

LOCAL AUTHORITY TIMES

Vol 23 No. 1
Spring 2020
ISSN No. 07 91-8267

IPA
AN FORAS RIARACHÁIN
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ELECTION 2020

What do the party manifestos say
about local government?



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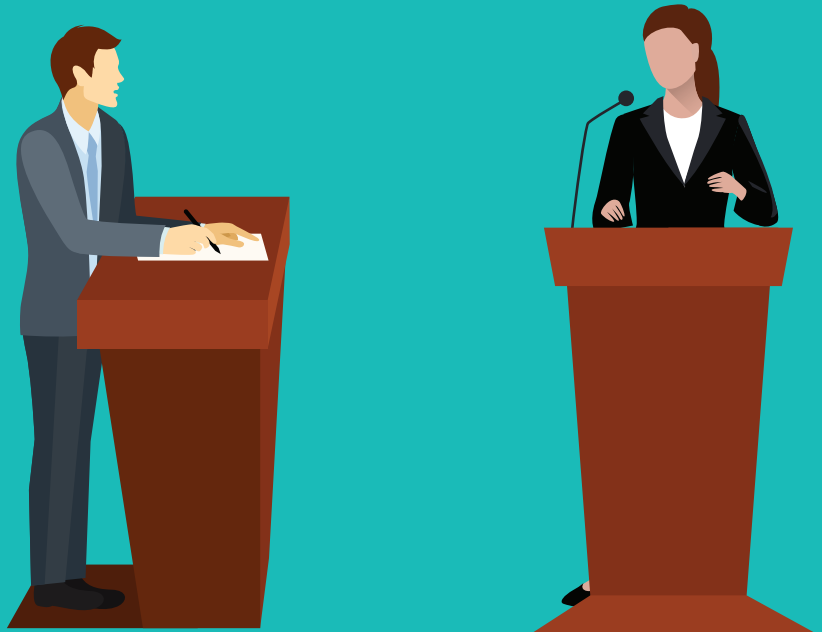
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GENERAL ELECTION 2020



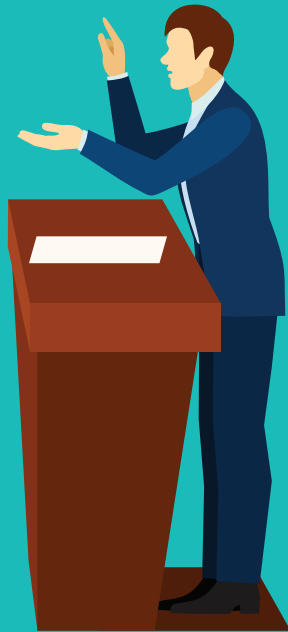
In a campaign that focused on three H's - housing, homelessness and health - the role of local government was often discussed and debated. At the time of writing, the make-up of the next Government remains unclear and the coronavirus pandemic will undoubtedly be the focus of attention for local and national government alike. It is however worthwhile to compare and contrast the promises and proposals of some of Ireland's political parties, as set out in their manifestos, as an indicator of long-term reform and innovation for local government in Ireland. This review largely considers the stances of the three largest parties (Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and Fine Gael) and the Green Party who have the next largest number of seats and have indicated willingness to enter into coalition.

Local Government Reform

The last reform plan was launched in 2012, with significant changes introduced under the *Local Government Reform Act 2014*. One of the most striking reforms was the abolition of 80 town or borough councils. Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and Labour have all proposed the re-introduction of town councils in some form. The Green Party propose the reinstatement of the

What do the party manifestos say about local government?

Laura Shannon



One of the most striking reforms was the abolition of 80 town or borough councils. Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and Labour have all proposed the re-introduction of town councils in some form.

five borough councils, while Fine Gael has no such commitments in their manifesto. The municipal district structure, introduced in 2014, does not feature in any of the manifestos and it is unclear how any re-instated or newly established town councils would work alongside or replace these structures.

Wider reform measures have been proposed from a number of parties which tackle issues such as funding, gender quotas for elections and devolution. Sinn Féin, for example, propose increasing funding by 20% alongside devolution of powers in areas of waste management, transport and economic development. The Green Party also believe public spending at the local level should be increased from the current 8% to 23% in line with our EU counterparts, alongside greater fiscal autonomy for local government.

The issue of directly elected mayors (DEMs) is one that has been frequently debated over the years. In 2021, Limerick will have Ireland's first DEM with executive functions. Voters in Cork City and Waterford rejected the Government's DEM proposal in 2019, while in Limerick the plebiscite passed (albeit narrowly). Fine Gael has established a Citizens' Assembly, which is to consider the best model for local government in Dublin, including the establishment of a DEM. While the Green Party agree with Fine Gael's approach, Fianna Fáil has proposed establishing a Dublin DEM, subject to a public vote, without the need for a Citizens' Assembly. Furthermore, the Green Party proposes an additional Citizens' Assembly to consider local government arrangements in Cork City. Sinn Féin did not express any position on the DEM issue in their manifesto.

The reform rhetoric is clear in the manifestos with language such as transformation, devolution, innovation and stronger, more accountable local government appearing across the manifestos. The remainder of this article looks at some of the key areas - financing, housing and homelessness, and climate action - to see how this rhetoric might play out.

Financing

Local Property Tax (LPT) received some attention during the election campaign with Sinn Féin promising to abolish the charge, to be replaced with direct exchequer funding. Other parties, including FF, FG and the Green Party are in favour of reforming the tax or replacing it with a site-value tax. FF propose that localised rates, broken down to the smallest level using CSO statistics, should be introduced to replace the 0.18% current tax rate.

The Green Party's proposed Site Value Tax (SVT) would be an annual tax measured on the 'basis of market value of the land under the property'. It would aim to 'incentivise land and property improvement, unlike the existing Local Property Tax'.

Of course, while significant, LPT accounts for a small percentage of local government funding. Sinn Féin has proposed increasing overall funding by 20%. The Green Party would like to entirely review the funding and functions of local government, with the aim of being more in line with our European neighbours as mentioned previously. Sinn Féin would also

initiate a 'time limited review of local government funding aimed at providing councils with a sustainable funding base'. One specific new tax proposed by the Greens is a 'bed levy' on tourists, similar to many European cities.

Commercial rates, which are another significant source of locally generated income for local authorities are also addressed in the party manifestos. Fine Gael promises to review and adjust where necessary the recently introduced changes to modernise commercial rates. Fianna Fáil includes proposals for long-term reform of rates and relief for childcare providers and rural businesses. A reformed system, they say, 'will secure the foundations of local authority finance and help promote enterprise into the future'. Measures would be targeted to help businesses and revitalise town centres but 'within the existing financial envelope of local authorities'.

Housing

Housing and homelessness were central to how this election played out. Here, the focus is on social housing and proposed measures to tackle homelessness are also discussed.

Fine Gael would continue to implement their policy for housing and homelessness, Rebuilding Ireland. They promise to deliver the 'largest social housing programme in decades' by adding a further 60,000 homes to the social housing stock over the next 5 years.

Fianna Fáil commit to directly building 50,000 new social housing units by 2025, within an overall target of 200,000 new homes. They promise to 'cut through local authority red tape' by increasing the discretionary spending threshold from €2m to €5m. They would also roll out a cost rental model for average income households. Housing Associations would maintain a key role in social housing provision and efforts would be made to enhance access to finance. The party also propose establishing a €50m 'Vacant Fund' to bring vacant and derelict homes back into use.

Sinn Féin has promised to deliver the biggest council-led housing programme the State has ever seen. To do this, they would provide an additional €6.5 billion in order to deliver 100,000 public homes on public land. The Land Development Agency would focus on 'strategically managing all public land while returning all residential development functions to local authorities.' The party also proposes to stop the use of 'public private partnerships' (PPPs), joint ventures and land initiatives in the delivery of public housing.

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The Green Party are also in favour of a stronger role for the state, but do not provide specific figures. They suggest replacing Rebuilding Ireland with a National Housing Plan to build public housing on public land, directly procured by local authorities. They also put forward a range of 'green housing' proposals including for both retrofitting and building new public homes.

All parties examined include proposals for taxing land that could be used for housing in order to tackle land hoarding and increase housing stock. Sinn Féin proposes an increase to the vacant site levy from 7% to 15%, while FF similarly propose an increase to 14%.

A number of parties also support the 'right to housing' and holding a referendum to enshrine this right in the Constitution. Sinn Féin and the Greens support a housing referendum outright. The Labour Party proposes establishing a new Convention on the Constitution to consider 'wholesale modernisation of the Constitution' which would result in one 'omnibus' referendum.

While all of the manifestos contain references to good planning and 'planning-led development', Sinn Féin includes a section on planning, building control and land use which would place much more control back in the hands of local authorities. One specific priority would be to repeal recent legislation relating to Strategic Housing Development and 'return all planning decisions to local authorities'.

Other important proposals include measures to curb the rising rents across the country. These include further supports to local authorities to restrict short-term rental platforms and changes to housing supports such as the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).



Homelessness

As the homeless crisis has deepened over the past number of years, each of the political parties set out their proposals for tackling the crisis. While there are many different stances and methods put forward, all the party manifestos examined advocate for the 'Housing First' approach to homelessness. The 'Housing First' model offers the 'provision of immediate, permanent and affordable housing to tackle homelessness, and then provides the appropriate wraparound housing and health supports, and connections to community-based supports, to ensure people maintain their housing and improve their overall health and well-being' (Government of Ireland, 2018)¹. A number of housing first tenancies have been put in place since 2018, with all parties advocating for the expansion of the model in terms of increased allocation and geographical rollout.

Fianna Fáil also proposes developing a national youth homelessness strategy and establishing a homelessness prevention unit within the DHPLG to 'develop and support effective prevention actions.' Their proposals around rental supports include increasing rent supplement levels nationally by 10% and establishing a new regular review structure to ensure the payment system is adapted to market reality. Ending rough sleeping would be an immediate priority, with measures introduced alongside the Housing First approach.

Sinn Féin would set a date for ending long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough. Specific measures include doubling the provision of Housing First allocations. In terms of emergency accommodation, they propose limiting the time a person can stay in emergency accommodation to 6 months and phasing out the use of dormitory-style homeless accommodation. They would also place a legal obligation on local authorities to put in

place preventative measures for those at imminent risk of homelessness, and end the use of vacant possession notices to quit to prevent families being evicted into homelessness.

Fine Gael's manifesto focuses on prevention, improving the current short-term emergency measures, securing long-term homes and meeting the health needs of those without a home. The outgoing Government, they would continue to implement existing strategies and ramp up delivery of supports such as the Housing First programme. The Green Party's measures focus on the need to increase supply of housing and protect tenancies in addressing the homeless crisis.

Environment & climate action

Climate action has become an increasingly important role for local authorities in recent years, alongside other responsibilities such as responding to major weather events like storms and flooding.

Fine Gael commit to fully implementing their Climate Action Plan 2019, under which each local authority has developed its own climate adaptation strategy. Looking specifically at measures that will most impact on local authorities, their proposals would see local authorities ramping up the retrofitting of local authority-owned homes and investing in more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling.

