

Local Economic and Community Plans

By The Local Government Management Association (LGMA)

There are 31 Local Economic and Community Plans (one in each local authority area), all prepared by the Local Community and Development Committees (LCDC), adopted by the elected members and submitted to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. Each local authority develops a plan that considers unique local factors through a process that includes extensive public consultation. The 31 Local Economic and Community Plans commits to 5,037 actions in the areas of; economic development, social inclusion, community development, health and wellbeing, rural and urban regeneration, investment and infrastructure. There are 1,701 organisations involved in the delivery of these actions. These include Government Departments, Local Development Companies, State Agencies such as IDA, Enterprise Ireland, the HSE; development organisations, and a wide range of local community and voluntary groups. Through the Public Participation Networks (PPNs), the LCDCs provide a mechanism by which the community and voluntary sector can meaningfully participate in local development. There are 11,137 community

and voluntary group on PPNs throughout Ireland which forms a mechanism for community and voluntary groups to engage meaningfully with local authorities.

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 clearly states that public bodies must cooperate with the LCDCs, there was no such obligation for public bodies to cooperate with the County Development Boards. The obligation for public bodies to cooperate with the LCDCs greatly strengthens the potential to deliver agreed actions that are ultimately designed to improve the economic, social or cultural fabric of local areas.

Alignment to deliver Local, Regional and National Development:

The preparation of 31 separate Local Economic and Community Plans poses the question: how do we avoid duplication and ensure collaboration for the greater good? The link between the LCDC and the local authority is essential to ensure that the benefits of implementation of the 5,037 actions are felt at local, regional and national levels.

- **Locally**, the Plans must be consistent with the County or City Development Plans.
- **Regionally**, the Local Economic and Community Plans are being used by the Regional Assemblies to inform the Regional Economic Spatial Strategies. In addition, local authorities, in partnership with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, are playing a central role in the coordination and delivery of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs.
- **Nationally**, the Plans will inform the National Planning Framework and are consistent with Enterprise 2025 – the Government’s enterprise policy.

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Leader funding of 6.4m euro for Dublin area

Two Irish towns win awards at the 2017 Academy of Urbanism awards in London

New Library Strategy

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200,000 euro funding for Lough Derg Blueway

16.6m euro EU funding to transform cross-border business research & innovation

and more...



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Mr. Joe MacGrath, Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council and Chair of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) stated that the Local Economic and Community Plans provide a framework by which significant investment will be made. The LCDC is the main approval body for the LEADER Programme investing €191.1million in local areas between 2014 – 2020. Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) will see €37.4million invested in social inclusion programmes throughout the country in 2016. The LCDC is also seen as the decision body in the Border counties for the Ireland – Northern Ireland PEACE Programme. Mr MacGrath asserts that this methodology is proving effective and the formula for allocation of funding and its governance via the local authorities should be built on.

Chief Executive of Offaly County Council, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, firmly believes that the membership of the

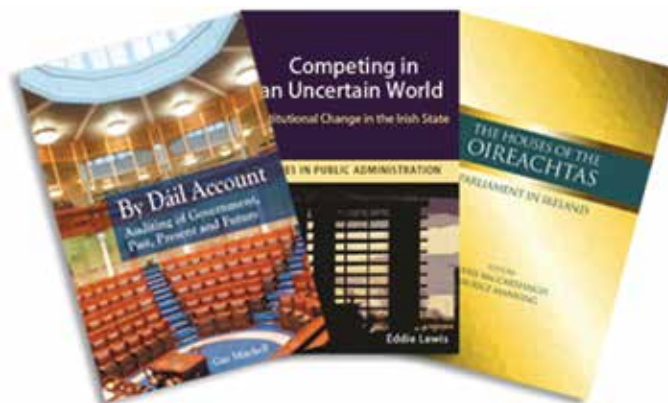
LCDC is critical to the delivery of the actions set out in the Local Economic and Community Plans. The role for the local elected members and the Chief Executive of the City or County Council, the voluntary sector, community groups and agencies are central to the delivery of public services in local areas. The combination of political and community leadership and agency involvement means that the LCDC is best positioned to mobilise relevant groups to deliver the Local Economic and Community.

Mr. Paul Reid, Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, cites the success of the Local Enterprise Offices as a major contributor to economic recovery across the country. Since 2014, the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are playing a pivotal role in supporting entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, people with a business idea and helping small business to scale up. The LEOs are now an integral part of the local authority providing businesses with a better range of supports

at a local level. A net total of 3,533 new full and part-time jobs were delivered in 2015 by the 6,500 small businesses from across the country that have been supported by the LEOs. He added that the expanded role local authorities play in tourism development and promotion is recognised across Ireland.

The implementation of the plans will make a significant difference to local communities, creating an enterprise environment that supports job creation, improving the attractiveness of local areas for tourists, and better coordination of a range of services aimed at enhancing inclusiveness and the health and wellbeing of local residents. Depending on the needs of the area, and the availability of resources, projects may include; enterprise parks, rollout of broadband, tourist attractions including greenways and blueways, and improved services for older people and other social inclusive measures.

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Fingal County Council named Local Authority of the Year 2016

By Chambers Ireland

On Thursday, November 24th, 2016, Fingal County Council was named Local Authority of the Year at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. The 13th annual Awards ceremony was held in association with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and celebrates and showcases best practice in local government across Ireland. The annual awards began in 2004 to recognise the Local Authority of the Year and many other achievements delivered by Local Authorities now across sixteen categories.

In presenting the awards Minister for the Housing and Urban Renewal, Mr. Damien English TD underlined that “it is essential that local authorities showcase their good performance - both to recognise their achievements and encourage further improvement in the services they deliver to local communities. I’m delighted to be associated with the Excellence in Local Government Awards 2016 and very grateful to Chambers Ireland for their valuable work in this area.” Mr. Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland, outlined that “the Excellence in Local Government Awards demonstrate

how each year Local Authorities work consistently to deliver services and initiatives that sustain, enhance and support our communities and local economies. Chambers Ireland is honoured to host these awards and recognise the dedication and hard work that takes place at local government level across Ireland. I want to congratulate Fingal County Council, the sixteen category winners, the many shortlisted organisations but also just as importantly, the people who made all these projects and activities happen. Fingal County Council has shown exceptional leadership through a vision for the future development of the locality and the broader economic region. Fingal has demonstrated tremendous ambition and capacity for innovation across numerous projects and is recognised for its willingness to share best practice with peers. The drive to continuously improve and deliver better services to citizens makes Fingal a worthy winner of Local Authority of the Year.”

There were sixteen awards presented on the night plus the overall award for Local Authority of the Year. Individual awards were sponsored by: Waterford Crystal, Eirgrid, Healthy Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, ERP, SIRO, ESB, Zurich, Shell E&P, AIB, CBRE and An Post. Specially commissioned crystal awards designed by Waterford Crystal were presented to the winners on the night.

The full list of winners is as follows:



left to right: Ian Talbot, Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland; Paul Reid, Chief Executive Fingal County Council; Damien English TD - Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal; Niamh Boyle, President Chambers Ireland; Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Daragh Butler; Cllr. Anne Devitt FCC; Cllr. Kieran Dennison

Supporting Active Communities Award sponsored by Eirgrid:

Limerick City & County Council – Team Limerick Clean Up (TLC)

Best Practice in Citizen Engagement Award sponsored by AIB:

Mayo County Council – Mayo Day

Health & Wellbeing Award sponsored by Healthy Ireland:

South Dublin County Council – HI South Dublin Healthy County

Supporting Tourism Award sponsored by Fáilte Ireland:

Clare County Council – Ennis Book Club Festival

Promoting Economic Development Award sponsored by Eirgrid:

Limerick City & County Council – Innovate Limerick

Local Authority Innovation Award sponsored by SIRO:

Cork City Council – Cork City’s Litter Fine System

Sustainable Environment Award sponsored by ERP:

Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council – Biodiversity in Action

Best Library Service Award sponsored by CBRE:

Offaly County Council – My Open Library

Sustaining the Arts Award sponsored by Ervia:

Kildare County Council – 1916 Sackville Street Art Project

Joint Local Authority Initiative Award sponsored by Waterford Crystal:

Donegal County Council – North West of the island of Ireland – A strategic Model for Regional Development Growth

Festival of the Year Award sponsored by Fáilte Ireland:

Cork County Council – A Taste of West Cork Food Festival

Outstanding Customer Service Award sponsored by An Post:

Tipperary County Council – Integrated Customer Services Centre

Enhancing the Urban Environment Award sponsored by Healthy Ireland:

Meath County Council – Ashbourne Main Street Refurbishment Scheme

Heritage and Built Environment Award sponsored by Zurich:

Fingal County Council – Swords Castle: Digging History

Disability Services Provision Award sponsored by Shell E&P Ireland:

Wexford County Council – Wexford County Council Beach Wheelchair Initiative

Commemorations and Centenaries Award sponsored by ESB:

Dublin City Council – Dublin Remembers 1916-2016: Is Cuimhin Linn

Special Commendation in Commemorations and Centenaries given to:

Monaghan County Council – From a Whisper to a Roar – Exploring the Untold Story of Monaghan

Judging Panel

There are two independent judging panels made up of respected experts from the community and local government.

