and thank the outgoing president Mick Cahill for all his work in the last year. Mary is a Fianna Fáil Councillor and a member of Galway County Council.



Cllr. Mary Hoade, AILG President 2020/21 with Cllr. John Joe Fennelly, AILG Vice President 2020/21. Picture courtesy of @AILGIRE on Twitter



## Dublin during Covid-19: Your Dublin, Your Voice survey panel provides feedback and suggestions for the capital region

Your Dublin, Your Voice is a joint initiative of the four Dublin local authorities and gives Dubliners and visitors alike a unique opportunity to provide opinions and views on what they love, like and would be glad to see improved in the capital region.

The findings of our most recent Your Dublin Your Voice survey, carried out online during August 2020, show widespread support for pro-environmental initiatives and active commuting (cycling/walking) infrastructure.

### Summary of results

#### Working from home & commuting

- 56% of those working worked from home on a daily basis in August 2020 with 41% expecting to be working from home frequently in the medium to long term this compares to a pre-Covid figure of 6%.
- Pre-Covid, 32% commuted on public transport but only 20% plan to use public transport post-Covid. There is an increase from 19% to 24% who intend to cycle. There is no change to the plans of the 20% who drive.

#### Encouraging walking or cycling

- Top factors to encourage more cycling were: (1) improved cycle lane network, (2) less traffic, and (3) increased/safe cycle parking.
- To encourage walking the top factors were: (1) More pedestrianised areas, and (2) improved & wider footpaths.

#### Household energy use

- 61% reported that their household was using more energy during the COVID-19 restrictions, particularly amongst those under 65, working and with dependent children. The increase was driven by the charging of laptops and other devices (79%) and food preparation (71%).

#### Changes in behaviour since mid-March

- A majority of respondents said that they are shopping locally more often (56%) and buying more food (51%) since mid-March.
- 49% reported an increase in cleaning and 47% reported an increase in entertainment/exercise in the household.



#### Appreciation of wildlife and nature and consideration of the environment

- The importance of nature to city life is highlighted by the fact that 50% of respondents reported that wildlife helped them cope during the Covid -19 restrictions, with 49% spending more time in nature and 48% actively seeking out nature.
- 58% of respondents felt that they would be more considerate of the environment post Covid -19 but only 25% felt that others would be more considerate.

#### Adapting to a "new normal"

- The majority of respondents would like the government's post Covid -19 plans to include the retention of the new cycle lanes & wider footpaths (67%) and the promotion and protection of wildlife (64%).

#### Engaging with Dublin post-Covid

- Post-Covid, 45% of respondents anticipate using public transport less, 38% anticipate socialising in the city less, 36% intend dining and non-grocery shopping in the city less.
- 51% intend to staycation in Ireland more post-COVID. However, only 15% anticipated 'staycating' in Dublin more, highlighting the challenges the capital has in this regard.

The most common things that respondents would like to see from their local authority as communities emerge from the pandemic restrictions are improved cycle infrastructure, more outdoor seating, amenities, green spaces, and reductions in traffic/more pedestrianisation.

All previous survey reports can be accessed online at: <https://www.dublincity.ie/business/economic-development-and-enterprise/economic-development/your-dublin-your-voice>

**T**wenty two local councils decided to raise the basic rate of Local Property Tax for 2021, three more than last year. Only 3 local authorities - Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council and South Dublin County Council voted to vary the rate downwards. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown departed from its norm by voting to maintain the base rate, along with 5 other local authorities. Kerry homeowners will be the only in the country to experience a decrease on last year's bill, with the county varying the rate by just +7.5%, compared to +10% last year. All other counties either retained last year's local adjustment factor, or increased it.

The decision to vary the rates came at a time of extreme financial uncertainty for local government. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, local government has seen its revenue streams constrained and its spending increase. Local budgets for 2021 were still being finalised and agreed at time of writing

this article. The national budget, while providing some welcome measures for local government (such as a €36 million increase to the Local Government Fund) in some ways failed to provide a long-term certainty for both local authorities and businesses by not extended the rates waiver into 2021.

Once again, the debate around the fairness of Local Property Tax was raised across the country. Many feel the LPT is inherently unfair, and that people's homes should be not a source of tax income. Others believe the current equalisations measures are problematic, and that money generated locally should be kept and spent locally. In addition, the revaluation and potential reform of LPT, that has been on the cards since 2015, has again been postponed. Homeowners will continue to pay LPT based on the 2013 valuation of their property, when the tax was first introduced. The deferral of revaluation also

# ON THE UP

## LOCAL PROPERTY TAX 2021

More local authorities than ever increase the LPT rate



means that any properties built since 2013 are still exempt from the tax.