Fianna Fáil's manifesto envisages a role for local authorities as a 'one-stop shop' for communities to access information on 'retrofitting, local intermediaries and

¹Government of Ireland. (2018). *Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018-2021*

contractors, as well as on available finance options'. They propose establishing a 'Green Homes Agency' under the aegis of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) that would focus on financing retrofitting through provision of low cost loans and accessing European 'Green Deals' and private funds. Other specific measures include empowering local authorities to implement 'Car Free Zone' days and 'no-idling' laws.

Sinn Féin highlight the role of local authorities in reducing and managing waste in our society among their climate and environment policies. They commit to putting waste collection back under the control of local authorities. In terms of promoting renewable energy, they support the establishment of municipal hydrokinetic power generating systems, publicly owned and operated by local authorities. Energy generated from these systems can be used to power public lights and electric public transport.

The Green Party has included many policies that impact on local authorities and how they would carry out their functions in relation to climate action. For instance, they propose 'annual audits of local authority environmental performance' and investing more in local government environmental enforcement capacity. They would like to

see all local authorities 'producing geographical heat plans for the decarbonisation of heat'. Agencies such as CODEMA and Tipperary Energy Agency are highlighted as good models for delivery of government programmes for energy efficiency.

In terms of transport, the Green Party would ensure that every local authority has a 'high-quality cycling policy and implements best practice infrastructure around housing and school projects.' They also support the school cycle bus initiative, which has already been implemented by local authorities across the country.

The future for local government?

There are many other areas that will of course impact local government which have not been reviewed in this article such as arts and culture, community development, transport, roads... the list goes on. However in the areas reviewed - reform of local government, housing and climate action - there are many similarities. For housing in particular, it is clear that local authorities will be central to the ongoing response to the crisis, no matter the make-up of the next Government. It will also be interesting to see how the rhetoric of reform advocated by some parties is reflected in practice, particularly in relation to devolution and catching up with our EU counterparts.

NEWS

Development of Colbert Station Quarter in Limerick progresses to second phase

The Land Development Agency (LDA) has begun the second phase of Limerick city's proposed Colbert Station Quarter. The aim of the project is to develop a 50-hectare 'brownfield' site surrounding Colbert Station with potential capacity for a walkable neighbourhood of new homes in addition to employment, transport and leisure spaces.

The LDA is collaborating with State bodies and other landowners, including Limerick City and County Council, ClÉ and the HSE in relation to the proposal.

After receiving almost 100 submissions from the public about the project, the design review panel members will now evaluate the potential for the site and will design

preliminary plans. The outcome of the design review will be put on public display and will act as a platform for a second round of public consultation and engagement.

The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland will lead the design review, which is independent and non-directional.

Chairman of the LDA, John Moran, said the response to the project had been 'tremendously positive' so far: 'I was particularly happy to see just how many people agree with the need to move away from low-density homes at this location. Their ideas now give local insight into how to provide a bed-rock for delivering on the need to build homes and community and not just housing units.'

The design review process is a precursor to a statutory master-plan.

Digital mapping software launched in Waterford to improve service delivery

Waterford City and County Council recently implemented digital mapping software from Esri Ireland that aims to improve how they deliver services to the 116,000 citizens in Waterford.

Esri's GIS solutions are helping to digitally transform the Council, by moving it away from many paper-based processes and leading to numerous efficiencies and benefits. The technology is being rolled out across many areas of the organisation, to help the Council to manage the wide range of services it delivers. These include housing, planning, finance, property management, roads, environment and customer service.

Employees in the planning department have used the digital mapping platform to make faster and more informed decisions on 4,400 planning applications to date - based on easy access to accurate and complete

information covering the entire county. The mobile functionality of the technology is also transforming how the Council manages social housing throughout Waterford. Employees can now collect data in the field using smartphones and tablets with information immediately accessible in the main office, enabling it to complete double the number of housing inspections carried out each year.

Michael Walsh, CEO, Waterford City & County Council, noted that this software has become a really important tool for us in terms of the effectiveness, the speed and hopefully the quality of decision-making within the Council."

Another innovative use of the software will help Waterford's tourism offering by developing engaging story maps. The maps developed by Waterford Council showcase attractions and upcoming events throughout the county, helping to attract more tourists to the area. One such series of maps explores the Waterford Greenway, a 46 kilometre off-road cycling and walking train along the old railway line from Waterford city to Dungarvan. Visitors can use the map on or offline to easily view car parks, bike hire shops, toilet facilities and highlights along the route, as well as viewing the local weather forecast.



Pictured at the announcement that Waterford City and County Council has implemented Esri's digital mapping technology to improve public services are (L-R): Dermot O'Kane, Head of Sales, Esri Ireland; Michael Walsh, CEO, Waterford City & County Council; and Jon Hawkins, GIS Projects Leader, Waterford City & County Council.

The IBP/LAMA All Ireland
Community & Council Awards

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Communities and Councils
recognised at annual
awards held in Croke Park

Over 500 people came together in
Croke Park on Saturday 15th
February to celebrate the
achievements of community
projects from across Ireland.

The IBP/LAMA All Ireland Community & Council Awards recognises and celebrates communities and councils working together across the island of Ireland and highlights unsung heroes for the phenomenal contribution they make throughout the year. RTE's Marty Morrissey hosted the prestigious ceremony, now in its 14th year, and the guest of honour on the night was the Minister for Local Government and Electoral Reform John Paul Phelan.

Clare County Council was one of the biggest winners at the annual, with 15 nominations shortlisted on the night and scooping the Council of the Year award. The award aims to recognise a local council that has gone above and beyond for their communities. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said the win 'highlights and validates the hard work and dedication of staff that the council is doing in conjunction with communities across our county for the betterment of all.' Also in Clare, the local civil defence organisation was awarded emergency response team of the year. Clare Civil Defence is a volunteer organisation with 90 members that supports front line emergency services as well as local communities.



With over 200 entries received, there were 24 winners crowned in the various different categories. The Grand Prix Award, which goes to the project or initiative that received the highest average mark from the judging panel, went to Kildare County Council for their work to make the county inclusive and accessible to all. The National Impact Award was awarded to Meath County Council as hosts of the Age Friendly Ireland shared service platform. In Cavan, a community-led initiative 'Belturbet Zero Waste' scooped the award for Best Waste Management Programme. The initiative was launched by Belturbet Tidy Towns in 2019 and aims to reduce waste consumption and carbon footprint by 50% over the next 5 years.



Council of the Year (Sponsored by IPB) - Clare County Council.
Photos by Paul Sherwood.

Commenting on the winners at this year's awards, IPB Insurance Chairman George Jones said, 'The vision, variety and social impact reflected through the community projects shortlisted tonight is hugely inspiring. I would like to congratulate all the winners chosen from over 150 All-Ireland finalists. Community spirit is the cornerstone of Ireland's societal heritage and therefore it is very important that we continue to recognise the valuable work being undertaken at a grass roots level. I would also like to compliment all 31 local authorities across the country that continue to give great leadership and support to their communities in creating better places to live, work and socialise. I wish everyone involved continued success with their endeavours into the future.'

For more on the All Ireland Community & Council Awards presented by IPB Insurance and LAMA please see <https://lamaawards.org/>

'The vision, variety and social impact reflected through the community projects shortlisted tonight is hugely inspiring.'



Grand Prix Award
(Sponsored by IPB) -
Working to make County
Kildare Inclusive and
Accessible to all / Kildare
County Council

All Ireland Community & Council Awards 2020 Winners

- Community & Council Awards 2020 Winners
- Best Arts/Culture (incl. festivals & events) - The Bingo Wings Project (Limerick City & County Council)
- Best Business Working with the Community - Ray of Sunshine Morning & After school Ltd (Wicklow County Council)
- Best Community Based Initiative - 'Community Car' Age Friendly Sustainable Transport Service in Fingal (Fingal County Council)
- Best Community Health Initiative - Parkrun in West Dublin Area (South Dublin County Council)
- Best Community Sports Team/Club - The Sanctuary Runners (Cork City Council)
- Best Connected Council (Communication & Digital Marketing) - Monaghan Alerts (Monaghan County Council)
- Best CSR Community Programme - Applegreen Blossom fund
- Best Disability Access & Inclusion Initiative - Working to make County Kildare Inclusive and Accessible to all (Kildare County Council)
- Best Education / Training Initiative - Active Body Active Mind (Waterford City & County Council)
- Best Educational Building - New Third Level Campus for Limerick Institute of Technology in Ennis, County Clare in collaboration with Clare County Council
- Best Energy Smart Initiative - Kilkenny County Council Streetlight LED Retrofit Pilot Project
- Best Environmental/Ecological Project/Initiative - Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN) (Monaghan County Council)
- Best Heritage Project- Cavan Townhall (Cavan County Council)
- Best Local Authority Innovation for Attracting Inward Investment - J17 National Enterprise Park (Laois County Council)
- Best Public Park - Lough Key Forest and Activity Park (Roscommon County Council)
- Best Social Housing Initiative - Feakle Social Housing Scheme (Clare County Council)
- Best Tourism Initiative - Donegal Connect (Donegal County Council)
- Best Waste Management Programme - Belturbet Zero Waste Initiative (Cavan County Council)
- Community Volunteer of the Year - Sister Finbar Breslin (Westmeath County Council)
- Best Social Enterprise - St. Gabriels Orthotic Services (Limerick City & County Council)
- Emergency Response Person/Team of the Year - Volunteers Supporting the Community (Clare County Council)
- Council of the Year - Clare County Council
- Grand Prix Award - Working to make County Kildare Inclusive and Accessible to all
- National Impact Award - Age Friendly Ireland Local Government Shared Service (Meath County Council)

THE DISPARITY IN HOUSE PRICES

A county-level perspective on housing affordability in Ireland

ESRI Research Note summary,
by Alan Reynolds,
Maynooth University student



Housing affordability is a contentious issue which has dominated the narrative of Irish life for the past number of years. There are several factors which have been dictating this, centering around house price growth and its uneven distribution across the country. In a recent research note the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) (Allen-Coghlan et al., 2019) make reference to several factors and indicators which illustrate the disparity in house price growth.

These factors focus on, in particular, first time buyers (FTBs) as a susceptible group within the overall housing market. According to the ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary in 2018, house price growth has become highest among cheaper properties as opposed to more expensive properties. This would indicate several difficulties have arisen for FTBs, as typically they would be the demographic of buyers entering the housing market at lower house price levels.

The note examines housing affordability and its effects country wide, combining granular data on both house prices and income. More specifically it combines data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on disposable income from the regional accounts with Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data, containing information on age and income in an attempt to measure FTBs for each county. Additional information surrounding FTB house prices is gathered from the CSO's Residential Property Price Index (RPPI) dataset. By examining the data available through these sources the note explains the differences between county house prices, county incomes, housing affordability, residual income and



illustrates the differences within urban centres with regard to housing affordability.