Round One

- Mr. Dónall Curtin, Senior Partner, Byrne Curtin Kelly
- Dr. Sean Ó’Riordáin, Director, Seán Ó’Riordáin & Associates
- Mr. Tony O’Brien, Chair, Chambers Ireland Local Government Policy Council and Principal at TOB Associates
- Gary McGuinn, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Ms. Geraldine Tallon, Former Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

Round Two

- Mr. Alex Connolly, Head of Communications, Fáilte Ireland
- Mr. Maurice Coughlan, Principal Officer, Department of Housing, Planning Community and Local Government
- Mr. Jack Keyes, Consultant and Former County Council Chief Executive, Cavan
- Dr. Sean Ó’Riordáin, Principal, Seán Ó’Riordáin & Associates
- Ms. Karen Smyth, Head of Policy, Northern Ireland Local Government Agency
- Mr. Martin Tobin, CEO, European Recycling Platform (ERP) Ireland

Donegal County Council scoops an Excellence in Local Government Award 2016



Pictured at the recent Chamber Ireland Awards where Donegal County Council was winner of the Joint Local Authority Initiative award is Ian Talbot, Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland; Liam Ward, Director of Service, Donegal County Council; Ger Grant, Letterkenny Chamber ; Damien English T.D. Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal; An Cathaoirleach Cllr. Terence Slowey; David McCoy, Waterford Crystal; Seamus Neely Chief Executive Donegal County Council; Joe Peoples, Director of Service, Donegal County Council.

On Thursday, November 24th, 2016, Donegal County Council scooped the Joint Local Authority Initiative award at this year's Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. This award was won by the Council for its work with Derry City and Strabane District Council on the North West of Ireland – A Strategic Model for Regional Development & Growth. This initiative sees a new approach to cross border regional development and co-operation which has been co-designed by Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council with support from the Irish Government

and Northern Ireland Executive. The initiative has also received the formal support of the North South Ministerial Council.

The 13th Annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award ceremony took place on Thursday November 24th, 2016 in association with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government and showcases and celebrates the best of Local Government in Ireland.

Mr. Seamus Neely, Chief Executive

of Donegal County Council outlined that “we are delighted to receive this prestigious award. We have been working closely with our neighbours in Derry City and Strabane District Council to put in place a new approach to cross-border regional development that will allow us to make the most of our unique position and geographic location and to maximise the potential for co-operation, development and investment in a co-ordinated and flexible way.”

Source:
Donegal County Council Communications Office

Donegal County Council Achieve ISO 50001 Accreditation

Donegal County Council entered into the Public Sector partnership programme with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in June 2015 with the aim of developing an Energy Management System which would be accredited in accordance with the International Standard ISO 50001.

This standard insists that organisations establish, implement maintain and improve an Energy Management System to establish the policies and procedures to systematically track, analyse, and improve energy efficiency.

The system is based on a Plan-Do-Check-Act management system which is familiar to many organisations which have implemented other ISO standards.

The Council firstly adopted an Energy Policy which committed to continuous energy performance improvements and established an Energy Team to provide diverse perspectives, distribute the workload areas, ease implementation, promote wide acceptance across the organisation and improve the potential for sustaining the completed system.

Currently all Public Sector Bodies are obliged to achieve 33% reduction in their Energy use by 2020 in order to achieve the objectives of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plans and fulfil the exemplar role as set out in the plan. In its Energy Policy, Donegal County Council has committed to continuous energy performance improvements throughout all its activities, premises, plant and equipment and has recently completed the development of its new Energy Management System as a framework for delivering on this commitment.

On November 9th, at the launch conference of the SECURE project, the Cathaoirleach of the Council,



Donegal County Council staff member Mairead Cranley taking the WATT Challenge at the Staff Awareness Roadshow in Dungloe Public Service Centre.

Terence Slowey confirmed that this Energy Management System has been independently audited and certified by Certification Europe as complying with the International Standard - ISO 50001.

Speaking following the announcement Seamus Neely, Chief Executive with Donegal County Council underlined that “energy management is an all-encompassing process and includes every aspect of the organisation from finance, human resources and public relations to maintenance, purchasing and planning”. He also outlined that “the Council’s commitment to improving our energy performance is set out in our Energy Policy and our drive to achieve this accreditation has been led

by the internal Energy Management Team headed by John McLaughlin Director of Roads and Transportation”.

Donegal County Council is only the second Local Authority in Ireland to have achieved this standard.

The Policy adopted by senior management, and signed off on by the Chief Executive in September 2015, committed the Council to:

- Achieving continuous energy performance improvements
- Provide all necessary information and resources required to achieve the objectives and targets of its energy management system;
- Comply with all applicable legal

and other requirements related to energy use, consumption and efficiency;

- Support the purchase of energy efficient products and services and design for energy performance improvements;
- Regularly review and update its Energy Policy.

An Energy Team was set up to be the main forum for enabling actions to improve energy performance in the organisation and it was designed so that members serve as contact points with the broader organisation. The general responsibilities of the Energy Team include:

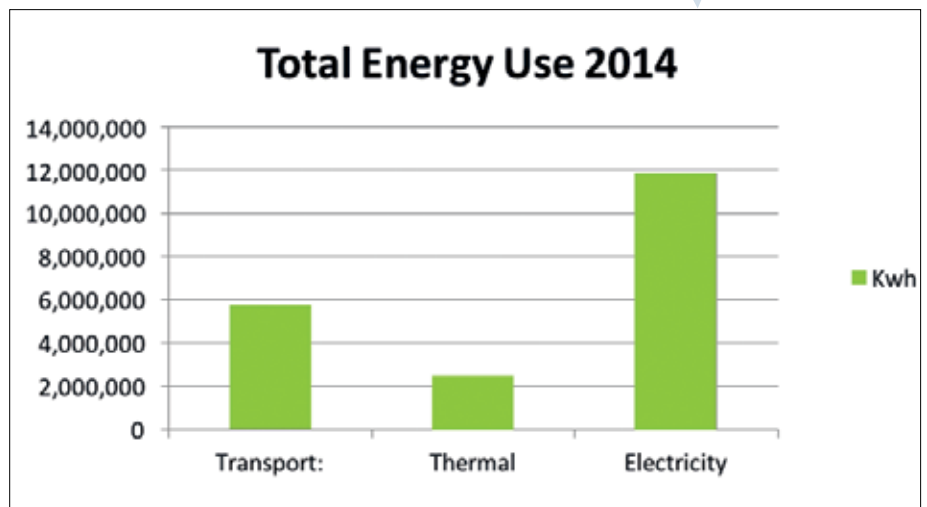
- Lead by example in the promotion of energy responsible behaviour
- Accept and action or add to opportunities register ideas for energy performance improvement
- Support and partake in Energy management system activities such as awareness campaigns, opportunity generation and assessment, action plan formulation and execution, internal auditing and associated follow up actions, energy team meetings.
- Propose energy objectives and targets for the consideration
- Ensure that aspects of the Energy Management System related to the team member's function within Donegal County Council are carried out.

The Energy Team was confident that achieving the ISO 50001 standard would be of huge benefit to the Council, the people of the County and its future generations, as it would help:

- Save energy by reducing consumption;
- Reduce the negative impact on the environment;
- Make annual cost savings of 10 to 15%;
- Promote sustainable, inclusive and healthy communities in line with the aims of the Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022.

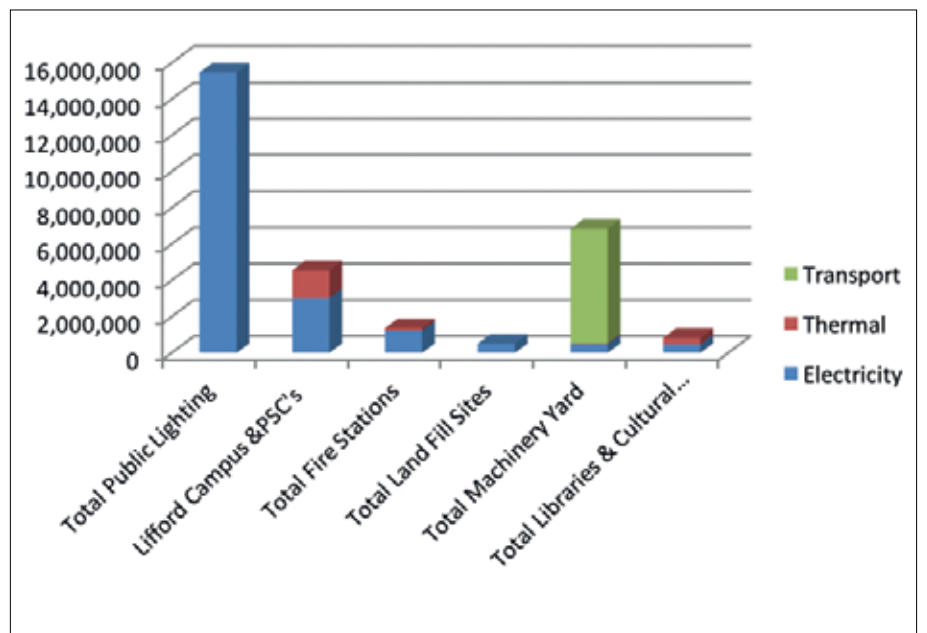
Historical energy data was examined for the organisation for the years 2009 to 2014 and the data for 2014 was used as a baseline.