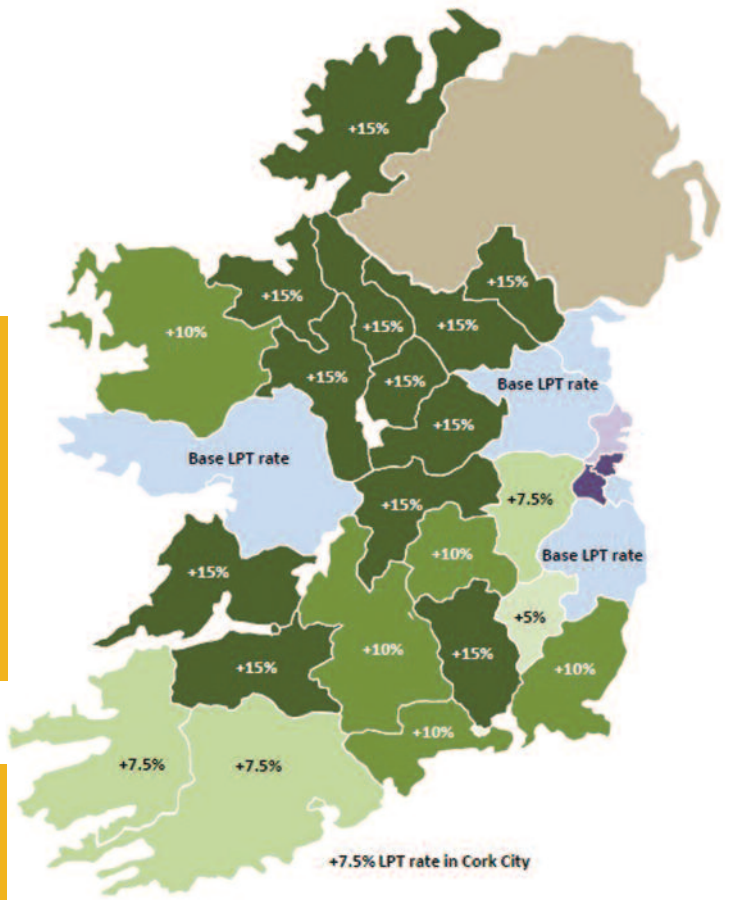
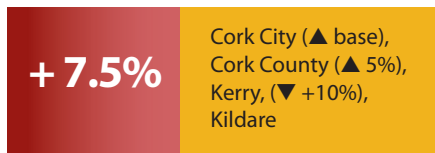
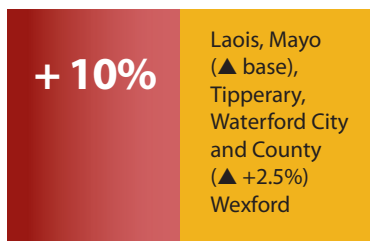
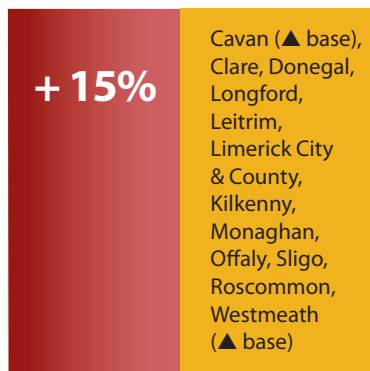
New legislative proposals are instead to be brought forward in early 2021, in line with commitments in the Programme for Government:

- To bring forward legislation for the LPT on the basis of fairness and that most homeowners will face no increase;
- To bring new homes, which are currently exempt from the LPT, into the taxation system, and that;
- All money collected locally will be retained within the county. This is to be done on the basis that those counties with a lower LPT base are adjusted via an annual national equalisation fund paid from the Exchequer.

These measures will be crucial for local authorities going forward. While LPT makes up only a small percentage of local

authority income, the 2020 pandemic has highlighted the need for a broad income base in order to provide essential services to local communities. The increased use of the Local Adjustment Factor, with most local authorities choosing to vary the rate upwards to make more money available locally, has shown that councillors are willing to take action to ensure funds are available in their local area.

A table containing all information on the impact of LPT allocations for each local authority can be found at: [https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/final\\_2021\\_lpt\\_allocations\\_after\\_local\\_variation.pdf](https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/final_2021_lpt_allocations_after_local_variation.pdf)



# CUSTOMER SERVICE SATISFACTION

Does your local authority tick the right boxes?



The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) recently published the third and final local authority satisfaction report. The 2020 report presents findings from a survey of over 1,000 citizens across the ten smallest local authorities in Ireland; Carlow, Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo, Cavan and Monaghan. A separate infographic was also published summarising findings from the previous surveys. All publications are available at [www.noac.ie](http://www.noac.ie)

The national picture from the three annual surveys shows:

- an average of 57% of those surveyed were satisfied with their local Council. Respondents in the smaller local authorities, surveyed in 2020 were the most satisfied at 59% whilst in 2019 and 2018, respectively, satisfaction levels were at 58% and 53%.
- on average just over half (52%) believe their Council is doing a good job with responses in 2020 highest at 55% compared to 54% in 2019 and 47% in 2018.
- At least 6 in 10 citizens believe their local council is making a positive contribution to the quality of life in their area. Work done by Councils to make areas cleaner, greener and safer get most recognition.
- 53% of respondents believe their Council promotes economic activity. This was agreed by 57% of those surveyed in 2020, 55% of those surveyed in 2019 and 48% of those surveyed in 2018.
- 42% stated that they were well informed by their local Council. This was highest in 2020 amongst smaller local authorities at 48% and at 41% and 38% in 2019 and 2018 respectively.
- Over one third (36%) believe their council is open and transparent, with smaller local authorities stronger on this at 41%, with 2019's survey at 39% and 2018's survey at 29%.

“ A key NOAC function is to review performance and encourage positive improvements in local government services. This series of surveys gives an excellent snapshot of how citizens across Ireland view their local Councils. Each year, we share these results with Councils and encourage them to seek improvement in how they interact with citizens. For the past 3 years NOAC has held excellent Customer Service Workshops at which presentations of many good initiatives developed and implemented by local authority staff were shared. ”

**Michael McCarthy, Chairperson of NOAC**

- 29% said that their local Council provides good value for money. In 2020 this figure was 29% whilst in 2019 this stood at 30% and in 2018 at 27%.

The remainder of this article highlights just a few of the findings from the surveys. See [noac.ie](http://noac.ie) for all reports.