Some interesting findings from the note are evident in county house prices and county income. CSO figures show the distribution of FTB house prices looking at the counties with both the highest and lowest mean house price each year from 2010 to 2018. As would be expected, Dublin has the highest mean house price in each year, while either Longford or Leitrim had the lowest mean house price in each year. Evidently in Dublin, FTB house prices in 2014



increased above 2010 house price levels and have continued to rise year on year since 2014. Additionally, at just under €375,000, the mean FTB house price in Dublin cost more than three times the mean FTB house price in Longford which was 116,000 euro. In 2018 only Wicklow, Dublin, and Kildare were above the FTB average of €283,000 while for 18 of 26 counties the FTB average fell below €200,000. Coinciding with these figures from the period 2013 to 2018, on average FTB house price growth increased by 56.4%. Higher than average growth was recorded in counties surrounding Dublin such as Kildare (61.6%), Louth (69.5%) and Meath (66.6%). On the other hand growth in FTB house prices in the same period in western and north western regions fell well below the 56.4% average in counties such as Mayo (26.5%), Sligo (36.6%) and Leitrim (46.3%).



In terms of income, as mentioned previously combining CSO data and SILC data illustrates the estimated levels of gross income and disposable income county wide in 2018. Indicated by these 2018 figures it is clear that there is higher levels of gross and disposable income in the East and South of the country. Dublin's disposable mean income (€48,867) as well as Cork's gross income (€56,596) illustrate some of the highest levels of income in the country in 2018.

The mean income level as reported in the note is contrary to mean gross income as illustrated by the Central Bank reports which indicates mean gross income for first time buyers accessing mortgage credit in 2018 as €73,536. As referred to this may be the case as households who are able to obtain a mortgage are situated in higher parts of the income distribution. Lydon and McCann (2017) show that more than 90% of FTB purchases in 2014 were to households in the top 60% of the population income distribution. The ESRI figure differs somewhat as it estimates the mean income of younger households (less than 40 years old) who are not yet actual

As would be expected, Dublin has the highest mean house price in each year, while either Longford or Leitrim had the lowest mean house price in each year. Evidently in Dublin, FTB house prices in 2014 increased above 2010 house price levels and have continued to rise year on year since 2014.

homeowners. What this does indicate is the difficulty that exists for first time buyers to potentially own their own home.

The relationship between house prices and income for first time buyers thus becomes an indicator for housing affordability. This is illustrated within the note by the mortgage repayment-to-income ratio (MRTI) (see Table 1). This ratio aims to assert whether or not it would be possible to achieve a mortgage under the current credit market conditions, in this case for a couple on the mean FTB income level. This is achieved by calculating what the monthly payment would be on a mortgage if these households were to purchase the mean FTB priced house in each county, as well as including some Central Bank parameters as referred to in the note. The MRTI is shown to be increasing across many counties in particular around Dublin and its hinterland. In Wicklow and Dublin, the MRTI is greater than or equal to 35%. This figure is smaller in Galway and Cork, at 28% and 27% respectively. In monetary terms, mean monthly mortgage payments for counties such as Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow are above €1000. In western counties the figures fall below 20%; Longford having the smallest at €443, an MRTI just of 0.14.



What is evident from the ESRI calculations in this note is that the rate of growth in house prices is outstripping income growth over the period mentioned. This illustrates FTB concerns are centred mainly in Dublin and the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). This is most concerning for lower income earners who are also FTBs. As mentioned, those closer to mean income levels within the FTB bracket have significant advantages in terms of paying mortgage instalments to attain minimum levels of consumption in all counties. What is clear though is that many FTBs are and will



continue to struggle with housing affordability particularly in Dublin and the GDA. In this regard subsidy schemes for first time buyers such as the 'Help to Buy' incentive should be coupled with an increased emphasis on building affordable housing as at the current moment

many low income earners are being priced out as housing prices increase. Additionally, the income data which is examined refers to two individual incomes together and does not refer to single income FTBs, those who might feel the burden of housing affordability in a greater sense. As Dublin caters as a focal point for much of the employment in Ireland, housing within the GDA should evolve to cater for those low to medium income first time buyers, in the hope of encouraging future home ownership.

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TABLE 1 MEAN FIRST TIME BUYER MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENT AND MORTGAGE REPAYMENT-TO-INCOME RATIOS BY COUNTY 2018

County	Payment (€)	MRTI	County	Payment (€)	MRTI
Carlow	696	0.20	Longford	443	0.14
Cavan	579	0.18	Louth	810	0.25
Clare	713	0.22	Mayo	570	0.18
Cork	973	0.27	Meath	1,048	0.31
Donegal	511	0.18	Monaghan	641	0.20
Dublin	1,423	0.35	Offaly	613	0.20
Galway	863	0.28	Roscommon	508	0.17
Kerry	685	0.21	Sligo	590	0.17
Kildare	1,129	0.32	Tipperary	607	0.17
Kilkenny	728	0.22	Waterford	713	0.22
Laois	695	0.22	Westmeath	680	0.21
Leitrim	455	0.13	Wexford	694	0.21
Limerick	811	0.23	Wicklow	1,217	0.36

Source: Allen-Coghlan et al, 2019, p. 13



CORONAVI

LOCAL RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

As the response to Covid-19 is continually evolving, local authorities are ensuring that core services are maintained and supports are made available where needed. While local authorities have closed their offices to the public, many services remain available online or by telephone. This article details some broad ranging measures and supports that have been put in place at the time of writing.

To find out more detailed and up to date information, please check your local authority website.

Homeless supports

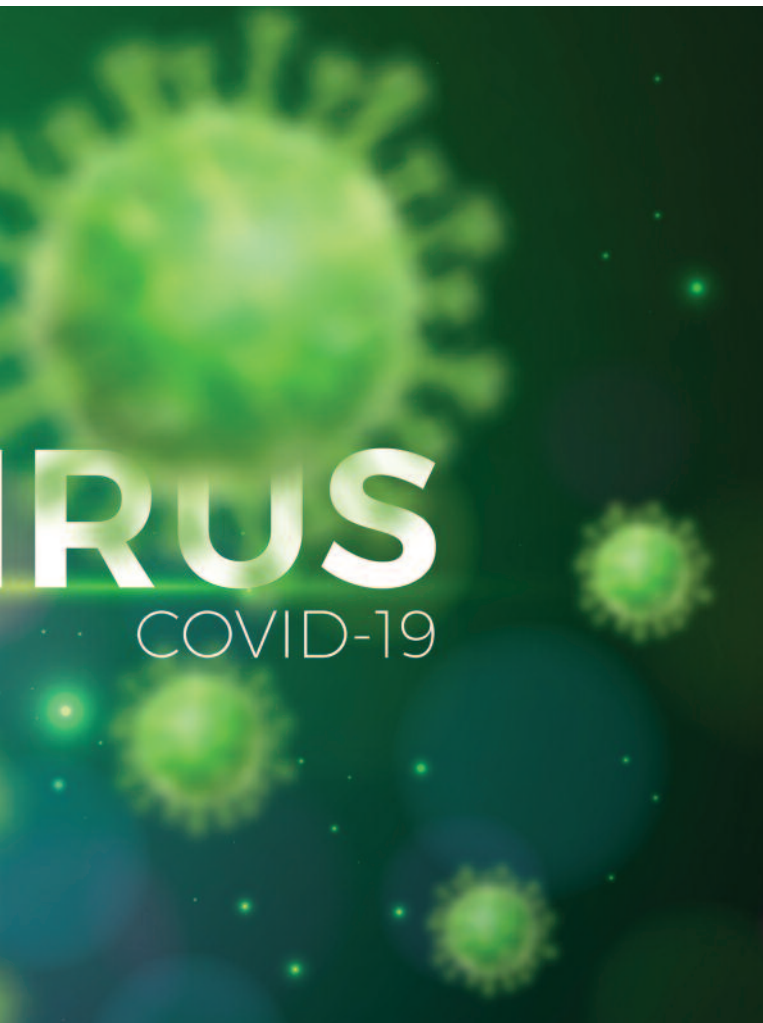
Families and people who are homeless are particularly vulnerable and additional supports and measures have been identified to ensure their health and safety. Staff working in these areas are also of paramount importance to ensure they can continue to deliver services and themselves stay well.

The Government's 'Covid-19 Government Action Plan' (as launched on 16 March) sets out the multi-agency response required for homelessness services with the following key actions:

- Issue homeless services specific guidance to all local authorities and service providers
- Operate business continuity management with a focus on the response required for isolation and relocation as required
- Introduce precautions to minimise the risk of infection among service users and staff
- Provide for additional outreach teams to offer beds and accommodation to rough sleepers
- Develop measures to reduce demand for emergency accommodation.

Local authorities will work to implement these actions along with partners such as the Departments of Health and Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), the Health Service Executive, and homelessness service providers.

Some measures were quickly implemented, such as providing guidance and securing the necessary facilities for self-isolation for those in emergency accommodation. Extra funding has also been made available to service providers, NGO's and local authorities to protect vulnerable people and those who work with them. Additional staff have been allocated to



front-line services, and back-up staff will be available as required. Measures will be reviewed on a daily basis as the situation evolves.

Libraries

While libraries might be physically closed due to Covid-19, many services can be accessed online. Libraries Ireland has put together a guide for using online services during Coronavirus. Anyone can join the library online and get instant access to eBooks, audiobooks, online magazines and newspapers for free, or even take language and other courses.

A 'how-to' guide is available on their website at: <https://www.librariesireland.ie/news/online-services-during-coronavirus>

Keep an eye on Libraries Ireland website, and social media channels for updates. Many libraries are also live-streaming readings and other library events.

Business supports

Supports have been announced for small business through local enterprise offices, and for others via commercial rates relief.

Micro-enterprises:

Small or micro-enterprises should contact their local enterprise office for information and guidance. Contact information for LEOs and the most up-to-date information can be found at: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/response/>

Businesses which are seeking support to assist with business continuity and preparedness connected to the Covid-19 outbreak, may be provided with a Business Continuity Voucher subject to certain conditions and criteria. This offer is in addition to the current range of business supports for microenterprises.

Other supports include a new loan scheme, providing up to €50,000 with 6 months interest free and repayment free moratorium. The Covid-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland (MFI), in partnership with Local Enterprise Offices, is a Government-funded initiative to support small businesses through the current period of uncertainty. It's designed for micro-enterprises that are a) having difficulty accessing bank finance and b) impacted, or may be impacted negatively, by Covid-19 resulting in a reduction of 15% or more in turnover or profit.

Further details on this can be found at: <https://microfinanceireland.ie/>

Local Enterprise Offices will no doubt be striving to help their clients to deal with this crisis. Carlow LEO, for example, will commence an online support programme to help business owners lead their business through Covid-19.

Community mobilisation

Social distancing is being strictly enforced and local authorities have been instructed to close all playgrounds, while public areas and parks remain open (as of March 24th). However many local authorities are encouraging and supporting communities to come together in new ways. Virtual parades for St Patrick's Day were just one such example. After much effort from local authorities and individuals alike, people were encouraged to post photos and videos online of their floats and outfits.

If you're well and interested in volunteering to help your local community, visit <https://www.volunteer.ie/> for more information and to find your local volunteer centre.