A summary of the organisation's energy use for 2014 is shown in the table below and is broken down into three general energy types; Electricity, Transport and Heating.



Graph 1: XXXXX

Following this examination we were able to determine our Significant Energy Users (SEUs).



Graph 2: XXXXX

Donegal County Council Significant Energy Users (Primary - kWh)

Members of the Energy Team were assigned specific responsibilities for Significant Energy Users (SEUs).

The initial energy review was completed in November 2015 based on 2014 data and used as the basis for establishing the Energy Management System.

Energy performance indicators (EnPIs) were determined for each SEU. These are measured parameters, ratios, or models that help to quantify energy use and efficiency improvements for the organisation. When compared to baseline values, they help to gauge performance and improvements.

An awareness campaign was designed and launched in an attempt to give staff a better understanding of how the organisation was using its energy, giving tips on how to reduce consumption, with a motto of Energy Saving at Home and Work. Most people did not consider Energy Consumption at work as being their priority or responsibility. A best “Energy Saving Idea” competition was launched and promoted and Energy Roadshows rolled out across the County at each of its Public Services Centres.

This competition amongst staff, not only promoted awareness, but also helped inform the Opportunities Register for the Energy Management Team. This register was further developed to become the Action Plan for the Council to achieve its overall objectives for

the system.

Speaking at the announcement, Mr Neely stated that “the staff energy awareness campaign, which was launched in July, is an important part of this process. The campaign is about providing staff with information about energy, the importance of conserving it and advising on simple ways to save energy both at work and at home. Our staff have a very important role to play in improving our energy performance and I would like to thank all our staff for their continued support and commitment to the process.”

Significant help and assistance were received from the SEAI and the mentoring and other supports that they offered over the course of their



Celebrating Donegal County Councils ISO 50001 Energy Management accreditation at the SECURE Conference held at Glenveagh Visitors Centre on Wednesday 9 November is well known environmentalist and architect Duncan Stewart, Michael Doyle from Energy Options, Donal Walker, Donegal County Council, Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Donegal County Council, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Terence Slowey, Cllr. Rena Donaghey and Paddy Mullen, Donegal County Council.



Cllr. Tom Conaghan, Donegal County Council taking on the WATT Challenge at the launch of the Donegal County Council Energy Management Programme. Picture also includes councillors, management and staff attending the launch: Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Kevin McHugh, Anne Marie Conlon, Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Terence Slowey, John McLaughlin, Donal Walker, Cliodhna Campbell, Cllr. Maire Therese Gallagher, Paddy Mullen, Cllr. Paul Canning, Cllr. Noel Jordan and Judith McCarthy.

Implementation Support Programme. The council also engaged the services of an Independent Energy Consultant, Michael Doyle of Energy Conservation Options, The Base Enterprise Centre,

Stranorlar, Co. Donegal and his assistance was extremely beneficial in the development of the system. The Council now looks forward to the challenges ahead in delivering the

actions and achieving the significant objectives identified as part of the system.



The Burren in Clare, the Wild Atlantic Way

Local and Regional Bodies in Ireland, 2012 – 2016

by Laura Shannon, IPA

Ireland's system of local and regional governance has undergone substantial reform in the last four years. The reform to local and regional government set out in *Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government* have been well documented and discussed. This article, based on a forthcoming IPA Local Government Research Series Report entitled *Local and Regional Bodies in Ireland 2012-2016*, focuses on the changing landscape of local and regional non-commercial public bodies.

For the purpose of this study, the working definition of a public service body is an organisation that has the following characteristics:

- It is structurally differentiated from other organisations
- It has some capacity for autonomous decision making
- It has some expectation of continuity over time
- It performs some public function
- It has some personnel
- It has some financial resources

Using a database of local and regional non-commercial public bodies compiled by the Institute of Public Administration in 2007 as the baseline, this study identified 130 organisations currently in operation in Ireland, reduced from 315 in 2012 (see Table 1).

Agency rationalisation has occurred at all levels of government, particularly since 2011 with the introduction of the first Public Service Reform Plan (which included an agency rationalisation programme). At the national level, allowing for both the new agencies created and the agencies terminated, there has been a 13 per cent reduction in the number of non-commercial agencies

between 2010 and 2015 (Boyle, 2016). As this study has found, however, the corresponding reduction at the local and regional level between 2012 and 2016, including government reform, has been almost 59 per cent.

This reduction has been the result of numerous reform, alignment and rationalisation programmes, stemming from the OECD report *Ireland: Towards an Integrated Public Service*. This report, while primarily concerned with the central level of government, stated that:

At the local level, inefficiencies seem to arise from the co-existence of weak local government with a direct accountability relationship to a line department and little autonomy, and the presence of local agencies reporting to other departments...Ireland would be more in line with other OECD countries if it were to strengthen local government in service delivery (OECD, 2008, p. 309).

In response to this, the government published *The Report of the Task Force on the Public Service: Transforming Public Services* in 2008. This was followed by a series of reports which directly or indirectly made recommendations for reforming Irish sub-national governance. In more recent years, a number of other reports and programmes have been published, and new structures established, which have shaped the reform agenda at the local and regional level. These include:

- The Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Implementation Group (2013)
- Public Service Stability Agreement (the Haddington Road Agreement)

(2013) [and subsequent extension under the Lansdowne Road Agreement 2015]

- Energising Ireland's Rural Economy - The Report of the Commission for Economic Development of Rural Areas (2013)
- The Public Service Reform Plan (2014 - 2016)
- The National Oversight and Audit Commission (2014)
- A Programme for a Partnership Government (2016)

This sets the context for the changes which have occurred at the local and regional level. Some of the main changes are discussed below, while Table 1 provides a more complete picture of the overall landscape of local and regional bodies in Ireland.

Local Government Alignment

One of the most significant changes to the system of local governance (outside of local government reform itself) has been the continued alignment of local development and local government. This has resulted in the abolition of 34 city and county development boards (CDBs). The Local Government Reform Act 2014 came in to effect on June 1st 2014, dissolving the CDBs and establishing in their place Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) with the purpose of developing, co-ordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. These reforms were initially recommended by the Steering Group for the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development in 2012.

Membership of the LCDCs includes local authority elected members and officials; state and non-state local development

Table 1: Local and Regional Bodies in Ireland 2007 - 2016

Category	Number of Organisations as of May 2007	Number of Organisations as of July 2012	Number of Organisations as of October 2016
City and County Enterprise Boards	35	35	0
City and County Development Boards	34	34	0
Local Development Companies	38 (LEADER companies)	51	48
	36 (Partnership companies)		
City and County Childcare Committees	33	33	30
Education and Training Boards	33 (VECs)	33 (VECs)	16
Regional Tourism Development Boards (formerly Regional Tourism Authorities)	5	0	0
Dublin Tourism	1	1	0
Shannon Development	1	1	0
Harbour Commissions	10	1	0
Regional Fisheries Boards	7	0	0
Dublin Transportation Office	1	0	0
Western Development Commission	1	1	1
Údarás na Gaeltachta	1	1	1
Local and Regional Non-Commercial Public Bodies	236	191	96
Regional Authorities	8	8	3 (Regional Assemblies)
Regional Assemblies	2	2	
Town Councils*	80	80	0
City/County Councils	34	34	31
Local and Regional Government	124	124	34
Total	360	315	130
* including those titled as Borough Councils			

agencies; community and voluntary organisations; and other representatives of civil society, including business interests, farming interests, etc. A key function of the LCDC is to prepare the community elements of a 6-year local economic and community plan (LECP) and to work with partners in the implementation of the plan. LECPs are developed as part of an integrated local, regional and national planning process. This ensures that each plan will be consistent with county development plans, regional spatial and economic strategies and regional action plans for jobs. The first set of LECPs cover the period from 2016 to 2021. LECPs will be the key mechanism to bring forward action arising from measures under the National Action Plans for Jobs and other relevant national government policies and strategies.

LCDCs are also responsible for coordinating, managing and overseeing the implementation of all local and community development programmes in their areas. This is intended to enhance the role of local authorities in relation to planning, oversight and management of locally-focused programmes and to provide for greater coordination across the full breadth of these programmes.

For the most part, local and community development programmes are delivered by Local Development Companies (LDCs). In 2006, an initiative was launched to integrate more closely the work of LEADER groups, partnerships and various national social inclusion programmes at local level. Integrated local development companies are a result of this process of cohesion which was designed to eliminate duplication of efforts and more closely align the various social development programmes within city and county council boundaries. LDCs are therefore known by many different names including Local Area Partnerships, LEADER Partnerships, Integrated Development Companies as well as the more obvious Local Development Company. As of October 2016, there were 48 LDCs nationwide, reduced from 74 (LEADER

and partnership companies) in 2007.