### Satisfaction with the local council

The combined average satisfaction score across all three surveys (which now includes all 31 local authorities) is 57%. The majority of councils fall within the ‘average’ range of between 47% - 67%, as can be seen in Figure 1. Given the small number of people surveyed in each local authority area, the margin of error for individual results is approximately +/- 10%.

Survey participants were also asked about satisfaction with some of the most important services provided by local authorities. Roads maintenance, affordable housing, and road safety were the top three ‘most important’ services in 2020.

While satisfaction with roads maintenance and safety were relatively high (at 65% and 74% respectively), satisfaction with affordable housing was much lower at 39%. Local authority housing was also received a low satisfaction rating at 38%.

### Feeling informed by the local council

The combined 2018-2020 figure for being informed by their local council is 43%. The majority of local councils register average scores, while six perform above average and five are below average, as Figure 2 (see page 20) shows. Further analysis of the survey results shows that those who feel more informed by their local council, are more likely to be satisfied with the council.

### Providing value for money

Survey participants were also asked if ‘Taking everything into account, would you say [Local Council] provides good value for money or not?’. The average rating here over the 3 years is quite low at 28%. This means that around 3 in 10 respondents perceive their local council provides good value for money. Some of the reasons given for a ‘poor value’ response in 2020 were cutbacks/

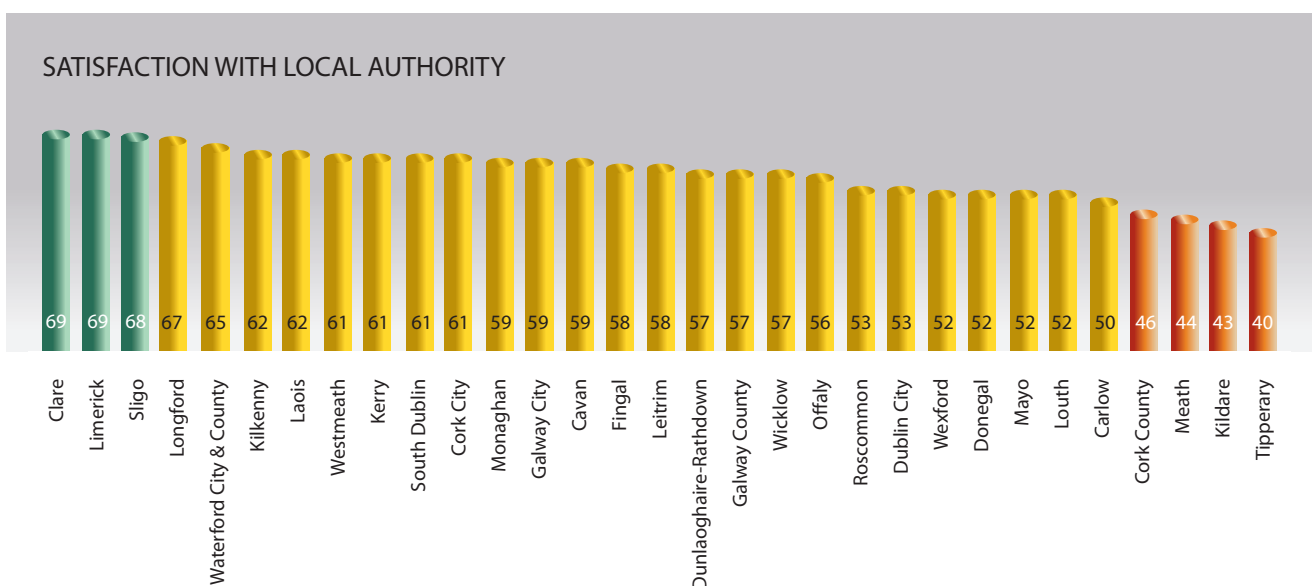


Figure 1 – Satisfaction with Local Authority. Source: Ipsos MRBI, NOAC Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2020

not spending wisely, need to improve local services such as playgrounds/parks, roads/footpaths, the need to improve communication/transparency while almost 13% were not sure why.

The annual customer satisfaction surveys have raised important issues for consideration for local authorities, as noted by Richard Boyle in a recent report commissioned by the County and City Management Association. As mentioned, this most recent NOAC publication was the final in their series of customer satisfaction surveys. The responsibility for tracking customer satisfaction annually will now be passed to the Local

Government Management Association (LGMA). The Institute of Public Administration's report will help inform the LGMA in taking over this piece of work. The report can be viewed on the IPA's website ([www.ipa.ie](http://www.ipa.ie)).

NOAC will continue its work, with the overall goal to ensure it is recognised as an authoritative body that is scrutinising performance and encouraging positive improvements in local government services. The annual NOAC Good Practice in Local Government was held virtually this year at the beginning of November, showcasing innovative projects from seven different local authorities.