For advice and factual information on coronavirus, please visit the HSE website in the first instance: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

'The Community Call': Mobilising Resources, Connecting Communities

Local authorities establish Community Support Fora

In light of the further Covid-19 measures announced by An Taoiseach on March 27th, particularly around cocooning requirements for certain vulnerable members of the community, support structures have been put in place by each local authority.

Chaired and coordinated by each local authority chief executive, each Community Support Forum consists of the HSE, the council, county champions, An Post, Community Welfare Service, An Garda Síochána, other State organisations, charities and other stakeholders. It will lead the co-ordination of Covid-19 community supports and resilience in each area.

If a vulnerable person needs to make contact immediately they can contact 0818 222024.

Community Support Fora will provide the following services:

- Collection & Delivery - Food, essential household items, fuel, medication in line with guidance
- Transport to Community testing centres Clinical Assessment Hubs GP and hospital appointments
- Social Isolation, supports, engagement
- Meals and their delivery
- Garda-related
- Other medical/health needs

There is now a community support helpline/call centre operating from early morning to late evening, 7 days per week, in every

local authority. It will be cross-referenced by the Alone National Helpline.

A full end to end service delivery process will ensure clients are identified and supported consistently in every area.

Speaking at the launch on April 2nd, An Tánaiste Simon Coveney TD said: 'We are all finding it very strange to be home and to be keeping away from our family and community. But those that are vulnerable or in need of a bit of help need to know that they are not alone. The government is tapping into the reach of our local authorities in every corner of Ireland as well as the extraordinary dedication of a legion of voluntary groups and charities. For those who need some help, it is there for you.'

Mr Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, also speaking at the event, praised the outstanding contribution of the community and voluntary sector to the national effort to address the effects of the COVID-19 crisis: 'Since the very start of this emergency, the community and voluntary sector has been working on the ground and also at national level with my department, to prepare for the Community Response which we are outlining today. One of our greatest assets in this country is the strength of our local, community and voluntary networks.'

'We are now asking that those networks - formal and informal - be mobilised so that everyone in our communities can look after each other. If your neighbours or relatives are required to stay at home - check with them to see if they need supports. And if you are in that category yourself, don't hesitate to ask for help - whether it's with shopping, fuel delivery, collecting medicines or any other necessities of daily life. The Local Authority helpline is there as a safety net, to ensure that everyone is looked after.'

The following is the list of each local authority's helpline phone numbers.

Local Authority	Community Response Number	E-Mail Address
Carlow County Council	1800 814 300	covidsupport@carlowcoco.ie
Cavan County Council	1800 300 404	covidsupport@cavancoco.ie
Clare County Council	1890 252 943	covidsupport@clarecoco.ie
Cork City Council	1800 222 226	covidsupport@corkcity.ie
Cork County Council	1800 805 819	covidsupport@corkcoco.ie
Donegal County Council	1800 928 982	covidsupport@donegalcoco.ie
Dublin City Council	01 222 8555	covidsupport@dublincity.ie
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	01 271 3199	covidsupport@dlrcoco.ie
Fingal County Council	01 890 5000	covidsupport@fingal.ie
Galway City Council	1800 400 150	covidsupport@galwaycity.ie
Galway County Council	1800 928 894 and 091 509 390	covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie
Kerry County Council	1800 807 009	covidsupport@kerrycoco.ie
Kildare County Council	1800 300 174	covidsupport@kildarecoco.ie
Kilkenny County Council	1800 500 000	covidcommunity@kilkennycoco.ie
Laois County Council	1800 832 010	covidsupport@laoiscoco.ie

Spring in Storytime: Irish libraries, publishers and writers team up for virtual library storytimes

Irish public libraries, publishers and writers have agreed a deal to facilitate online storytime sessions for young people while libraries and schools remain closed to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This initiative will provide another valuable resource for families alongside the online services already provided by libraries such as eBooks, eAudiobooks, and access to online learning resources on Askaboutireland.ie and Enfo.ie.

'Spring into Storytime' is the name of libraries' annual celebration of families reading together. This year, people are being encouraged to celebrate great Irish writing with our librarians online instead of in your local branch, using #LoveIrishWriting.

Storytime in the library is a special shared time for families and, thanks to the generosity of Irish publishers and writers, this deal will allow librarians to keep storytime alive online for our youngest members. Library storytimes are a fun way for children to enjoy stories, especially those who may not have access to books in the home or do not have access to new books at this time.

Irish librarians, writers and publishers are committed to inspiring a love of stories now more than ever and this partnership means children can continue to enjoy the best in Irish children's books.

How will it work?

The publisher partners (listed below) and the Irish Writers Union have kindly agreed to temporarily waive licence fees for the reading

of selected books and the posting or streaming of videos online. Librarians will stream storytime sessions or post them online on their social media channels, and these videos will remain online while library buildings are closed.

Follow your local library service's social media channels or Libraries Ireland's Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages to find out when storytimes in your area will be uploaded. Visit www.librariesireland.ie for more information.

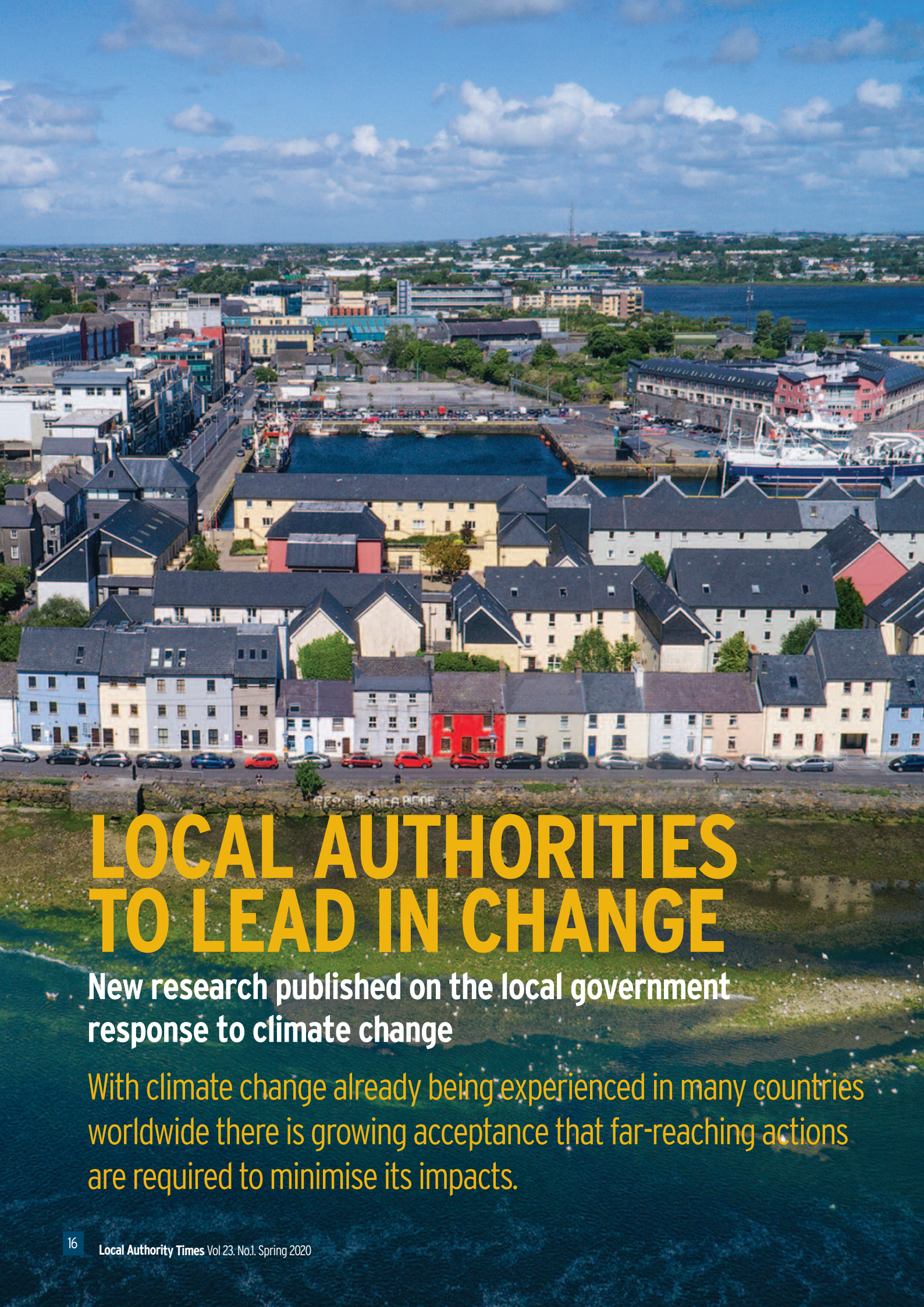
The Irish publishers who have signed up are:

- The O'Brien Press
- Mercier Press
- Little Island Books
- Gill Books
- Futa Fata
- Leabhar Breac
- An Gúm
- Cló Iar-Chonnacht
- Cois Life
- LeabhairCOMHAR

Additional funding for library online services was also announced by the Government, in light of the increased demand for online services. A €200,000 investment was made to provide an additional 5,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks. In the week following the closure of the public libraries, over 7,300 people registered for the Borrowbox service which provides eBooks and Audiobooks to library members, almost as many as had joined since the start of the year up to that point.

There were also 25,521 eBooks downloaded from 13th to 19th March, a more than threefold increase on the previous week. During that same week there were over 26,000 eAudiobook downloads, more than double the previous week.

Local Authority	Community Response Number	E-Mail Address
Leitrim County Council	071 965 0473	covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie
Limerick City & County Council	1800 832 005	covidsupport@limerick.ie
Longford County Council	1800 300 122	covidsupport@longfordcoco.ie
Louth County Council	1800 805 817	covidsupport@louthcoco.ie
Mayo County Council	094 906 4660	covidsupport@mayococo.ie
Meath County Council	1800 808 809	covidsupport@meathcoco.ie
Monaghan County Council	1800 804 158	covidsupport@monaghancoco.ie
Offaly County Council	1800 818 181	covidsupport@offalycoco.ie
Roscommon County Council	1800 200 727	covidsupport@roscommoncoco.ie
Sligo County Council	1800 292 765	covidsupport@sligococo.ie
South Dublin County Council	1800 240519	covidsupport@sdublincoco.ie
Tipperary County Council	076 106 5000	covid19@tipperarycoco.ie
Waterford City and County Council	1800 250 185	covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie
Westmeath County Council	1800 805 816	covidsupport@westmeathcoco.ie
Wexford County Council	053 919 6000	covidsupport@wexfordcoco.ie
Wicklow County Council	1800 868 399	covidsupport@wicklowcoco.ie



LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO LEAD IN CHANGE

New research published on the local government response to climate change

With climate change already being experienced in many countries worldwide there is growing acceptance that far-reaching actions are required to minimise its impacts.

To effectively respond to the challenge the Irish Government, under its *Climate Action Plan* published in June 2019, committed the State to achieve ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction levels by 2030 in line with legally binding EU commitments. Within the *Climate Action Plan*, as with all public sector bodies, local authorities are required to lead in the delivery of fundamental changes in how they operate and in how they provide public services to support State ambitions regarding climate action.