Similar to community development, economic development has also been more closely aligned with local government. The 34 city and county enterprise boards, established in 1993, were also abolished in 2014 and replaced by Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), in line with the Government's commitment in the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 to reform the system for delivery of State supports to micro and small enterprise. LEOs are offices within each of the 31 local authorities and act as a 'first-stop shop' for individuals seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in Ireland. LEOs are not considered independent agencies although policy direction and funding is provided by Enterprise Ireland and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

LEOs operate through a framework service level agreement between Enterprise Ireland and the city/county council and provide service under the four headings:

LEOs operate through a framework service level agreement between Enterprise Ireland and the city/county council and provide service under the four headings:

- Business information and advisory services
- Enterprise support services
- Entrepreneurship support services
- Local enterprise development services

LEOs are required to develop an annual enterprise development plan which addresses a number of broadly agreed metrics with Enterprise Ireland and establishes targets for the year ahead. The new Programme for a Partnership Government also commits to mandating LEOs to set county-specific targets on job creation.

Education and Training Boards

Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

replaced the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in 2013. The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes (2009) originally suggested reducing the number of VECs from 33 to 22, in line with their suggestion to reduce the number of local authorities to 22. However, the then Government announced plans in 2010 to reduce the overall number to 16. The 16 ETBs were formed from mergers of existing VECs and continue to operate along local authority boundaries.

ETBs incorporate training functions previously delivered by FÁS. The Further Education and Training Act 2013 abolished FÁS, established SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) as the new further education and training authority and provided for the transfer of the former FÁS training division (16 training centres) to the ETBs. The board of ETBs consist of 21 members consisting of 12 elected members of local authorities, 2 staff representative, 2 parent representatives and 5 representatives of special interest bodies. ETBs each have their own executive, they employ teaching, administrative and maintenance staff, and provide education and ancillary services for their administrative areas. The activities of ETBs are financed mainly from Exchequer funds and partly from receipts generated locally through fees charged for services they provide.

Regional governance

At the regional level, 8 regional authorities and 2 regional assemblies have been replaced by 3 new regional assemblies. Eight new 'sub-regional strategic planning areas' have also been established. These broadly equate to the previous regional authorities, with some minor changes. The government are currently developing a new National Planning Framework, which intends to provide the strategic context for planning at regional and local levels, including the preparation of new regional economic and spatial strategies. The regional versions of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's 'Action

Plan for Jobs' have been prepared along the boundaries of the new sub-regional strategic planning areas. This aligns well with the approach that is being taken by the regional assemblies, whereby key planning and economic development functions will be performed at sub-regional level.

Over the last number of years, regional tourism structures have been abolished and subsumed into the national tourism agency, Fáilte Ireland. In 2006 the five regional tourism authorities, which had existed as private companies since 1964, were dissolved and subsumed into Fáilte Ireland with new regional tourism development boards being established in each area. The five regional tourism development boards published their regional development plans for the years 2008 to 2010 in late 2007, as did Dublin Tourism (an autonomous body for Dublin) and Shannon Development (see below). The Public Service Reform Plan published in late 2011 suggested further consolidation of the local and national tourism structures and in early 2012 Dublin Tourism was merged with Fáilte Ireland.

Shannon Development was set up as Shannon Free Airport Development Company in 1959 to promote the airport and region, and also acted as the regional tourism authority for the

region. In 2014, in line with the state agency rationalisation programme, the tourism functions of Shannon Development were subsumed into Fáilte Ireland while enterprise functions were transferred to the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. Also in 2014, Shannon Group plc was established as a commercial semi-state company incorporating Shannon Airport Authority Limited, Shannon Commercial Enterprises Limited, Shannon Castle Banquets and Heritage Limited and the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC).

Summary of Rationalisations

Table 1 provides an overview of local and regional bodies in Ireland, including local and regional government, and outlines the changes that have occurred between 2007 and 2016. Agency rationalisation and alignment programmes have resulted in the reduction of local and regional non-commercial public bodies by 49.7 per cent between 2012 and 2016. If we include the reforms to local and regional government, this figure is almost 59 per cent.

The changes to the local and regional governance landscape over the last number of years present unique challenges and opportunities. Ireland's system of governance remains highly centralised, however a streamlined

local and regional government system has been given strengthened roles in relation to specific functions. Local authorities now have an increased role in coordinating community and economic development. While this is a largely positive development and can present a model for the role of local authorities as coordinators of service delivery, it should be cognisant of the bottom-up, community-led approach used by local development organisations. While the remit of regional assemblies remains limited, their enhanced functions regarding spatial and economic planning and oversight of local authorities, alongside the development of a national planning framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, provides an opportunity for greater coherence between national policy making and local action.

Note: This article is based on a forthcoming IPA Local Government Research Series Report entitled 'Local and Regional Bodies in Ireland 2012-2016' and will be available on the IPA website, at www.ipa.ie

References

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1916 centenary exhibitions in the Local Authority Museums

By Rosemary Ryan, Keeper of the Bishop's Palace - Documentation & Education Officer, Waterford Treasures Museums, Bishop's Palace, Viking Triangle, Waterford City

All twelve local authority museums in the **Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN)** - Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Limerick, Louth, Monaghan, Tipperary and Waterford - have led varied commemorative projects in their counties to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising. Since 2012, the museums have been participating in a decade of commemorations of the Great War and therefore, their 1916 exhibition or event is one of a series within this context. The exhibitions are of varying duration and scope.

The Irish Volunteers all over Ireland had their orders from Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) Supreme Council for their part in the island-wide rising which due to the countermand and confusion did not come to pass, but, there was significant action in some counties. All the counties of the LAMN can claim participants in the Dublin Rising whether rebels, civilians or UK

crown forces, or in the dramatic events in the years preceding and following the violent rebellion.

The 2016 commemorations of the Rising have broadened and deepened our knowledge of all those who lived through and sometimes died in the Rising and its aftermath, such that our children and grandchildren may know the stories of Nurse Margaret Kehoe of Co Carlow (killed in the fighting in the South Dublin Union) or eighteen year old Waterford man, Lieutenant William Dobbin who handed Francis Sheehy Skeffington and the two journalists over to Bowen Colthurst, fought in the Somme and was killed in France in March 1918 or RIC Head Constable William Rowe, a Wexford man, killed in Cork; about Edward Daly of Limerick, Michael O'Hanrahan a Wexford-born Carlow man or Thomas MacDonagh of Tipperary who were among the executed Rising leaders. The exhibitions include guns and paper material, service medals

and uniforms and personal objects. Tipperary, Louth and Cork have original copies of the Proclamation. Limerick borrowed a flag and Kerry the boat in which Casement landed, not seen in public since 1924, from the Imperial War Museum. Many photographs and films of the period and the protagonists exist and film is incorporated in at least two exhibitions, in Waterford and Cork.

Objects recur - Lee Enfields and Mausers, membership cards of the Volunteers, the 'souvenir' programme of the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, copies of Irish War News (Pearse's propaganda sheet during Easter Week, three-quarters of which was written and printed by the Waterford journalist James W Upton and by Joe Stanley). A sword holster grabbed by Upton when evacuating the GPO is on display in Waterford Treasures, extremely generously donated along with Upton's archive by the family. I was struck by the dramatic logo of Cumann na mBan (gold badge and headed

Carlow:	over sixty events to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising
Cavan:	The 1916 Exhibition and Experience
Clare:	Patrick Brennan's Frongoch Autograph Book - the social media of the time
Cork:	In Their Own Words: Cork Stories, Easter 1916
Donegal:	County Donegal in 1916: Our Story
Galway:	Revolution in Galway, Réabhlóid i nGaillimh, 1913-1923
Kerry:	Casement in Kerry: A revolutionary journey/ Mac Easmainn i gCiarraí: aistear réabhlóideach
Limerick:	They dreamed and are dead
Louth:	The Birth of a Nation - the evolution of Irish nationhood 1641-1916
Monaghan:	From a whisper to a roar, exploring the untold story of Monaghan 1916
Tipperary:	Road to the Rising.
Waterford:	Other Voices - Ordinary People Extraordinary Lives, Waterford 1800-2000

notepaper on display in Cork), showing a rifle laced through the words 'Cumann na mBan'. There are many autograph books, a form of social media of the time.

Most museums' exhibitions are accompanied by programmes of activities and events for children and adults alike; in Donegal there are a children's activity booklet, a lecture programme, a commissioned drama 'The Forgotten Women of 1916' and a touring exhibition (in both English and Irish, telling the story of six Donegal men involved in the Rising) to community centres, schools and libraries. Outreach into the community is also being done by Clonmel, Co Tipperary and the exhibition there is very interactive. Galway has produced a graphic novel and Limerick and Clare have also produced accompanying publications.

Building layout and different schedules and availability of funding mean that in some museums the Rising exhibition is not always juxtaposed with the First World War display (the latter a simulated trenches experience that you walk through in Cork) but that is the better contextualised presentation. However, several museums do have displays of the entire period 1912-1923. As expected

the museums which receive cross-border funding, emphasise reconciliation, while no exhibition glorifies killing and all are scrupulously even-handed as reflected in text and captions. Cavan physicalizes the Rising and World War through their replica GPO and Trench and the visitor chooses as the Irish did in the 1910s a political path. Both routes emerge in the Peace Garden to encourage reflection on the loss of life which accompanied armed conflict whether in Flanders, on Dublin streets or in the Irish countryside. The ever-present danger of over-wordiness – books on walls – is largely avoided. The strength of an exhibition is always the objects. Local authority museums cater wonderfully to their local communities but must also attract the visitor from abroad.