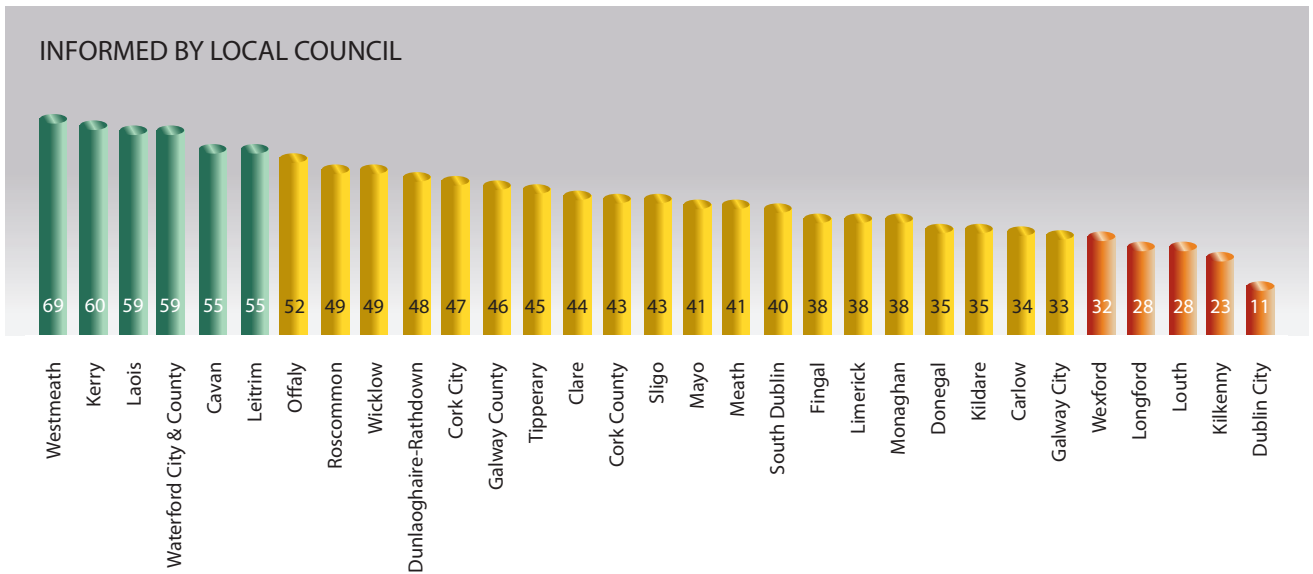


Figure 2 – Informed by local council. Source: Ipsos MRBI, NOAC Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2020

Q: Overall, how well informed do you think [Local Council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides

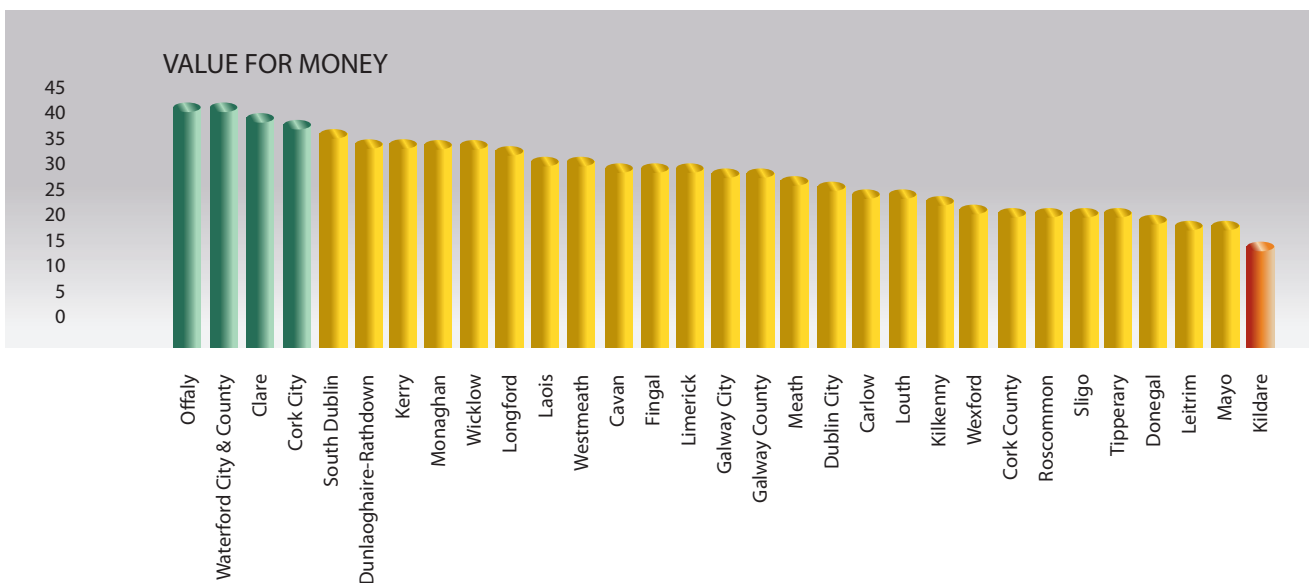


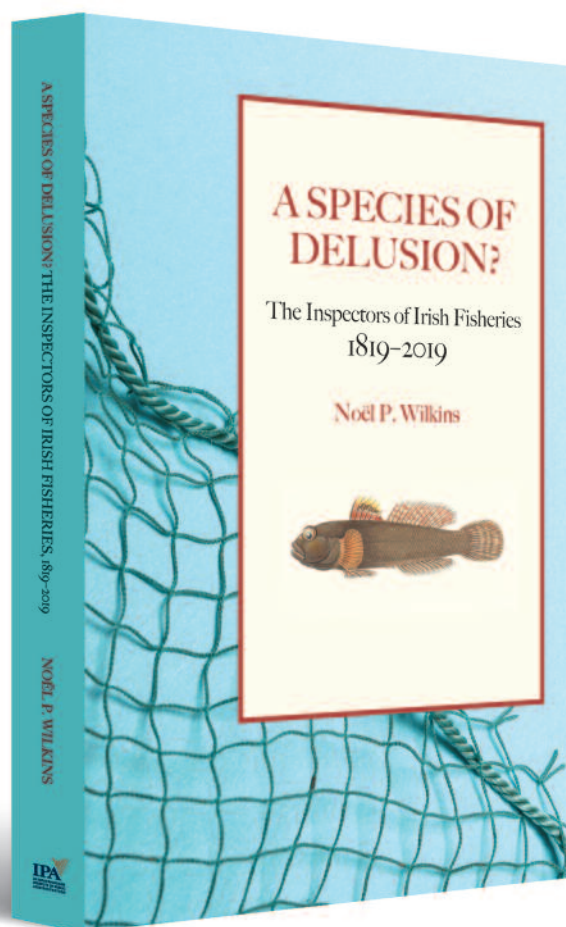
Figure 3 – Value for Money. Source: Ipsos MRBI, NOAC Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2020