Local authority climate change publication

A key requirement for the sector under the *Climate Action Plan* was to establish a baseline of current climate change activities. Prior to the publication the national plan, the County and City Management Association (CCMA) Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning (ECCEP) Committee had asked the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) Research Unit to undertake a review of local authority climate actions between 2011-2018. A research report, *A Profile of Local Government Climate Actions in Ireland* by Dr. Darren Clarke and Dr. Bernie O'Donoghue-Hynes, was published in January 2020 that captured the sectoral baseline required under the *Climate Action Plan* but went beyond that to include resources that could be used to share best practice across the sector.

The research was undertaken in 2019 and the objective was to quantify local authorities' mitigation, adaptation and emergency response climate actions. All thirty-one local authorities responded to a detailed questionnaire that examined climate actions in key areas, including critical infrastructure, water resources and flood risk management, nature-based solutions and public engagement. In addition, forty-four case studies detailing climate action best practices were included. The case studies represented the diversity of climate actions that local authorities were involved in, each of which detailed how local authorities specifically responded to practical climate change issues. The questionnaire development and data collection were facilitated by personnel in the four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs).

Climate proofing for the future

The research found that in the context of **critical infrastructure**, between 2011 and 2017 local authority energy efficiencies prevented over 60,000 tonnes of CO₂ from being produced - equivalent to the CO₂ emissions produced by approximately 11,000 Irish homes annually. In addition, the National Public Lighting Upgrade Project being advanced by the sector is expected to avoid 31,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually once completed, saving the equivalent of the annual CO₂ produced by more than 5,600 homes. Efforts to mitigate climate change have also been achieved in electric vehicle and cycling infrastructure, with some local authorities reporting 15% of their vehicle fleet as electric, and more than 260 electric vehicle charging points for the public available

on local authority property at 2018 year end. Cycling infrastructure also continues to expand across local authorities, with approximately 14,000 bicycling parking spaces installed by the local authority sector nationally and more than 1,500km of segregated cycle lanes across local authorities at 2018 year-end.

Where **flood risk management** and **water resources** are concerned, local authorities collaborated with the Office of Public Works on 21 major flood defence schemes and delivered a further 228 smaller flood defence schemes between 2014 and 2018, with local authorities investing approximately €12.4 million of funding towards flood defences. Local authorities also spent approximately €101 million in responding to emergencies following extreme weather events between 2014 and 2018 when the impacts of extreme weather events arose.

Local authorities demonstrated significant commitment towards **nature-based** climate change solutions. They planted approximately 74,000 trees between 2017-2018 and implemented a significant number of nature-based policies with specific climate actions, including policies dealing with invasive alien species, managing trees and urban woodlands, developing green infrastructure and public open spaces and parks, and reducing pesticide usage. Many of these policies are supplementary measures, which local authorities have advanced in addition to their statutory requirements under biodiversity management.

Finally, the findings show that, through **public engagement** across those actions that can impact upon climate change, local authorities provided over 2,400 allotments and 97 community gardens for public use in 2018. Moreover, they supported 884 towns and neighbourhoods in 2018 through the Tidy Towns programme, many of which undertook specific climate actions such as increasing biodiversity and tree planting. The study highlighted that many local authorities are also training employees, communities and social housing residents to reduce their climate change impact and save energy as part of the sector's commitment to encourage public climate action.

The results act as a baseline measure for the sector regarding climate change and will serve as an important tool as it works towards developing and achieving measurable outcomes under the *Climate Action Plan*. Given the extensiveness of the study, the research is subsequently expected to inform future climate policies and actions both locally and nationally.

For further information please contact Darren Clarke or Bernie O'Donoghue-Hynes: research@lgma.ie

The report is available on the LGMA's website: www.lgma.ie



This article is based upon briefings produced by the Climate Action Regional Offices for the Local Government Information Unit International, London

The story of climate change is often presented as a hugely negative feature of life in the 21st century. It is often associated with terrible weather events, economic and social disruption, and forced migration due to dramatic shifts in environmental conditions such as flooding. Treating climate change in such a negative manner is however to miss the potential which addressing its challenges will bring. Governments and business across the globe now clearly acknowledging that climate change brings with it a focus on renewed economic opportunity, a chance to conserve and regenerate our natural and manmade environments, and a platform upon which to move towards a more resilient and sustainable existence. Doing nothing is therefore not just an environmental concern, it is also, critically, an economic folly.

LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS

Building opportunity from addressing climate change

More opportunity than threat?

Climate change is a chance to address long standing negative legacies from our history of industrial revolutions over the past centuries while also building upon better, longer-term opportunities for both environmental success and aligned economic performance.

This understanding of climate change becoming an era of potential is increasingly reflected in the thinking of major business leaders across the globe. The OECD and the UN, alongside the EU Commission, are also now arguing in favour of taking a pro-active approach to climate change, seeing within the environmental context the opportunity to address environmental degradation, bio-diversity loss, social disadvantage and inequality across the globe as well as sustaining economic growth.

The Global Commission's five business models¹ are helping inform the re-configuration of businesses, small, medium and large, as a central feature of successful entrepreneurship. These models are also reflected in the economic development policies of some governments who are now taking advantage of the new industrial revolution we are entering. Drawing upon the work of the Global Commission, and others, they highlight the potential of developing, for example, clean energy systems as we transition from fossil fuel based production into renewables. These moves which, when aligned to advances in Smart technologies and digital platforms, will allow for more resilient, cheaper and locally based energy production options. They draw upon advances, already apparent across the globe, in smarter urbanisation and rural renewal, underpinned by wellbeing, which could deliver up to \$17 trillion in savings across the world's cities and rural communities over the next decade. These options also underpin more localised food production and forestry protection which could arrest the loss of bio-diversity and secure food reserves in even the most densely populated countries. Such approaches, in turn, will for those willing to go through transition, deliver stronger and more sustainable land management and thus increase the potential for sustainable rural incomes alongside protection of water reserves, critical to the relationship between food, energy and population growth.

This understanding of climate change becoming an era of potential is increasingly reflected in the thinking of major business leaders across the globe.

Finally, the move from the linear or single use economy towards a circular economy, which will facilitate decoupling economic growth from resource depletion, will enhance the opportunity for localised employment opportunities. Such opportunities will be central to advancing sustainable community building across the globe, but especially in less developed regions and states.

It is now evident that countries, communities, businesses, families and individuals, which are placed at the forefront of this new industrial age, regardless of location, can be positioned to take maximum advantage from their willingness

¹ <https://newclimateeconomy.net/>

to change, to migrate into a new economic model. Equally, it is now apparent that those who reject the opportunity to transition will find that their economic conditions are likely to worsen, alongside a worsening natural environment.

The choice is simple in so many ways, even if the process of transition is itself difficult, does society wish to benefit from a likely increase in adaptation and mitigation, alongside more sustainable practices and protection of our bio-diversity and in doing so become part of a projected direct net \$26² trillion economy over the next decade? Or should society stay as is with an increasingly unstable and likely hostile natural environment causing ever greater trauma and disruption? The question for many policy-makers across the globe is whether they wish to be a stranded economy or a vibrant sustainable economy? Something which, it seems, business leaders, young people and a few countries have already appreciated but which, all too slowly, most political leaders are still finding it difficult to come to appreciate.

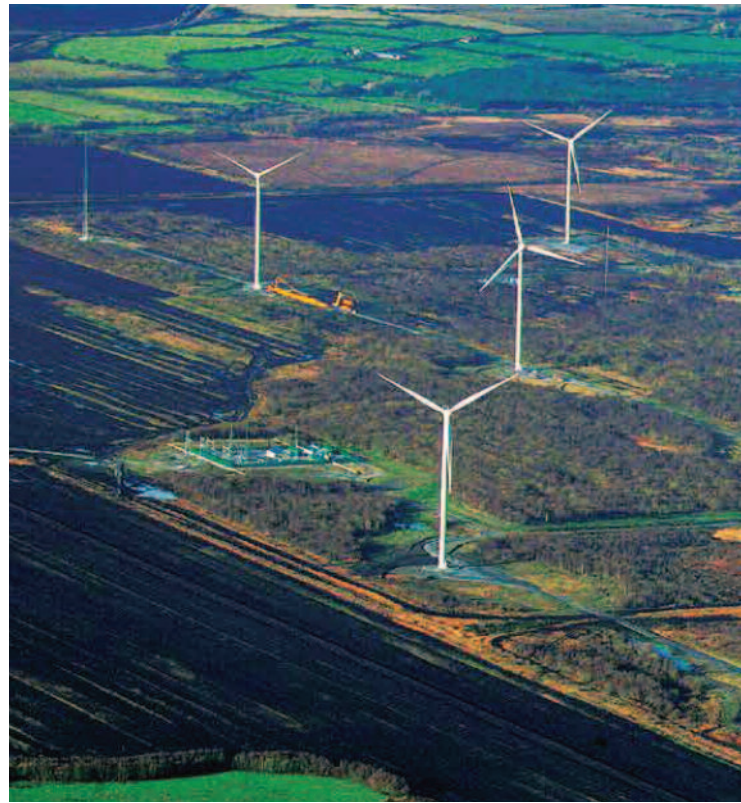
So what about Ireland?

After several unsuccessful efforts to confront Irish responsibilities on climate issues, the out-going Government published a comprehensive plan, the *Climate Action Plan 2019*, to address the many challenging characteristics arising from the impact of climate change. All political parties had a clear focus on climate matters in their recent general election manifestos. Nonetheless, Irish efforts to date squarely place the country among the laggards on climate change, something hardly befitting a State seeking to advance its standing in the international community. In addition, the State needs to create a sustainable economic platform through which it can confront the many challenges of the modern era, from Brexit to shifts in food preferences in some of our markets to the increased automation of the work place.

The current climate plan points out that even with the purchase of international emission credits, Ireland is no way near meeting the targeted 20% reduction with cumulative exceedance between 2013 and 2020 expected to be in the order of 16.3 MtCO₂ to 17MtCO₂ and thus requiring the State to be pro-active in the purchase of international credits to an annual cost of several tens of millions of Euro. Current and past policies actually cost real money, something the economy can ill afford.

Targets from 2020 to 2030 will require a reduction by 30% over 2005 emission levels so the challenge is not going to get any easier, even with progress in moving towards renewable

² Keeping in mind that some \$90 trillion in infrastructure is projected across the globe over the next decade according to the Global Commission.



Pictures courtesy of Bord na Móna.

energy, not to mention achieving a government target of net zero in emissions by 2050. To date, much of the response to achieving these targets was covered in the national planning framework, *Project Ireland 2040*, with an underpinning budget of over 20 billion euro. Implementation of the 2040 National Development Plan, which provides for a population growth of over 1 million people was to see delivery of, among other energy/emissions related investment:

- A target of 55% renewable power
- Delivery of a BusConnects Programme in all the major cities
- Retrofitting of over 450,000 homes, and
- At least 500,000 electric vehicles by 2030 underpinned by a comprehensive charging infrastructure.