The museums nearer the border, inevitably, deal more than museums further south with the diverging stories of north and south and all future exhibitions should cover the parallel courses of the Free State and Northern Ireland. A joint LAMN-National Museums of Northern Ireland exhibition with objects drawn from the whole island, might be worth considering.

Most museums sourced funding from

the 1916/2016 Centenary Programme and all are funded by their respective local authorities. Collectively, they have made a significant contribution to the national commemoration of the 1916 Rising – the social, economic and cultural contexts; and greater emphasis on those Irish who fought in the UK forces to put down the Rising and in the Great War and the role of women. All the LAMN museums are designated branches of the National Museum of Ireland and their 1916 exhibitions are thereby, extensions of the National's exhibition Proclaiming a Republic. All deserve visiting.

The Curator in Louth described working on the exhibition as *'humbling, working with some of the most significant artefacts in our history - items associated with many of the pivotal points in the national narrative - and the ensuing discussions that accompanied them, my colleagues and I were acutely aware of the hand of history.'*

Note: The author visited the exhibitions in Clonmel, Limerick and Cork and curated that in Waterford Treasures. My thanks to my colleagues in the LAMN museums.



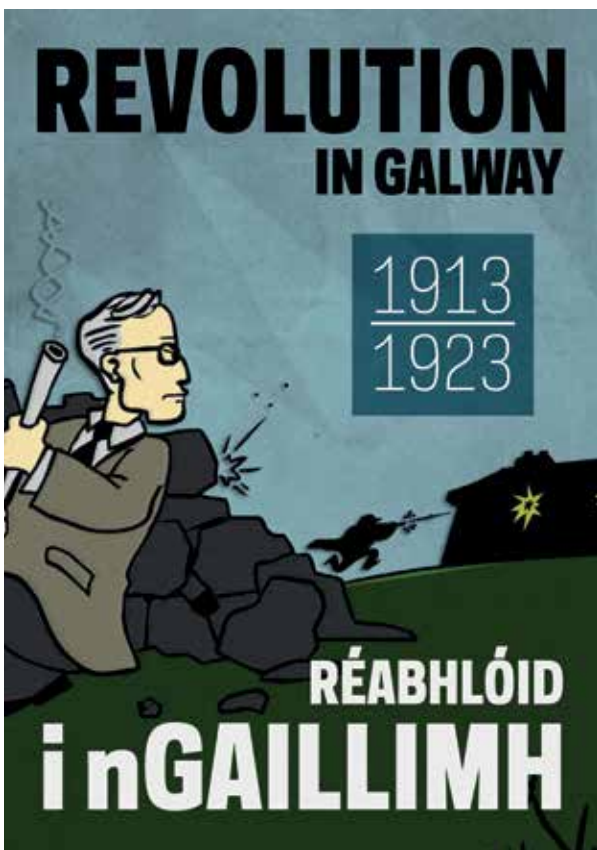
Flag depicting the arms of Limerick given to Roger Casement by John St Gaffney before his departure from Germany, to be flown from King John's Castle. © Imperial War Museum (FLA 867)



Cavan Museum's GPO installation



'The 1916 Tablecloth' with 60 signatures of the leading figures gathered and embroidered in the early 20th century, Waterford



Galway Museum's graphic novel



Margaret Clarke's prison art in Tipperary Museum, Clonmel



Monaghan County Museum



Countess Markievich (aka Maura Logue), Donegal County Museum



Display in Louth County Museum



Cork Public Museum's 1916 exhibition



Cumann na mBan badge



A page of Clareman Patrick Brennan's Frongoch camp autograph book with entries by fifty-four internees including Richard Mulcahy and Michael Collins.

New video launched to promote Arklow’s Business and Tourism Attractions

by Wicklow County Council

Arklow’s attractions as a centre for business and tourism is highlighted in a new video launched at the beginning of November, 2016 by Wicklow County Council. The four-and-a-half-minute long video covers the Arklow Municipal District and features contributions from local representatives, business figures and others, as well as, aerial shots of the locality.

The purpose of the “Arklow Municipal District – Making a Difference” project is to highlight the District as a business location and a tourist destination. The video will be on all Wicklow County Council websites and will also be sent to the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Connect Ireland and will be promoted across social media.

Launching the video, Mr Bryan Doyle, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, outlined that, “as part of the overall strategy for economic development in the county, which is embedded in the Local Economic and Community Plan, we are committed to promoting County Wicklow as an ideal location for investment, enterprise and knowledge creation, we will do this online, via our videos, our website and social media and via a range of promotional material.” He added that “I am delighted that Wicklow County Council has been able to support this initiative by the Cathaoirleach and members of Arklow Municipal District.” Also speaking at the launch of the video, Councillor Pat Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach

of Wicklow County Council, stated that “I very much welcome this initiative which showcases all that is good about the Arklow Municipal District. We need to strive to portray a positive image of our District and to assist in whatever we can in an effort to attract industry to the area with the support of the relevant job creating agencies.” He added: “I would like to congratulate all the participants in the video, to thank you for your input and your enthusiastic commitment to the project. You are great ambassadors. You embody the spirit of Arklow – Making A Difference!”

The Cathaoirleach of the Arklow Municipal District, Councillor Pat Kennedy, said the video “showcases the



Photo Caption: Pictured at the launch of the “Making A Difference” video in Arklow were: L/R – Cllr Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, Arklow Municipal District; Mr Bryan Doyle, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council; Ms Linda McDonald, Administrator, Arklow Municipal District, and Cllr Pat Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council.

very best that the Arklow Municipal District has to offer: our infrastructure, our amenities and our people. It shows that we are open for business. We have all the necessary infrastructures needed to nurture economic development and incentivise job creation. Our location is a commodity that many other districts and counties would love to possess.” He added that “our proximity to Dublin with an interconnected network of transportation links provides easy access to the Arklow area, whether by land, sea or air. The recently completed M11 places us an hour from the airport, ferries and Dublin city centre. There are regular bus services and a passing train line for passengers and freight along with the port here in Arklow.”

Councillor Fitzgerald noted the rollout out of next generation communications has also begun to reach Arklow. He also stated that “the ability to conduct business around the world at the blink of an eye is of paramount importance and

vital in today’s market place; 3G and 4G coverage along with the latest fibre optic broadband enables businesses to avail of modern web services and technologies. An employer based within the Arklow Municipal District can now market themselves and their employees to the world.”

He also emphasised Arklow’s natural resources and community amenities. “We have them in abundance. If Wicklow is the Garden of Ireland, then surely South Wicklow is the flowerbed. Mountains and valleys, forests and rivers, beaches and the sea. Community assets such as playgrounds, gyms, and swimming pools, football, rugby and soccer pitches, golf courses, walking and hiking trails, kayaking, sailing and mountain biking. We have them all.”

The launch event was also addressed by Mr Donal Murray, Manager, Arklow Business Enterprise Centre who outlined the work of the Centre and the services it

provides to local businesses and start-ups, including training and work placement. Mr Daithi de Forge, Recreation Manager, Coillte, spoke about recreation plans for the Wicklow forests and particularly the redevelopment of Avondale House and Forest Park. Avondale House was the home of Charles Stewart Parnell. Mr Conor Simpson, Regional Business Development Manager at the IDA for the Eastern Region also spoke at the video launch.

The video was produced by Paul Carney (PC Productions) with the funding came from the Arklow Municipal District Economic Development Funding and the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank. Arklow Municipal District covers 26 per cent of the roads in County Wicklow (598 KM), the second highest District in the county. The principal town is Arklow and the main villages within the District are Avoca, Aughrim and Rathdrum.



Future Trends in Engineering

by Paul MacDonald, CEng MIEI, Executive Engineer/Training Officer, Kildare County Council National Roads Office



Solar powered building in Masdar City

It is important that engineers should attempt to articulate a future vision of technological trends – particularly in the energy, transport and communications sectors, which are so critical to society.

The prediction of future trends in engineering and technology is a challenging task. However, engineers should nonetheless attempt to articulate a future vision of technological trends – particularly in the energy, transport and communications sectors which are so critical to society.

The key trends that will influence engineering to 2070 are global urbanisation and the fourth industrial revolution. Urbanisation trends will result in a doubling in size of the urban population from 3.5 billion persons today to seven billion persons by 2070, according to the UN World Urbanisation Prospects Report 2011. The demand for higher living standards, particularly in the emerging states, will result in a doubling of energy use in the

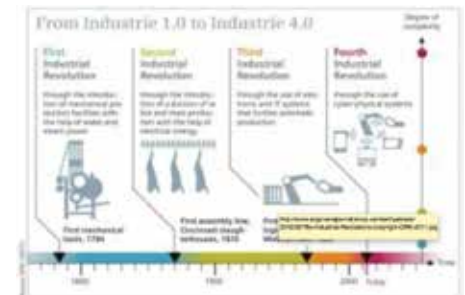
coming decades, a 50 per cent increase in transportation needs and tight water supply, with 75 per cent of the global population experiencing water shortages.