NEW IPA  
PUBLICATION

# A SPECIES OF DELUSION?

The Inspectors of Irish Fisheries  
1819–2019

Noël P. Wilkins



The fishery laws of Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were acknowledged to be among the most complex in the statute book. The task of implementing them, and of monitoring the fisheries, fell to a body called the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries, first established in 1819. There were six distinct Inspectorates in series from then until today. Their tasks were so demanding that an early inspector claimed that the body was ‘a species of delusion’.

Written for a general readership and based on extensive research on public records and documents, this new volume on fisheries administration is a worthy addition to the list of books on Irish fisheries, notably by the author. These include *Ponds, Passes and Parks: Aquaculture in Victorian Ireland* (1989), *Alexander Nimmo: Master Engineer* (2009) and *Humble Works for Humble People* (2017).

**To purchase a copy contact:**

Institute of Public Administration

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Tel: +353 1 240 3760 | Email: [sales@ipa.ie](mailto:sales@ipa.ie) | Web: [www.ipa.ie](http://www.ipa.ie)

**Noël P. Wilkins** is a retired professor of the National University of Ireland, Galway. A graduate in science and law, he entered the field of fisheries as a student in the sixth Inspectorate. He subsequently became a senior scientific officer in the Marine Laboratory (Aberdeen) of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland. On returning to Ireland, he was appointed lecturer, later professor, in zoology at Galway, specialising in the genetics of fish and shellfish. The author of almost one hundred research papers and several books, he has worked and lectured widely in Europe, North America, Japan and Greenland.



# WHILE LEADING REMOTELY

Siobhan Bradley, senior leadership and management specialist at the Institute of Public Administration, on leadership and building trust while working remotely

**D**o you have this nagging feeling that “if I can’t see the team, they could be up to anything”? If you have this feeling now, chances are you had this feeling prior to current circumstances of enforced isolation. Counter-intuitively for many, remote working provides a great opportunity to build more trusting work environments and greater impact in your leadership, by taking some simple steps to enhance this critical leadership and organisational competency.



to get

Why is trust so important? Because it's the foundation of all relationships. The ability your job done depends on working with, through or in some way with others.

Therefore, building good relations with individuals and in your teams is essential to your success and will generate a range of individual and organisational benefits.

## Tell me more then about trust!

More trusting environments allow people to think and speak more freely. This openness improves the quality of decisions and creates the environment for people to take more responsibility for issues and actions. A better thinking



# “You must trust and believe in people or life becomes impossible” Chekhov

environment enhances creativity and resourcefulness, which is what leaders often say they want in their teams and which are also vital for addressing the business issues and challenges many face. As humans, we are social beings. More openness and trust helps people build a greater sense of connection and purpose together, which leads to better performance.



Needless to say, an environment of distrust curtails open thinking and discussion, sends people into a protectionist/defensive mode, which does little to build understanding of different perspectives. This negatively impacts the team-working dynamic and limits your ability to benefit from the full potential of all on the team. It also limits team responsiveness and robust decision making.

More research is emerging from the field of neuroscience which greatly enhances our understanding of how and why certain reactions are triggered in the brain, their impact and resulting behaviours. At the same time as looking for a connection with others, we have an innate, instinctive mode which scans the environment for potential threats. Understanding this can help us learn to send the ‘right’ signals for trust and learn how to effectively respond to ensure we build mutual trust.



There are a number of easy steps you can take to build and show trust. You start by looking at your mindset and how you think, as this shapes how you speak and behave.



Ask yourself some initial questions, such as, ‘*what is my picture of leadership?*’- that I should be ‘*all knowing and always have the answers to tell people what to do*’ or do I think leadership is a ‘*dynamic, collective process where I am a catalyst for action, growth, performance?*’. Where does my need for control come from? What am I concerned will happen if I give more trust?

The ‘give’ word is important. While we think people should ‘earn’ trust, we also have to give it, which means we have to ‘let go’ of something in order to give. What do you need to ‘let go of’, in order to give more trust?

## Focus on:

**Intentionally build relationships:** be interested in others, who they are, what they bring to the team. Your warm curiosity shows openness and respect of others.

**Role Model:** practicing what you want to inspire and ensuring there is no difference between what you.

**Connect with others and show you are human:** this is a strength in leadership. People need to ‘connect’ with others, give them something to ‘connect’ with. Understand the demands and stresses on them as they cope to live and work differently at the moment.

**Give people discretion in how they do their work:** this promotes responsibility and innovation. Explain any concerns and discuss workable oversight approaches to keep both sides happy.

**Open communications:** is about dialogue; not monologues where you speak at people to score points and take positions. Listen attentively to others, it’s amazing what you’ll hear and learn.

Remote working for vast numbers of people may become the norm and it certainly will be for the coming months. Now presents an opportunity to build the type of working relationships and environments that allow more people to thrive, more free expression of commitment and energy. This will spur people to go above and beyond the call of duty to give more, be more creative and innovative and thus be more responsive to the inevitable transformational change in organisations, coming down the tracks. By giving you will gain in return.