Delivering on these targets would be no small achievement. While ambitious, the reality is that much of what is set out in *Project Ireland 2040* is, in effect, addressing legacy issues and, therefore, our overall target to become a carbon neutral country will not be delivered if government restricts itself solely to the above targets.

Much more ambition is required and while a lot of what is in the existing 2040 plan is fully budgeted for within the context of a growing economy, the costs of moving beyond these efforts into a substantive transition into a decarbonised economy is much more onerous and costly. Critically however,



Already we are seeing delivery of such facilities across Europe with several examples now also in place in Ireland. In the case of the midlands, Bord na Móna has clearly realised that to have a future it has to migrate from its historical approach into a business approach which has sustainability at its heart.

there is a clear business case for spending a lot of cash on climate actions. In short such actions demonstrate a clear net return of investment. In other words it makes sense for the government to move the country towards carbon neutrality.

The *Climate Action Plan 2019* notes a need for an annual reduction of 2% in emissions per year over the course of the timeframe, this at a time when it is envisaged that Ireland, unlike most other OECD countries will see population growth of a broadly similar level (i.e. about 2% per year) and net 4% in economic growth per year. Clearly, with such patterns, a real need to break the link between emissions and growth is required. The effect of this is, as the climate plan sets out, such that a critical challenge exists for both national and local investment planning but, as a consequence, it will bring huge business opportunity. This needs to be fully understood by all those looking to win business from the public sector but, equally, given that Ireland's public service is one of the smallest in the OECD, application of initiatives to move wider society towards neutrality as well. Emissions from the Irish public sector are very low as a proportion of overall national emissions, particularly in the local government sector. In Ireland, to make the necessary reductions, much of the heavy lifting will be achieved by enabling the private sector move into renewable energy usage for example.

Broadly speaking the Government in Ireland is working towards a radical downsizing of emissions to 2030 and onto

2050, well beyond what was intended in *Project Ireland 2040* as follows:

- 1 million electric/hybrid vehicles
- Roll out of off shore wind and other off shore renewables
- Roll out of solar generation
- Retro fitting of 500,000 housing units
- Alternative energy sources in 600,000 homes and buildings

In these areas alone, there is considerable business potential, underpinned by significant shifts in public funding requirements for projects from health to transport, education to defence and security. All social housing will be covered within the green, and soon to be climate proofed, procurement policies of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. More significantly, private housing, including extensions etc. will, from November 2019, have to be designed and built so that at least a higher energy rating is achieved. So in addition to homes, public buildings etc. all new private investment in construction will largely be regulated towards higher energy standards which, while carrying upfront costs of 2-5% of unit value will, thanks to the energy improvements, have relatively immediate net pay back to property developers, managers and, of course, owners.

Opportunities for rural communities

It is not just in construction that we will see the positive

impact of both public and private investment in our housing and other built stock across the State. Climate action is at the heart of the 4th industrial revolution³ and with it comes greater economic opportunity through the effects of increased digitalisation and communication. Advances in such areas are allowing reduced carbon footprints, particularly in rural areas as information networks are rolled out, opening the option for reduced commuting and the creation of higher value incomes in the most rural of communities, among other opportunities. So clearly the roll out of broadband and 5th generation communications technologies will open up considerable economic potential whilst allowing individuals and communities to reduce their carbon footprint. But in practical terms what other opportunities, from a rural perspective, will be available as we transition towards carbon neutrality?

Many fears, genuine and real, have been raised about the future of rural communities which over the past decades have become so dependent upon fossil-fuel based transport. Ireland is also relatively unique in the OECD in the impact of employment and residential locations. It has been argued that challenges to future population growth etc. in many rural communities, could be negatively impacted, especially if carbon taxes are introduced. Radical thinking will be required to enable a move away from fossil based transport options but with the advent of a fully developed car charging network comes the possibility of this challenge being overcome whilst also creating economic opportunity in terms of servicing the networks which will be rolled out over the coming decade. In addition developments in other communal transport platforms based on hydrogen open the opportunity for better developed rural transport services.

Equally, people will point to the now likely shut down of peat based electricity generation capacity and the consequent negative effects especially in the midlands. Eirgrid however have already announced the objective of achieving a higher level of renewable energy production than even the high targets of the *Climate Action Plan 2019*. Apart from wind and solar based generation which clearly have considerable scope for increasing local, particularly rural, incomes, other options exist with advances in biological based energy production and the creation of a circular economy based upon the energy-organic material production platforms.

Already we are seeing delivery of such facilities across Europe with several examples now also in place in Ireland. In the case of the midlands, Bord na Móna has clearly realised that to have a future it has to migrate from its historical approach into a business approach which has sustainability at its heart. Within a decade the company is expected to have completely



overhauled its businesses with innovation being central to creating new economic opportunity in some of the most disadvantaged rural communities in Ireland. It will be a carbon neutral company, an amazing achievement given its starting point, bringing considerable employment and income potential to the midlands. It will quite likely employ more people on higher incomes producing foods, building biodiversity, and renewable energy, using some of the most innovative industrial platforms and research in Europe. The company was once upon a time seen internationally as a leading bog development company. Now it is moving to becoming a company with carbon neutrality at the core of its business development and in doing so is once again being recognised as one of the leading research led companies in Europe.

Building a skilled workforce based upon traditional agriculture methods such as those promoted under the Burren Life Project in Clare (<http://burrenprogramme.com/>) do point to an advanced and workable future for many in agriculture that currently are not generating sufficient incomes to farm sustainably.

A radical re-think of our approach to rural communities is required and putting climate action at its heart provides considerable, cost-effective, opportunity for rural communities which in turn will be further underpinned by a renewed local commercial sector supported by new opportunities in energy and food production, rural transport, information and communications technologies and sustainable farming.

Faillte Ireland has set out the importance of sustainability to the critical tourism sector, a sector essential to the viability of

³ <https://www.weforum.org/focus/fourth-industrial-revolution>



Climate change should not be seen as a negative challenge but a tremendous opportunity to renew both social and economic pillars of Irish society in the 21st century. Ireland missed out in previous industrial revolutions and has long had to sustain the costs of this through emigration, rural decline and urban disadvantage.

many rural communities, not to mention Ireland's urban centres. They acknowledge that the main impacts on tourism in Ireland will be:

- Increased mean annual temperatures
- Increased mean annual rainfall, but with the likelihood of drier summers
- More extreme weather including heavy downpours and more intense storms
- Higher sea levels due to melting ice and thermal expansion

Given the above factors tourism has to become a real contributor to meeting the challenge of adaptation of the country and to underpin any mitigation planning that will help to reduce the impacts from climate change. A challenge, certainly, but one which is managed pro-actively could bring huge opportunity to many rural communities, especially in the midlands given the relatively light impact of tourism on the area thus far. For that reason the State company has advanced development of the brand "Ireland's Hidden Heartlands". Doing so will allow many rural communities in the region to benefit from having a sustainable tourism offering while at the same time allowing a more advantageous distribution of the visitor load across the Country.

Conclusion

It is clear that an acceleration in investment at local level, as a consequence of climate change, will bring considerable opportunity in terms of employment, renewed sustainable facilities and enhanced vibrancy in local communities, urban and rural. At national level in Ireland a huge reduction on imported fuels should enhance the national balance of payments and overall terms of trade. In practical terms this means that the current

level of external leakage from both the local and national economies will be very much reduced. As a result there will be greater capacity for spending within the economy, further underpinning both public and private capacity to grow sustainably.

As now one of the countries which most benefitted from the last, information based, revolutions, Ireland is remarkably well placed to benefit from this new revolution, one that will make Ireland more sustainable and economically self-reliant but within an open global context where other countries are also having to change. This, in turn, presents many other opportunities for a country like Ireland where, though its international trading partners, it can sell its accumulated knowledge and expertise to such countries whilst also providing a much needed leadership role at the international level in organisations such as the EU and UN.

There is a real need to properly roll out a transition from a fossil based economy into a carbon neutral economy but the benefits far outweigh the costs. There will be considerable disruption at local and national level and the costs, social and economic, have to be fully and transparently addressed by government and leaders in local and national economic life.

This is not a case of having no option but is very much a case of seeing the considerable benefits from advancing towards carbon neutrality and taking full advantage of moving towards a cleaner, greener and sustainably wealthier economy with the capacity to address real issues such as rural and urban disadvantage, environmental degradation, ageing and provision of public services that are sustainable and effective on a consistent basis.

Property Registration Authority sets up new unit

The Property Registration Authority (PRA) was formed in 2006 to manage and control the Registry of Deeds, originally established in 1707 and the Land Registry, which has been in operation since 1891. The main goals of the PRA are to maintain the integrity and reliability of the Register and to promote and drive the extension of the Register.

In the time since the PRA's formation, the Irish economy has gone through a decade of recession and is now in a period of sustained growth. This changing context has seen an increase in the intake of applications and changes in the type and complexity of property transactions. The PRA has also seen a greater diversity in its traditional customer base. As a result of these changes, they have placed a greater focus on user needs and the social and economic impacts of property registration.

One area the PRA have focused on is in deepening relationships with their numerous external stakeholders, including public sector bodies. In 2019 they established the State Property Unit as a way to improve and formalise engagement with the public sector, including local authorities.

The State Property Unit offers the following benefits to all public sector bodies, which includes local authorities;

- A single point of contact that offers support and collaboration with public sector bodies in their property management and transactions.

- Helping to mitigate risk by assisting with bulk folio ownership updates following Ministerial transfer of functions or merger of local authorities, thus enhancing accountability and control over valuable state assets. This can help against financial and reputational risk by preventing inappropriate/fraudulent legal title being acquired to vacant or unregistered properties.
- Assisting with the sub-dividing of large omnibus folios into smaller folios, for easier viewing on www.landdirect.ie.
- Advising on registration issues related to high priority housing and infrastructural projects.
- A dedicated unit within the PRA processing most Public Sector registrations.

By assisting and collaborating with public sector bodies, the State Property Unit's objective is to increase the number of public sector properties registered, further enhancing the integrity and reliability of the register. To find out more about how the State Property Unit can assist your local authority or organisation with property management and transactions, you can contact them using the information below:

Email: statepropertyunit@prai.ie
Telephone: +353 (0)51 303087.

The Property Registration Authority is holding a Public Sector Stakeholder Event in May of this year. If you or a member of your organisation would like to attend, please contact the State Property Unit at statepropertyunit@prai.ie to express an interest. Please note numbers will be limited for this event.



The State Property Unit team.



Speakers at the Future of Local Government Conference

Major conference outlines future of Northern Ireland's local councils

Over 200 people attended a major local government conference in February at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast, the first council led conference since the restoration of Stormont.

Jointly delivered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE NI), the 2020 Local Government Conference focused on work to ensure sustainable communities and strong local councils in Northern Ireland, defining the policies and evidence required to achieve this, together with a push for greater local decision taking in government, and the co-design of the emerging Programme for Government.