The environmental impact of increased carbon-dioxide emissions and pollution in urban areas will also create climate-change pressures. Engineers will have to play a key leadership role in terms of formulating technical solutions for cities that are sustainable in social and environmental terms.

The second key trend is the fourth industrial revolution, which encompasses a range of intelligent and integrated technologies in the energy and transportation sectors, where energy use can be optimised across different sectors. In the industrial sector, the concept of ‘virtual production’ will be key for modelling production in advance for ‘zero defect’ outcomes.

Past industrial revolutions

In considering future trends that will influence engineering, it is important to remember that these revolutionary changes have all happened before. The first industrial revolution emerged with the invention of the steam engine in the late-18th century, which led to the economic development of the North Atlantic region.



The Four Industrial Revolutions

The second industrial revolution encompassed developments in the electrical, chemical and motor-vehicle engineering sectors at the end of the 19th century. These new technologies facilitated the exponential growth of cities such as New York, with steel production enabling long-span bridge and skyscraper construction to facilitate urban connectivity.

Mass transportation and the reciprocal growth of outer suburban areas was facilitated by mass production of motor vehicles and petro-chemical developments, while electrical power systems revolutionised energy supply to domestic and industrial settings. The leadership provided by Henry T. Ford in mass production, and the Carnegie family, the owners of the steel plants in Pittsburgh was key to implementing the

new technologies which revolutionised urban development, production and transportation.

The 1950s saw the emergence of the third industrial revolution, with developments in the electronic and aerospace sectors. These were accompanied by a new shift from mass labour production to specialised labour, when over 50 per cent of American workers became 'white collar' semi-professional workers. Again, the political leadership of civic councils in the 'sunbelt states' of the US was key to implementing these new technologies of the third industrial revolution. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Belt

Since the 1960s, the technological advantages enjoyed by the North Atlantic region have eroded with the rise of the Asian economies, which have penetrated into the electronics, transportation and heavy-industry sectors. However, the decline in the economic status of the western states may also be explained by a decline in the status of the engineering and technology sectors relative to new service areas such as the media and financial-services sectors.

The future enhancement of science and technology in western societies will be key to reversing this economic power shift, particularly given the opportunities that will arise from mass urbanisation and the new fourth industrial revolution in the coming decades.

Masdar City urban model

The challenge associated with the design and construction of urban areas for the extra 3.5 billion residents in cities will create an onus on engineers to deliver innovative technical solutions in the energy supply, transport and communications sector in order to ensure a high quality of life in the congested cities of tomorrow.

One of the pioneering urban solutions being developed by engineers and planners is Masdar city in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Masdar City is a



Automatic solar powered cars in Masdar City

solar powered, high-density urban area with solar-powered automatic cars for transportation needs within the urban zone. Water is recycled in the Masdar City, thus reducing water-supply needs by two thirds. The city also incorporates courtyard wind-towers, which provide an external cooled environment to enhance the quality of life.

Masdar City will cost \$22 billion and will be home to 30,000 residents when finally completed in 2025. The high costs associated with this prototype project will be reduced through economies of scale and new technological developments in the area of sustainable energy and transport technology.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US presidential candidate Hilary Clinton have both visited Masdar City, which is indicative of the opportunities political leaders see in terms of utilising Masdar's technology and creating business development in the sustainable technology sector. Alongside political leaders, engineers must play a more visible leadership role regarding the urbanisation challenge, in terms of researching these new technologies and communicating their benefits to the general public.

For city regions such as the north-east region of the US, which continues to grow, new transport technologies such as the Amtrak High Speed Rail project will play a key role in facilitating high quality transport into cities such as New York. The proposed reduction in rail journey time between Boston and Washington D.C from eight hours to

three hours and 15 minutes is indicative of how the Amtrak High Speed Rail will facilitate a transport modal shift away from air transport to rail transport for journeys in the 400-600 kilometre range.

The quality of urban infrastructure in cities such as New York will be key to attracting today's globally mobile professionals. The new Bank of America building in New York is a key engineering project in this regard. With its floor-to-ceiling windows, it creates a high quality working environment for workers through enhanced light and air quality. The building also incorporates grey water recycling and an efficient onsite energy plant to enhance its sustainability.

The key point is that engineers have an opportunity to provide leadership in the area of sustainable urban development in partnership with others. However, this will require engineers to take on a greater public relations role to communicate the benefits of these sustainable technologies.

Fourth industrial revolution

The second key trend of the 'fourth industrial revolution' is, in many ways, an evolution of the infrastructure and industrial production trends of the second industrial revolution 100 years ago and the partial automation technologies of the third industrial revolution 50 years ago.

This new technology revolution will encompass a shift away from fossil-fuel energy production to sustainable energy systems in advanced states. The energy, transport and industrial domains could be linked in terms of shared energy use, thus enabling optimisation – particularly given the fluctuations associated with sustainable energy supply from solar and wind sources.

In the transportation sector, Europe's motorways will include green electric charge-stations along the entire European motorway system, which



Traffic congestion in New Delhi

will mean a continuation of private vehicle use, but in a more sustainable manner through the use of electric cars. The introduction of automatic cars to increase traffic-flow efficiency and reduce accidents will create challenges in terms of the social perception of automatic technologies. Engineers will again have a key role to play in informing the public about the benefits of such automatic transport technologies.

In the industrial production sector, self intelligent or digital factories will be enabled through total integrated automation, where digital control of production will be realised. These factories can adapt production to changing product requirements based on real-time market data trends, with all production being modelled in advance for total efficiency.

The key challenges for this sector will be:

- The creation of ‘rule frameworks’ for production optimisation based on the cost, quality and environmental parameters;
- The development of ‘languages’ to facilitate machine to machine or product to machine communications; and
- Dynamic architecture systems to enable rapid reconfiguration of production for changing supply or market conditions.

Germany is a leader in the digital factory sector and derives the labour, energy and supply efficiencies associated with this revolutionary production technology.

Information communications technology revolution

The truly revolutionary aspect of the fourth industrial revolution is the information communications technology sector. The chair of Hewlett Packard, Meg Whitman, has predicted that there will be thirty billion devices connected to the internet by 2020, with large markets such as Brazil, India and China contributing to growth in the computer device sector.



The Digital Factory – copyright Siemens 2016

The volume of data doubles every two years, which is driving remote data-processing in data centres, also

known as ‘cloud computing’. The use of virtualisation technology, where hardware computer servers in data centres are reconfigured with software to become ‘software defined servers’, enables the complex mass of changing data on computers to be processed as efficiently as possible.

The future trends in computers will see a shift towards software-based data centres, where software replaces the network and storage hardware systems. Data analytics will enable computers to determine business and other trends to advise workers of beneficial courses of action, while cyber security will become predictive.

The digital technology sector, like the steam engine or electrical-engineering technologies of previous industrial revolutions, will be deployed across all domains of society – including the energy supply, transport and industrial production sectors – to enable greater efficiencies to be gained. This is particularly relevant to sustainable energy technologies, as urban development makes the existing model of fossil-fuel energy supply and transport system unsustainable over the longer term for global society.

In conclusion, the future trends of global urbanisation and the fourth industrial revolution will influence how energy supply, transport and production engineering systems are designed and deployed with a new emphasis on resource sustainability and delivering a high quality of life in congested urban areas.

This revolution will require leadership from engineers to articulate a future vision of technology in society. In looking forward, the capacity of engineers to articulate a historical perspective of the previous urbanisation and industrialisation trends will be important in reminding the public that today’s standard of living resulted from the previous industrial revolutions, and the future trends are just the latest evolutions in a technology process that started over 200 years ago.

Minister Coveney's address to the Academy of Urbanism Conference

On Thursday, September 1st, 2016, Minister Simon Coveney, T.D., gave an address at the Academy of Urbanism 10th Anniversary conference addressing the theme of "Urban Futures: Cities and Towns in Transition". He acknowledged that the Academy has picked an interesting time to come to Ireland and Dublin, given that the government is in the process of addressing a number of very important policy topics from an urban development perspective, namely, the recently published Action Plan for Housing and the forthcoming National Planning Framework. The Minister noted that "our cities and their wider regions, as well as our towns and villages are where the majority of our population lives and works. The health of our cities and towns are increasingly the barometers for the health, not only of our economy, but wider society as well and that is why urban policy is so important today. As I have stated before, I asked for the Housing, Planning and Local Government brief and while I am aware of the considerable challenges, I am also a passionate believer in the importance of vibrant and dynamic urban places and in the need to plan for the longer term interests of our urban places."

Action Plan for Housing

- Ireland's recovery from the sharpest economic contraction in its history is now firmly established, reflecting a combination of decisive policy implementation, as well as, relatively favourable external tailwinds with GDP set to increase by around 5 per cent this year. However, success has brought its own pressures with extraordinary pressure on the country's housing stock and a lack of supply of housing in the right locations, mainly our key cities.