# URBAN MOBILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Over the last few months as local governments nationally and internationally respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, urban mobility has been in the spotlight. Of course, mobility is not a new consideration for local government - as evidenced by recent publications from Ireland and further afield. Both Dublin Chamber and the Southern Regional Assembly have recently published frameworks based around 'hyper-proximity' and compact, accessible urban centres.

In the summer edition of Local Authority Times, we published a case study of national and international responses to transport mobility during Covid-19! In this article Sean Keane outlined the issues for local authority - from reduced public transport capacity to enhancing active mobility (i.e. walking and cycling) - and how local authorities were tackling these issues.



# 15 minute cities and 10 minute towns

Two plans have recently been published, by the Southern Regional Assembly and Dublin Chamber, that present a new way of thinking about planning our towns and cities. Compact urban growth is a key national strategic outcome, as per Project Ireland 2040 - our national planning framework.

## Dublin Chamber's 15-Minute City

Dublin Chamber's new 'Dublin: A 15-Minute City' document calls for the concept of hyper-proximity to be adopted by planners in Dublin. The document points to the success of the 'hyper-proximity' approach in other cities such as Melbourne, Barcelona and Paris, which seeks to enhance both quality of life and sustainability.

The Chamber said that the recent Covid lockdown had highlighted the importance of urban planning that is focused on creating liveable, walkable communities in which people can live and access most of their daily needs within 15 minutes of active transport, i.e. walking or cycling.

These places should have diverse housing options and access to: safe cycle routes and local public transport, local health facilities, parks, shops, and other local infrastructure, the Chamber says in the document.

Outlining the benefits of the 15 minute city principle, the Chamber document outlines: "The core of this concept is mixed development, integrating as many uses as possible within the same space. This in many ways counteracts the past century of planning which has focused on separating residential areas from those for retail, employment, manufacturing, and entertainment."

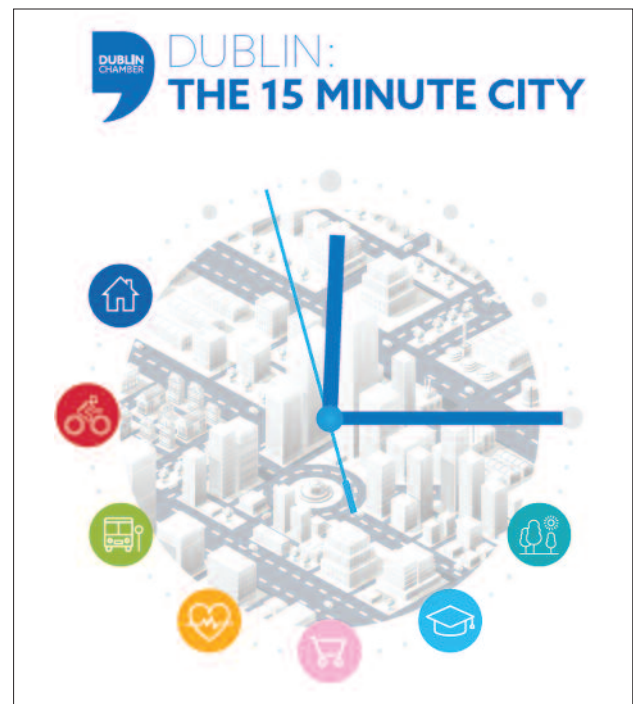
According to Dublin Chamber's Director of Public & International Affairs Aebhric McGibney: "By adopting the 15 Minute City principle we can significantly enhance the liveability of Dublin. Reduced congestion and pollution, enhanced public spaces, thriving local economies and efficient public transport would all improve Dublin's international reputation and competitiveness. Such a vision, if carried out successfully, could prove transformative for Dublin and enhance not only the lives of its residents and local economy, but its attractiveness as a place in which to do business. As remote working continues into the future the 15 Minute City concept will be pivotal in reimagining the city."

## Addressing shortfalls

The Chamber contends in the document that community development in Dublin has often taken place on an ad hoc basis. The 15 Minute City concept seeks to ensure that planners and local authorities look at the needs of a local community: what facilities or infrastructure are in place, which are not, and how shortfalls can be addressed.

Dublin Chamber's vision is that within 15 minutes of active transport from their home, Dublin residents should:

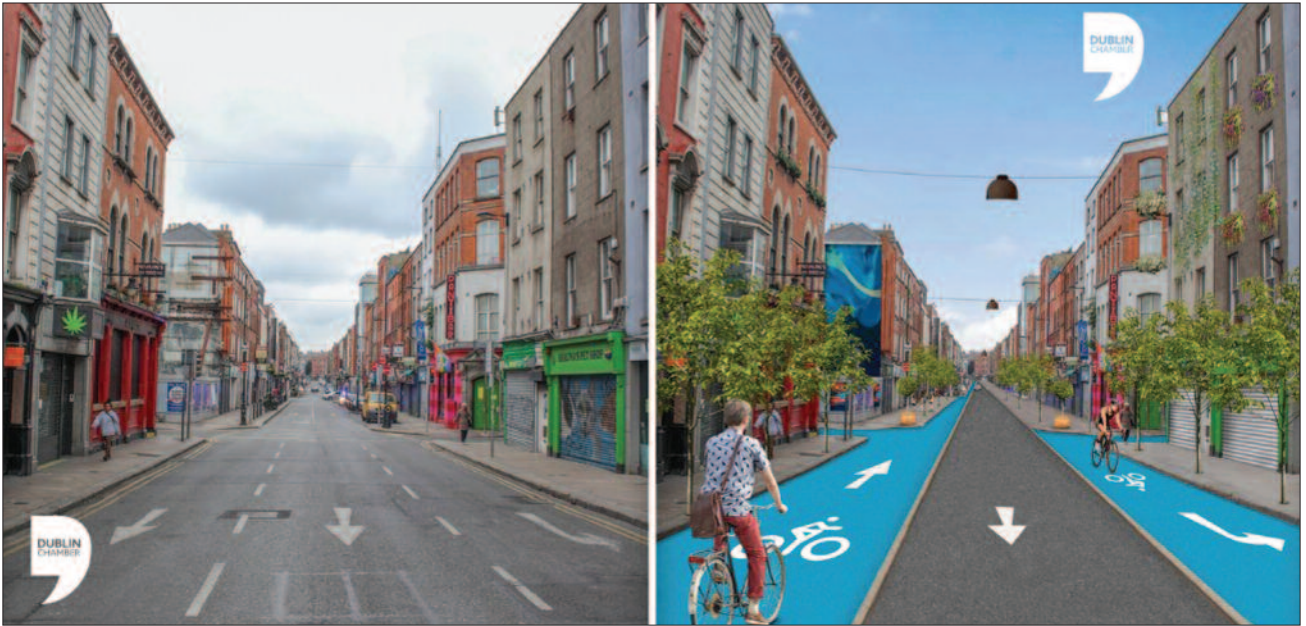
- Have access to a key public transport hub to commute around the city to access work or higher-level services;
- Be connected to their local community through safe, accessible, and well-connected footpaths and cycle paths;
- Have access to an open greenspace and high quality public realm;
- Have facilities and services that promote local living and a local economy.



To deliver this vision across the city region, the report recommends:

- Consideration of the guiding principles of hyper-proximity and the 15 Minute City vision in the upcoming reviews of the four local authority Development Plans. Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, must work together to improve the liveability of Dublin for all its residents;

<sup>1</sup> This case study, and others, are available on the IPA website at: [https://www.ipa.ie/\\_fileupload/ResearchPapers/Local%20Gov%20Covid-19%20Innovation%20Case%20studies\\_29July2020\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ipa.ie/_fileupload/ResearchPapers/Local%20Gov%20Covid-19%20Innovation%20Case%20studies_29July2020_Final.pdf)



Reimagining Capel Street in a 15-minute city.

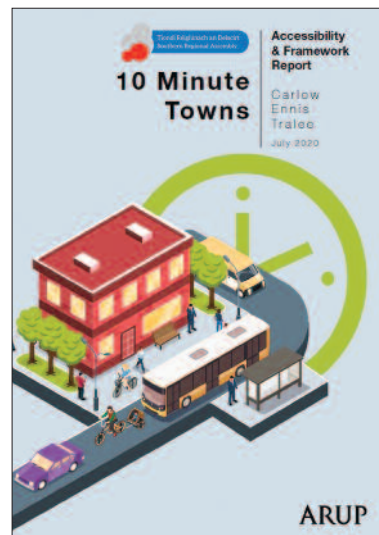
### 10 Minute Towns

Similarly, the Southern Regional Assembly's 10 Minute Town Framework aims to improve accessibility to essential services and public transport hubs in all key towns in the Southern Region by improving infrastructure to ensure these essential services are within a 10 minute walk or cycle.

10 Minute Town came about through the Southern Regional Assembly's participation as a partner in the Interreg Europe MATCH-UP project to learn from other European regions how to improve regional policies to increase the use of sustainable transport modes and reduce carbon emissions.

Following learnings from the MATCH-UP partners, Assembly focused our policy improvement on the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) - in particular Regional Policy Objective 176 on the 10 Minute Town Concept.

The 10 Minute Town Concept seeks to have all community facilities and services accessible within a 10 minute walk or cycle from homes or are accessible by public transport services connecting people to larger scaled settlements. ARUP were commissioned to assist in designing a framework and methodology to be used by local authorities as an implementation tool under the RSES for their key towns.



The framework and methodology were developed through an assessment of 3 key towns in the Southern Region - Carlow, Tralee and Ennis. The use of this implementation tool will assist all local authorities with fully integrating the "10 Minute Town Concept" into to future Local Development Plans

and increase the use of sustainable transport and reduce carbon emissions in the Southern Region. The report outlines the 'baseline' conditions in the towns by mapping out location of key services, analysing demographics and commuting and catchment patterns.

Through the in-depth assessment of the 3 key towns, some common trends in constraints were found:

- Lack of direct walk/cycle access from residential estates to local and regional roads, thus limiting their connectivity

- Establishment of a pilot programme, similar to those used in Melbourne, to be trialled in one community in each of four local authorities to establish learnings and identify implementation issues arising from such an ambitious plan;
- Use of the Local Area Plan and Strategic Development Zone models to deliver the 15 Minute City vision and to encourage further development and regeneration in built parts of the city;
- A review to identify parts of Dublin that have a particular shortage of the facilities essential to creating a 15 Minute City, particularly greenspace and public transport;
- A review of the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design standards for new apartments' document to ensure that access to communal amenity space and pedestrian first policy is placed at the core of design;
- Integration and consideration of community needs into planning conditions and zoning;

- Consideration of partnerships between industry and communities to develop mixed-use spaces;
- Pedestrian-first planning to enhance the permeability of our public spaces, creating a walkable city that supports the delivery of inclusive, vibrant and healthy communities;
- Significant capital investment in transport infrastructure, including the delivery of key projects for Dublin such as BusConnects, MetroLink, and Luas and DART expansion;
- Accelerating investment in and delivery of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan;
- A focus on mixed-housing developments, increasing population density and embracing the principle of compact growth and brownfield regeneration.