Speakers included Junior Ministers Gordon Lyons MLA and Declan Kearney MLA, Belfast City Council's Suzanne Wylie, Pivotal's Ann Watt, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Anne Donaghy, senior civil servants, representatives from the business and voluntary communities, and the conference's keynote speaker, award-winning journalist Lesley Riddoch.

Speaking at the conference, NILGA Chief Executive Derek McCallan said: 'Today's conference was a fantastic opportunity to bring together ministers, civil servants, business partners and community leaders, indeed anyone with an interest in the future of local democracy and sustainable local councils. It is clear from the discussions, policy pointers and presentations that there is a real appetite for transforming our system of governance and

giving our councils - together with a more participative community - more powers to co-design how we spend the £23 billion annual public purse.

'Councils in Northern Ireland are a unique and, in many ways, an untapped resource, restrained by the limited devolution of new powers in 2015. Today's conference explored innovative ways that local councils can better deliver for their communities, including through responsible planning and place-shaping, community-led public service design, tackling the climate emergency, and exploiting new and emerging technologies for the benefit of everyone in our communities.

'With the Executive now back at Stormont, we want to see a comprehensive and far-reaching set of actions delivered which will put greater powers in the hands of local communities. Local government here has ambition and is developing capacity to be the service hubs of our community, but to be so requires institutions to move power, resources and delivery more locally, just as in every other part of the UK, and in Ireland. It's time to challenge councils & equip them with resources, based partly on the political governance they maintained for three years without our Legislative Assembly, but mainly because this would lead to more effective and efficient public services.'

SOLACE NI Chair David Jackson said: 'SOLACE was proud to deliver today's conference in partnership with NILGA. This was a hugely ambitious conference focusing on solutions - everything from infrastructure and planning to shaping Northern Ireland's high streets and getting our councils to zero-carbon. The future of government in Northern Ireland will be shaped and defined by strong, community-oriented local councils. Today was a great opportunity to define how we transform our system of local governance and sustain our communities.'

Background

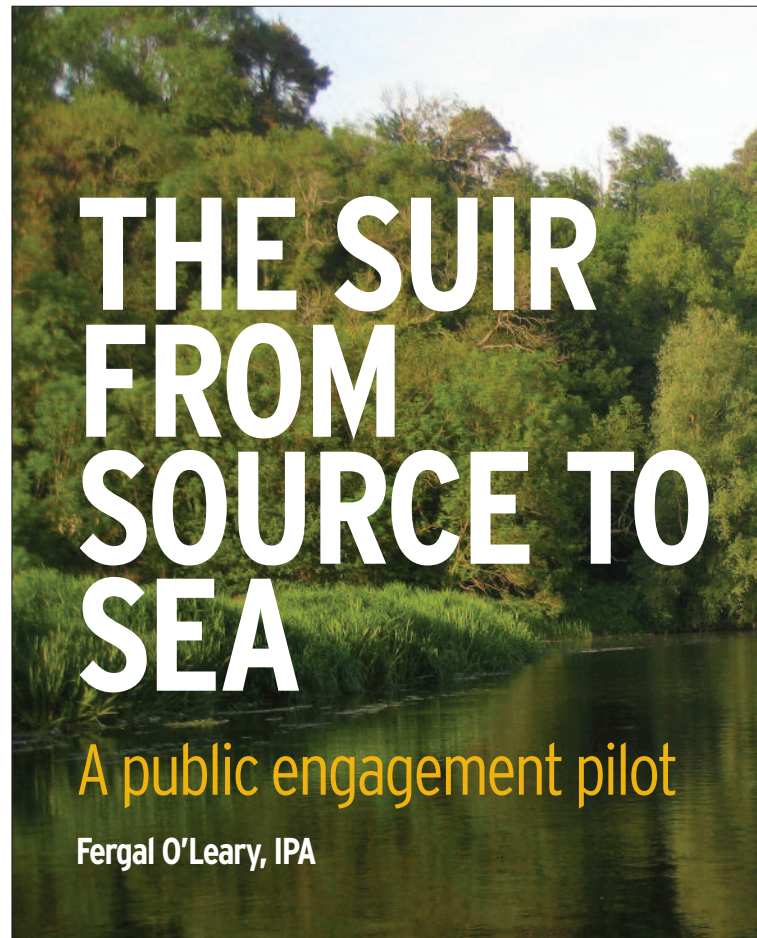
The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), introduced in 2000, requires Member States to protect and restore good water quality in rivers, lakes, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters and to cooperate on international waterbodies. At the heart of this lies an integrated catchment approach, which focuses on water quality in designated river basins (or catchment areas).

Article 14 of the WFD requires each state to promote active involvement by interested parties in the production, review and monitoring of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). Although not explicitly referenced by the WFD, the concept of public participation underpins the water governance system that has developed since 2000. A review of the first-cycle RBMP (2009-15), and the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2014, led to a reorganisation of Ireland's water governance structures. Legislative provision was made for the establishment of regional offices to improve stakeholder coordination and public participation. The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) was set up in February 2016.¹ Acting as a national local authority shared service. LAWPRO is funded by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) and is responsible for:

- Networking and coordination of local authorities and relevant state agencies across a five-region structure;
- Engaging with local communities, with support and advice for water-related projects and initiatives;
- Conducting catchment assessments in Priority Areas for Action to identify problems and work with stakeholders to identify solutions.

Engaging communities during the preparation and implementation phases of the RBMP is therefore a key function of LAWPRO.

¹ Originally named the Local Authority Waters & Communities Office (LAWCO), a restructure in 2018 saw LAWCO staff merge with the water catchments team to form the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO). For clarity, only the term LAWPRO is used in this case study.



In July 2016, LAWPRO began a community engagement exercise that focused on the entire River Suir catchment. In total, 16 public meetings were delivered and this became known as *The Suir from Source to Sea: A Public Engagement Pilot*. The purpose of LAWPRO's consultations was to encourage local interest in the River Suir, its tributaries and, more broadly, to generate awareness of the WFD's objectives. LAWPRO held its public meetings alongside the Office of Public Works' (OPW) consultations on flood risk assessment and management. By hosting a complementary set of consultations, the OPW in the afternoon, and LAWPRO in the evening, it was hoped to maximise participant turnout and impact. Having only been established several months earlier, these public meetings represented a pilot engagement exercise for LAWPRO ahead of statutory consultation on the draft RBMP from spring 2017.

The organisers' expectations were greatly exceeded by the initiative. Initially only six consultations had been scheduled, however, given positive feedback from participants, a further 10 were subsequently organised. It was felt by LAWPRO that the level of interest among communities to get involved in the WFD process warranted additional consultations. Ultimately, 339 members of the public



This case study was produced as part of the IPA's upcoming research on citizen engagement at the local in Ireland. Our thanks to all those who participated in the research.

attended the 16 consultations. As this was a pilot project, a similarly thorough engagement exercise across a catchment area had never previously been undertaken. It was noted by an interviewee that the relatively high volume of submissions on the draft RBMP from the Suir catchment can be attributed to the pilot's success.

The consultations took the form of interactive town hall-style sessions. Attendees were asked to think about their local water body, its potential, and share concerns that they would like to see addressed. From LAWPRO's perspective, a key purpose of its consultation was to broaden out the public discussion on natural water bodies, and in doing so, capture local knowledge. The interactive nature of these meetings, together with presentations from expert speakers, meant that participants were able to discuss pertinent local issues in detail.

Building on local interest to promote engagement

LAWPRO capitalised on a latent local interest in the Suir catchment's water bodies. That said, significant effort was made by the organisers to stir up this interest. LAWPRO's promotional strategy, which utilised traditional and modern methods, was designed to reach a broad spectrum of people within each community.

- Posters were designed specifically for each consultation and featured imagery of the relevant water body and local landmarks. A caption asked the viewer what the local river meant to them.
- The posters helped 'grab the imagination' of the public by provoking an almost emotional reaction. Evocative imagery and taglines sought to draw on a strong sense of place among communities.
- Persuasive articles, written by LAWPRO staff in an engaging and relatable manner, appeared in local newspapers. These encouraged anyone with an interest in their local river to attend the meetings where their views and ideas would be explored. Inclusive language helped convey the message that LAWPRO wanted to actively engage with communities and thereby involve them in the co-management of local water bodies.
- Social media was utilised and interviews →given to local radio stations; these carried similarly encouraging messages about local water bodies and the upcoming consultations.
- Enlisting the help of local champions (such as angling and environmental groups) helped the promotional campaign. LAWPRO wanted to 'involve and leverage as much support as we could'.
- Getting local groups involved greatly boosted the turnout:



River Suir public meeting in Cahir

'They will cheer-lead or promote the project locally, so you had that connection as well, that did help, it makes it more real'. By assigning tasks to local people, they felt properly involved in the consultation process, with an actual role to play.

Careful consideration was given to the consultations themselves. It was acknowledged, by interviewees, that the WFD and water quality can be abstract topics, and somewhat unappealing from the public's perspective. To address this, LAWPRO wanted to broaden out the conversation to other topics and, as much as possible, differentiate their engagement approach from traditional-type consultations. Being clear with the audience from the outset in terms of what local problems LAWPRO could, and could not, tackle was essential. Furthermore, a database of attendee details allowed LAWPRO to provide them with progress updates in terms of the issues being addressed. This helped continue the community engagement process; it demonstrated follow-through which in turn fostered public confidence in LAWPRO's work. Through its open approach to community engagement, LAWPRO sought to build trust and over time develop local understanding of, and participation in, the wider WFD process.

Importantly, LAWPRO's systematic, yet adaptable, approach to community engagement was successful by different measures: the attendee turnout, level of engagement, quality of contributions and, in particular, the relationship-building and community projects that developed as a result.

Building awareness and trust

Generating interest in the consultations, and getting people to identify with local water bodies, posed a particular challenge. At the time, LAWPRO was a relatively unknown public body and lacked any established community-level relationships which posed a problem. 'It's much easier if you have a rapport with a

community to get things going', observed an interviewee. Yet, conversely, public perception proved to be something of an issue. As a representative of local government in the area of water management, LAWPRO was initially met with a degree of scepticism from stakeholders. The broader context is, of course, an important consideration. Incidents of historic mismanagement of natural waters, along with a heated public debate on domestic water charges, meant that there was 'a bit of resistance towards working with us' from environmental groups, farmers, anglers and business owners. However, once LAWPRO's open and inclusive approach to water management was better understood publicly, engagement with communities became easier.

Concluding remarks

Managing expectations, and developing trust, were vital to LAWPRO's engagement with communities. Attendees had to be clear on what LAWPRO could, and could not, achieve. Furthermore, their role as participants in the process had to be understood. Most importantly, to achieve the necessary buy-in from the attendees on a long-term basis, the value of community input into public debate, and how it contributes to an informed policy response, had not only to be reiterated, but demonstrated afterwards.

The Suir from Source to Sea pilot achieved its key objectives. Community thinking on local water bodies was encouraged, which increased public awareness of the RBMP and WFD. However, besides animating communities on the issue of water management, the consultations had a more tangible impact. Citizen engagement led to local problems being addressed, recommendations acted upon and several projects secured LAWPRO's support.