Minister Simon Coveney, T.D., gave an address at the Academy of Urbanism 10th Anniversary conference addressing the theme of "Urban Futures: Cities and Towns in Transition"

- Just over 12,600 housing units were completed last year, almost half of which were individual or "one off" houses, whereas, we need to be building somewhere in the region of 25,000 units per annum, principally in our key cities and towns to meet evolving household formation, economic and demographic patterns.
- Furthermore, what active housing development sites we have in the Dublin area are not delivering enough housing at affordable costs for purchase or rental. A well-functioning housing sector is critical to the overall health of the economy and that is why we need to build homes to make up the ground lost and to keep pace with future growth in the number of households needing homes.
- In response to this need on July 19, the Government launched Rebuilding Ireland - an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness which sets out a holistic response to overall housing system as a fundamental building block of our urban policy. This action plan is ultimately focused on delivering more homes and includes more than 80 separate actions structured under five main pillars each targeting a specific area of the housing system for attention. The Plan provides practical and readily implementable actions that aim to increase the annual housing supply to 25,000 unit per annum by 2021.

- Progress will be reported in monthly and quarterly Reports under each of the 80 plus actions, to test and demonstrate the Action Plan's effectiveness.
- The Government also intends to build on it in the forthcoming budget and Minister Noonan has indicated he will take further steps to underpin the policies in the Plan.
- I, like you, recognise that there are a number of problems affecting the housing market in the short term: most of all, the lack of supply, exacerbated by investment impediments for buyers and developers since the credit crunch. And because this Government believes in actions not words, a massive €5.5 billion has now been made available for social housing and infrastructure.
- **I have also recently issued a call for proposals to local authorities under a €200 million Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund, which will help to activate the delivery of large scale private housing development sites which would otherwise not be delivered and has the potential to release the delivery in the region of 15,000 to 20,000 new homes.**
- **Local authorities, working with the Housing Finance Agency, can avail of the new fund to provide funding for off-site or common infrastructure, such as, distributor roads, bridges, surface water management, amenities and utility diversion to facilitate development on major housing sites and to significantly increase the supply of housing.**
- The Government's Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) is also currently exploring supporting the delivery of housing-related enabling on-site infrastructure.
- The combination of finance options for on and off-site housing infrastructure should unblock large development sites to enable individual developers to proceed with building houses on individual land-banks and sites owned by them within the larger scale priority development areas.
- In addition, a total of 2,000 affordable rental homes will be brought on stream through a new and innovative scheme that I will be launching later this year.
- While our planning system has facilitated future potential development of equivalent to 46,000 home in Dublin alone, I am determined to further reduce the timescales and risks associated with getting permission to build on these sites, which is why I will shortly finalise legislative proposals that will enable all housing development proposals of over 100 units to go straight to An Bord Pleanála for priority decision within an 18-week statutory period.
- I also believe it is my job to work with and support local authorities to make more land available so that more homes can be built and the price of new homes comes down.
- It is also appropriate to mention, given the month of September is associated with students seeking accommodation, that the plan provides measures to bring on stream significant numbers of additional student accommodation places to compliment the 10,000 units that are already in the system at various stages. This will provide additional purpose-built units for our growing third level sector, and in the process, free up rental properties in our cities, which is badly needed.
- The recent DAFT reports highlights the current pressures present in the rental market and given the importance of the rental market, a major new strategy for the whole of the rental sector will be brought forward before the end of this year. A significant build to rent component will be at the heart of this.
- You might think that the Action Plan is all about new-build but it also has a huge emphasis on making the best use of our existing buildings and existing places. For example, there is a commitment to prepare a National Vacant Housing Re-Use Strategy, informed by Census 2016 data, to compile information on vacant housing across the country as well as reasons for longer-term vacancies (i.e. over 6 months) in high demand areas and a range of actions to bring vacant units back into use.
- Minister of State Damian English T.D. will lead an Urban Renewal Working Group to bring forward proposals for new urban regeneration measures which will complement the existing regeneration programme and projects under the Social Housing Capital and Social programmes across local authorities.
- The Living City Initiative will be reviewed with a view to further enhancing the attractiveness and effectiveness of the Scheme and a new Repair and Leasing Initiative is being introduced to incentivise owners of vacant homes needing investment to bring up to standard, to offset such costs against guaranteed future rental income, if they make them available for social rental required by the local authority.

National Planning Framework

- While the housing crisis must get priority attention, as Minister for Housing and Planning, I also recognise the value of the longer term picture, which is why I am committed to the development of a new National Planning Framework to succeed the National Spatial Strategy.
- The development of the new framework is timely. Planning for the

longer term was not possible back in 2011 when I was part of the previous Government. Back in 2011 all the talk was of a massive oversupply of housing and what to do with nearly 3,000 'ghost estates'. National recovery had to be prioritised. We were a long way from a supply crisis. Infrastructure planning focussed on what could be afforded. In the midst of crisis, we simply lacked the financial scope to take a longer term view. 2011 and the years after were all about survival and regaining our economic sovereignty, which we have achieved, working together.

- We've made significant achievements over the past five years, halving of unemployment, turning around disastrous public finances, regaining our financial independence and regaining our position as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Reflecting on the last election however, perhaps the public spoke about whether our economic recovery was balanced enough, contrasting the economic fortunes of our capital city Dublin as opposed to more rural or regional areas. They also spoke about the need to get on top of the housing situation and more investment in public services and infrastructure.
- The Programme for a Partnership Government is a balanced response to the public's wishes that addresses urgent priorities, while at the same time acting in a long-term sense so that lasting solutions with broad based support are implemented. That is why there is a specific commitment in the Programme for Government to prepare a new National Planning Framework to replace the National Spatial Strategy, to be finalised by the first quarter of 2017.
- Whatever you might think about the National Spatial Strategy, it did establish a hierarchy of national, regional and local plans that is critical in any effective planning process and we did see infrastructure like the interurban motorway network and

rail investments delivered. So how will a National Planning Framework be different from its predecessor?

- For a start, the Framework will not be a product of Government but, as provided for under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 and as recommended by the Mahon Tribunal, the Framework will be approved by Dáil Éireann as the definitive statement on the strategic development of our remarkable country.
- There has been a massive cultural shift in terms of the importance of long term strategic planning at national, regional and local level. The introduction of the Core Strategy component in County Development Plans has been critical in delivering this culture shift. So too has been the willingness, under the last Government and already under this one, of Ministers to use their powers under the Planning Acts to tackle deficient or irresponsible forward planning decisions.
- That more rigorous engagement, including appropriate use of power to direct, is here to stay and will provide an important instrument in ensuring coherence between the new hierarchy of plans.
- In addition, the framework can afford to be more strategic, more succinct than its predecessor because there will be three new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies developed alongside the NPF by the three new Regional Assemblies representing the local government sector and co-ordinating their local economic development and planning functions.
- The work involved in drawing up the framework, which I hope the Academy will be involved with, will grapple with an array of issues. In broad terms, we know that we must plan for an expanding, more diverse and older population. Whilst we have

yet to finalise detailed projections, we know that we will need to plan for a population of more than five million people and a 50% increase in the numbers of people aged over 65.

The Minister believes that key areas the Framework must address, include:

- Where and how our housing needs are best met;
- Place making as one of our key assets for economic development and job-creation;
- The location and delivery, including funding, of infrastructure;
- The role of planning in enhancing our sustainability, our greenness;
- Finding the right balance between the complementary, but, contrasting strengths of our regions;
- Strengthening the opportunities for an island approach to our development and one that integrates marine and terrestrial planning processes.
- We need to have a realistic national conversation about the potential of our places, both urban and rural, recognising that a National Planning Framework will mean hard choices and avoiding the "one for everyone in the audience" approach.
- In a globalised world, quality of 'place' really matters. The character and local distinctiveness that we take for granted over relatively short distances in an international context, the differences between Dublin and Cork for example is a key asset for us.
- As your Academy's publications have noted, distinctiveness gets you noticed. Distinctive places

attract people, talent, investment and progress and good planning should recognise and re-inforce distinctiveness. The NPF should therefore set out how we can build on and enhance our urban places, drawing on their distinctive traits.

- I also want to make it clear that in drawing up the National Planning Framework, wish-lists and bland aspirational statements are out, as far as, I am concerned because I know that what the people want is delivery.
- Because of the cross cutting and challenging issues concerned, a high level Cross-Departmental Team has been established, which I chair, to meet regularly to drive the process.
- A number of stakeholder events have been held to inform the process and more will be organised later in the year as part of a broader public consultation exercise.
- Work on econometric and demographic forecasting is underway jointly with the ESRI.
- Finally, the overall process will be prepared fully in line with the requirements of a number of EU Directives, including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directives.
- Later this year, a draft of the Framework will emerge and I will be intent on there being full and effective public and political engagement around its content. I look forward to the deliberations of your event which some of my senior officials are attending and I hope that both your Academy and my Department will work together in informing both policy development and urban development practice so that we create better urban places for all.