A full copy of Dublin Chamber's 'Dublin: A 15-Minute City' report can be found here: [https://www.dublinchamber.ie/DublinChamberofCommerce/media/banners/Dublin\\_The-15-Minute-City.pdf](https://www.dublinchamber.ie/DublinChamberofCommerce/media/banners/Dublin_The-15-Minute-City.pdf)

between important education, employment, leisure, healthcare and retail services

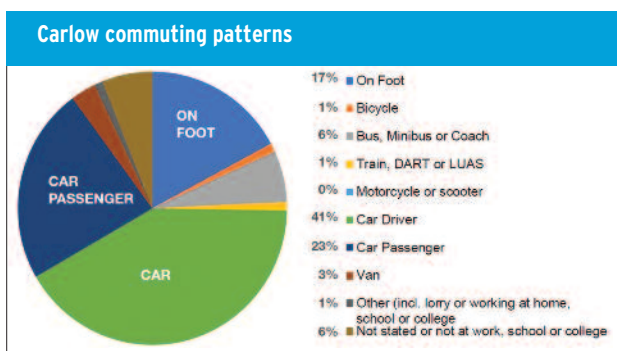
- Severance between residential estates (e.g. cul-de-sacs and fences);
- Low cycle usage from census data (1% mode share for each of the three towns);
- Bus services are generally limited (e.g. infrequent and does not cover parts of the towns) and tend to only cover specific corridors within the towns;
- Poor infrastructure, particularly cycling; and
- Lack of services, particularly in the outskirts of the town centres.

A range of infrastructure improvements are thus recommended to address these issues, including:

- Provision of walk/cycle bridges across rivers to connect areas currently deprived of services;
- Provision of connections between residential estates, for example through knocking down walls and fences, as well as providing paths between cul-de-sacs;
- Provision of connections to existing walking and cycling facilities;
- Improvement to bus services with provision of local services within the towns, increase in frequency and widening the public transport catchment through additional bus stops and new bus services.

The report also notes that behavioural changes are needed to promote the use of new walking and cycling routes and sustainable transport modes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the need for accessible, local services and the value of local environments for health and wellbeing. These two reports are excellent resources for local authorities to inform debate and thinking with regard to planning our urban areas during (and after) Covid-19.



## How city governments co-create sustainable urban mobility

**Pierre Vander Auwera, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).**

Every city faces the challenges of urban mobility: how can we make sure that citizens can get around quickly and safely every day, while also not harming the environment? That's why, on the occasion of World Car Free Day and the conclusion of the European Mobility Week, we are publishing a new report on how cities can co-create mobility projects in partnership with other levels of government.

Transport in particular is an area in which a city's policies may affect and be affected by other territories and by other levels of government. Multi-level governance and cooperation mean governments successfully consult one another and work together.

This is both horizontal - neighbouring municipalities working on a common bus network for example - and vertical - such as a regional government consulting with its municipalities and the national government on a new railway line. Such cooperation naturally leads to more coherent policies that benefit citizens in all territories.

The report examines 10 case studies of successful projects from European cities and makes recommendations for cities looking to undertake their own mobility projects and consult other governments.

### Successful mobility plans from across Europe

The case studies look at how city governments succeeded in designing their projects and cooperating with levels of government, with a focus on planning, legal and financial issues. The report notably looks at how cities developed Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), a strategic tool proposed by the European Commission. Behind the technical-sounding name is a practical reality: a comprehensive approach to consulting with citizens and other governments, which can also unlock access to EU funding.

Budapest for example completely revamped its planning process in 2013. Over 200 organisations, from local governments to interest groups, participated in the public consultation and discussions. The city was able to tap into tens of millions of euros in EU funds and there has been a significant change in urban

planning culture in general: procedures and platforms are now in place for citizens to be much more involved.

The city of Bremen won the European SUMP Award for its plan in 2014. The city authorities were able to cooperate with a wide variety of local stakeholders and peer cities, designing an ambitious plan significantly increase bicycle use and public transport by around 20% each.

### Recommendations: engage citizens and other governments

The report also issues recommendations to both urban and European policymakers on how to improve policymaking going forward. For example, local governments working on a common project should setup a platform to discuss issues and reach consensus. More generally, governance structures should encourage cooperation between municipalities.

Local governments also need to work 'vertically' with national and EU authorities. Mobility planners should then establish a contact point with the national authorities to inform them about their project and the results. Cities should furthermore join a European network or relevant EU project to build up their planning capacity and exchange with other municipalities.

### Background information

The report was drafted by CEMR and EUROCITIES as part of the Urban Agenda, an initiative of the European Union which brings together EU, national and urban policymakers. The Agenda aims to give cities a bigger say in EU policymaking, to facilitate cities' access to funding and to share knowledge and best practices among cities.



The Urban Agenda includes 14 partnerships covering sustainable mobility and numerous other issues relevant to cities, from air quality to security in public spaces. After three years of operation, the EU institutions and national governments are discussing the future of the Urban Agenda, notably whether to maintain the existing partnerships or to create new ones.

The report can be accessed online at: <https://ccre.org/bibliotheques/get-File/7b19c4a19caadfe3a1f0995b8ddb06dfe52d0a0b>



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# GET INVOLVED.

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

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Laura Shannon, Editor  
Local Authority Times  
Institute of Public Administration  
57-61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4  
Tel: (01) 240 3600  
Email: [latimes@ipa.ie](mailto:latimes@ipa.ie)