The next phase of consultation

The third cycle RBMP will cover the period 2022 - 2027 and the

public consultation on that draft plan is due to commence in January 2021 for a period of six months. The DHPLG are currently delivering a public consultation on the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI), which will close in June this year. LAWPRO will facilitate public consultations at a local level on the third cycle RBMP in early 2021. That process will in many ways be a continuation of ongoing and sustained engagement with local communities on local water bodies. A

process that will be guided by the outcome of the SWMI and the content of the draft plan, which are two unknowns at this juncture. One thing is certain though, communities are now engaged and interested in water quality at a local level. Thus, the focus for the future must be on the multiple benefits healthy waters and catchments can deliver for communities, for wildlife and for local economies.

NEWS

Fingal pushed into the international spotlight as Royal couple visit historic town of Howth

Fingal was pushed into the international media spotlight at the beginning of March when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge spent an afternoon in Howth as part of their first official visit to Ireland.

Mayor of Fingal Cllr Eoghan O'Brien, Fingal County Council Chief Executive AnnMarie Farrelly and Director of Operations David Storey were delighted to welcome the Royal couple to the historic Fingal town.

Prince William and Princess Catherine enjoyed a walk along the Howth cliffs under glorious blue skies which offered sweeping views across the county of Fingal

and Dublin Bay. They also met with representatives from the Marine Institute.

The visit received worldwide exposure with the Royal couple posting about their visit on the official Twitter account which has 1.9m followers and their Instagram account which has over 11m followers.

Mayor O'Brien presented Prince William, a life-long Aston Villa supporter, with a bespoke framed photomontage namechecking Republic of Ireland soccer stars who have played for the famous Birmingham club over the years. Princess Catherine was presented with a copy of 'Fingal Through Old Picture Postcards' compiled by Jacinta Judge and a framed painting of Swords Castle by Fingal artist, Maura O'Rourke.

The visit presented a major tourism opportunity for Fingal County Council, with Howth being one of the most important tourism destinations in the area.



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are greeted by the Mayor of Fingal Cllr Eoghan O'Brien on their visit to Howth during their official visit to Ireland.

Six factors that can help or hinder public service reform

Joanna O’Riordan, IPA Research

The Goal Programme for Public Service Reform and Innovation (Goal Programme) sought to support systemic change in public services in Ireland and Northern Ireland with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes for people using public services. The Programme was funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and delivered by the Centre for Effective Services (CES).

Nine projects were selected and ran for a period of approximately three years. They were:

- Developing evidence and knowledge management, Department of Health
- Youth mental health and wellbeing pathfinder, Department of Health
- Building Collaborative Working Practices, Department of Education and Skills

- Using Data to Inform Policy, Department of Education and Skills
- Reform of Youth Funding Schemes, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Leadership Development Programme, The Executive Office, Northern Ireland civil service
- Children and Young People’s Strategies, Department of Education and Health, Northern Ireland
- Embedding Innovation, Department of Finance, Northern Ireland

CES commissioned the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) to conduct an evaluation of the Goal Programme. This was published in late 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to review the Programme, assess the extent to which the project short-term outcomes were achieved and to determine what lessons could be learnt for other public service reform initiatives.

The full evaluation is available on the IPA website https://www.ipa.ie/_fileUpload/Documents/Evaluation_Executive_Summary_Final_11Oct19.pdf

However, included here is a summary of the factors



Pictured at the research seminar are Robert Watt, DP&R; Nuala Doherty, CES; Dr. Richard Boyle and Dr. Marian O’Sullivan, IPA.



Conn Murray, Former Chief Executive Limerick City & County Council, during the panel discussion.

identified in the evaluation that can help or hinder public service reform:

- Leveraging senior buy-in and sponsorship
- 'Going with the grain' - aligning with context, priorities and what has gone before
- Getting and keeping the right people /skills/expertise and managing succession
- Accessing and using external supports
- Applying appropriate tools and techniques to support change
- Enabling and embedding sustainable collaboration and cross-sectoral learning.

A research seminar was held in the IPA on 29 January to launch the evaluation. This was done by Robert Watt, Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Dr Richard Boyle, Head of Research and Publishing at the IPA, discussed the key findings of the evaluation. This was followed by a panel discussion with Conn Murray, Former Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council, Josephine Feehily, former Chairperson of the Revenue Commissioners, Peter Housden, former Head of the Scottish Civil Service and Malcom Beattie, Head of the Innovation Lab, Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Changes and trends in county incomes in the Western Region

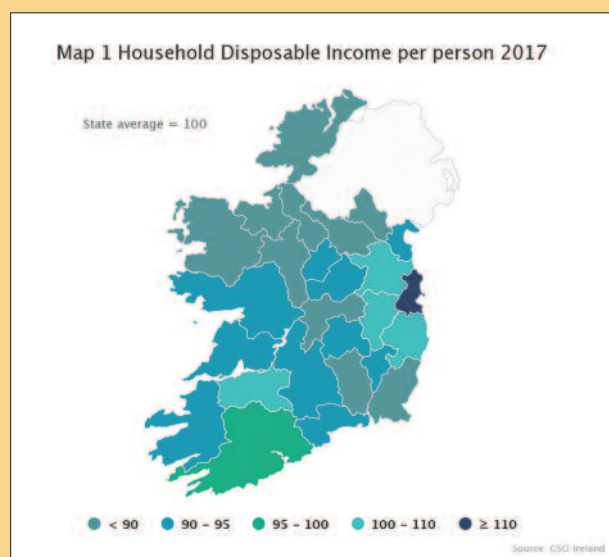
How does the West compare?

The Western Development Commission has analysed newly published CSO data on county incomes and regional GDP in their latest 'Insights Blog'. Helen McHenry examines the 2017 data with a particular focus on the differences among counties in the Western Region and the changes over time.

In a detailed post, McHenry highlights the geographical disparity in disposable incomes across the country (see Map 1). As the map shows, the highest levels of disposable income are concentrated in the east. Donegal has consistently been the lowest in the region (and nationally) with disposable incomes of 76% of the state average in 2017. Only two counties in the region, Clare and Galway, had incomes of more than 90% of the state average.

The trends over time and compared to the national average, which are analysed in detail in the post, also show that the disposable incomes in the Western Region are not recovering from the recession at the same rates as in other areas.

The full, detailed post can be viewed at:
<https://www.wdc.ie/how-are-we-doing-changes-and-trends-in-county-incomes-in-the-western-region/>



World Health Organisation recognises Ireland as a leader in Age Friendly Programmes

In 2019, Ireland became the first country in the world to be recognised as a leader in Age Friendly Programmes and have full membership across all administrative areas to this significant World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative. On Monday 16th December 2019, representatives of all 31 local authorities in Ireland gathered for a formal ceremony in Slane Castle to receive their charters from the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D. and Alana Officer of the World Health Organisation, as part of a special recognition ceremony.



Each local authority in Ireland is leading on the implementation of a local Age friendly Programme, in partnership with multiple stakeholders in the public, business and community/non-government organisation sectors. Ireland's Age Friendly Programme has been

operational for ten years. Age Friendly Ireland, as a shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council, was officially launched at this event. The Age Friendly Programme is a key strategy to enable people of all ages to actively participate in the community, helping people to stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages and providing appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

Internationally the world's population is ageing, and the WHO programme is a response to this demographic trend. Ireland's population has been getting steadily older since the 1980s. The 65+ age group increased by 19% between 2011 and 2016. This trend will continue, so it is crucial now to plan and prepare for the needs of greater numbers of older people in our communities.



At the launch, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar commented that the initiative 'is a really effective way of bringing together a wide range of organisations, businesses and

service providers to ensure the interests and needs of older people are being well served.' He commended the work of local authorities in implementing the programme: 'That work will help to ensure Ireland is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the fact that we are living longer.'



This milestone occasion marked the full engagement of all 31 authorities and a multitude of key stakeholder agencies in taking actions which will improve the quality of life of older people across Ireland. Creating a great place in which to grow old is the aim of the national Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme to cater for an ageing population, with Ireland leading internationally in rolling out the programme.



Also speaking at the launch, Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive of Meath County Council, acknowledged the leadership of local government in driving the initiative since its early days, to the point where it is mainstreamed as a shared service. She noted key milestones in the ten year journey, including developing Age Friendly Housing Developments, Age Friendly Libraries, Age Friendly Airport Guidelines, Age Friendly car parking, Age Friendly Business, intergenerational projects, developments at policy level, public realm improvements impacting on older age, and improved customer service and communication for older people.



The IPA has previously researched and written about the role of local authorities in relation to the Age Friendly Programme. This report is available on our website at: https://www.ipa.ie/_fileUpload/Documents/LO-CALGOV_no14.pdf

GAA and local authorities partner up for sustainable communities

The GAA and the local authority sector, represented by the County and City Management Association recently announced an innovative new initiative pledging to work together to lead their communities in promoting sustainability and climate action. The partnership will capitalise on the leadership roles both organisations have within their communities, and the potential they have to engage with citizens of all ages to promote sustainable local development, environmental awareness and climate action.

The partnership builds on the GAA's status as a Sustainable Development Goal Champion and aligns with local government commitments under the National Climate Action Plan and local authorities' Climate Action Charters. A steering group, composed of representatives from the Local Authority sector, the GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association, have begun work on the development of a Green Club toolkit, which will be piloted in 2020 ahead of the roll-out of a National Green Club Support Plan in 2021.

The Green Club toolkit, which will be piloted across a small number of clubs throughout the country, will be focused on the key action areas of energy & water efficiency, biodiversity, waste management & plastic use and transport.

Sustainable Club and Community Partnership projects include:

- Development of a Sustainable Club
- Sustainable Club Workshops
- Promotion and Support of Sustainable Energy Communities
- A Sustainable Development Goal Action Module in the GAA/PDST TY Future Leaders Programme, with contributions across GAA/LGFA/Camogie Association input at all levels of the Mainstream Education System (with the Department of Education and Skills)
- Green Procurement Guidelines and Support
- Further Developing Croke Park as a World Exemplar Stadium in Sustainable Development
- Alignment to Statutory Funding Streams

Speaking at the launch, Uachtarán CLG John Horan said, "An increasing number of clubs are seeking guidance in the area of sustainability, and our members are very anxious to play their part in the fight against climate change. The collaboration with the Local Authority Sector is an ideal partnership to help us to develop our clubs sustainability within and for communities and to reach people in every corner of Ireland with information that will help them to make changes in their own lives to support the effort against climate change and adapting to evolving challenges."

Michael Walsh, CCMA Chairman said, "The GAA and local authorities both represent local leadership, community, legacy and vision. We each have relevant networks, knowledge, existing partners and facilities. Working together we can have huge impact and enable the necessary behavioural change in our communities."



Former Wexford hurler Diarmuid Lyng, Chariman of Local Authority Climate Change Steering Group Ciarán Hayes, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael John Horan and Chairman of CCMA Michael Walsh in attendance at the GAA Local Authority SDG Launch at Croke Park in Dublin.

Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile



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.

Local Authority Times is also published on the IPA website: www.ipa.ie

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