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/rebuilding-ireland/minister-coveney-address-academy-urbanism-10th-anniversary-event>

News items

LEADER funding of 6.4m announced for Dublin Rural Area

At the end of November, 2016, the budget for the new round of LEADER funding across the Dublin Rural Region up to 2020 will be €6.4 million. The Dublin Rural Region comprises parts of the three Dublin County Council – Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. LEADER programme funding is set to support a diverse range of projects across various themes including enterprise development, rural tourism, social inclusion and the environment. A series of public information events have been held in Balrothery, Rostestown, Rush, Garristown, Glenasmole Hall, Newcastle, Saggart, Glencullen and Tibbradden for interested parties to learn more about LEADER, its application process and also to invite expressions of interest from potential promoters.

Dr Pat O’Connor, Chair of the Dublin Rural Local Action Group, welcomed the recent signing of contract documents and highlighted the new way that the

LEADER programme will be delivered as part of this round up to 2020. “The LAG have appointed Fingal Leader Partnership as our on-the-ground implementing partner. Together with the three relevant Dublin Local Community Development Committees and Fingal County Council we look forward to implementing the programme objectives of the Dublin Rural LEADER strategy until 2020.” While the LAG was the main signatory to the Contract of Agreement with the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, it was also witnessed and co-signed by Fingal County Council and Fingal Leader Partnership.

The Dublin Rural Area has a population of over 66,000 people of which Fingal makes up approximately 70 per cent of the eligible local areas and Fingal County Council Chief Executive, Mr Paul Reid, outlined that “this €6.4 million funding has the potential to have a transformative impact on the economy and quality of life in Rural Dublin. From a Fingal perspective, it is very much welcome, especially considering the size and importance of the agricultural sector



(from left) : Ed Hearne, Director of Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Department, Fingal County Council, Dr Pat O’Connor, Chairperson, Dublin Rural LAG, Chris Harmon, Chairperson of Fingal LEADER Partnership, Paul Reid, Chief Executive, Fingal County Council, Breffni O’Rourke, Chief Officer, Dublin Rural LAG, Fingal County Council.

in the county. As Financial Partner for the Programme, Fingal County Council are looking forward to working closely with the Dublin Rural Local Action Group, the Fingal Leader Partnership, and our counterparts in the other local authorities to ensure that we maximize the benefits that will accrue from this funding.”

Background

The Fingal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was successful in a bid to be the Local Action Group (LAG) for the delivery of the programme. It will do this in conjunction with its appointed on-the-ground implementing partner, the Fingal Leader Partnership, and Fingal County Council who will act as Financial Partner. While the LAG was the main signatory to the Contract of Agreement with the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, it was also witnessed and co-signed by Fingal County Council and Fingal Leader Partnership.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014, enacted on 27 January 2014, gives legislative effect to the commitments in the Action Programme ‘Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government’, in October 2012’ including the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each local authority administrative area. These measures represented part of a number of significant changes in government policy in relation to local government and seeks to place local government as: *“The main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably.”*

More information on this scheme may be found at www.dublinruralleader.ie or contact a Rural Development Officer on T. (01) 807 7690 M. 087 283 7462.

Source:

Fingal County Council Communications Unit, email press@fingal.ie or (01) 8905133

Plans to fast-track delivery of 30,000 homes

- Details of Major Urban Housing Development Sites announced;
- Sites can deliver up to 30,000 homes over next 3-4 years;
- Housing Delivery Office to troubleshoot where required;
- Planning bill to be completed by the end of the year.

On Thursday, November 10th, 2016, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and Minister of State Damian English T.D., announced fast-track delivery arrangements for 30,000 new homes in major urban centres in Dublin, Cork and other urban locations around the country. The Minister was speaking at the launch of **Pillar 3 - Building More Homes** – under the Government’s *“Rebuilding Ireland – an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.”* Since launching the overall Action Plan on 19 July, 2016, the Minister has revealed more detailed actions under Pillar 1 (Addressing Homelessness) and Pillar 2 (Increasing Social Housing provision) with this event focusing on the broader issue of housing supply. Rebuilding Ireland sets ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes and deliver 47,000 units of social housing in the period to 2021, while at the same time making the best use of the existing housing stock and laying the foundations for a more vibrant and responsive private rented sector.

Speaking at the event in Dublin, Minister Coveney stated that, *“today we are setting out how, with housing providers, we intend to kick-start badly needed additional supply. A key element is the identification of Major Urban Housing Development Sites with the potential to deliver up to 30,000 additional homes, in great locations on existing zoned lands and close to the key areas of demand over the next 3-4 years with even more potential for another 30,000 homes on those lands or a total of 60,000 homes*

in the long term. The initiatives being announced today are part of a drive to upscale the pace of delivery in the places that people need homes most. These sites are in some cases already serviced by major infrastructure but often need additional investment and co-ordination to get them started. Therefore I have placed the Housing Delivery Office within my Department at the disposal of the relevant local authorities and development interests to trouble-shoot as needed on these and other sites, a process that is already underway as today’s event will hear.”



The Minister added, *“If we are to achieve two of the core objectives of the Action Plan – increasing supply to a minimum of 25,000 homes per annum and providing the 47,000 social homes committed to, we must speed up the processes that lead to housing delivery and we must make it more efficient to deliver the homes that people need and where they need them. For my part, I have made a number of changes to the planning system to speed up the processes and reduce building costs, with more coming under fast-track planning legislation published this week and I have made funding available under Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (€200m) and in Rebuilding Ireland I have set out a series of actions to ensure the restoration of a functioning housing supply system. Today is a very good start by identifying the sites with the greatest potential for development and both I and the Government now want to see developers getting on with building the homes that people need.”*

Major Urban Housing Delivery Sites

Local Authority	Location	Envisaged Medium Term Housing Yield	Envisaged Total Housing Yield
Dublin City Council	North Lotts & Grand Canal Dock SDZ	1000	1000+
	Poolbeg West SDZ	1500	3000
	Residential Lands Initiative	2000	2100
	North City Fringe	1200	7000
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	Kiltiernan-Glenamuck LAP	1000	2000
	Cherrywood SDZ	2000	8000
	Shanganagh-Woodbrook LAP	1500	2300
Fingal County Council	Hansfield SDZ	1000	2500
	Donabate LAP	1500	2200
	Oldtown-Mooretown LAP	1500	3200
	North City Fringe	800	1500
South Dublin County	Adamstown SDZ	2500	7400
	Clonburris SDZ	2000	8000
	Corkagh	1000	1000
Cork City Council	Cork Docklands	600	1000+
	Old Whitechurch Road	600	600
Cork County Council	Midleton	1500	2500
	Ballicollig	2000	4000
Limerick City & County	Greenpark, Limerick	700	700
Galway City Council	Ardaun (subject to progress on LAP)	500	500+
Future Sites	Work ongoing		

The event outlined arrangements in relation to the following:

- **Housing Delivery Office** – programme management of strategic sites;
- **Further Planning Reform** – new fast track planning approvals Bill 100+ units being dealt with in an integrated one-stop-shop way by Bord Pleanála in conjunction with relevant local authorities and community participation;
- **Streamlining of local authority “Part 8” approvals process;** “Help to Buy Rebate” to convert theoretical to realisable demand.

The Minister also stated, *“The lack of supply of homes is central to wider problems in the housing sector. To put it in its simplest terms current supply is half of what’s needed even before you factor in pent up demand. Lack of supply is driving up prices, increasing rents, which in turn influences homelessness. Lack of supply puts severe pressure on young families, job seekers and workers, not to mention the impacts on the wider economy and the implications for foreign direct investment that we need to continue and broaden our economic recovery. For all those reasons and more the conditions must be created for supply to increase as quickly as we possibly can. Under Pillar 3, the Government has brought about huge policy, legislative and investment initiatives to create those conditions and enable supply of affordable, high quality and well located homes that will create sustainable places and communities. I now believe the time is ripe for the development sector and housing providers to respond with the housing supply that people need and today’s event will hear about those plans from some of the biggest housing providers in the State.”*

#RebuildingIreland
@RebuildingIrl

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/rebuilding-ireland/coveney-announces-plans-fast-track-delivery-30000-homes>

Two Irish towns win at 2017 Urbanism Awards

By Emma Gilleece, Deputy Editor for Architecture Ireland, the journal of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland.

Congratulations to Clonakilty who have won the ‘Great Town Award’, and Waterford’s Viking Triangle Initiative receiving the award under ‘The Great Place’ category as part of the Academy of Urbanism 2017 Urbanism Awards. The awards ceremony took place on Wednesday 16 November at U+I in Victoria, London. The awards cover both Ireland and the UK. Clonakilty also has the honour of being the only Irish town to make the initial 15, before that was dwindled down to three. The West Cork town was up against Blackpool in Lancashire and Tormoden in West Yorkshire for the prestigious award.

The reception for The Urbanism Awards Ceremony included the launch of their third book, Urbanism, to be published with Routledge, which captures the learning and lessons from the 75 Urbanism Awards Finalists celebrated between 2009 and 2013. The other awards handed out on the night were the European City of the Year and – for the UK and Ireland – The Great Town, Neighbourhood, Street and Place. The

judging involved a visit to the town by a group of architects from the Academy of Urbanism at the start of April and a second assessment visit took place during the summer when the town made the final three.

Clonakilty is no stranger to award ceremonies as it picked up the Public Choice Award and Highly Commended for the Public Space Award in the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland Irish Architecture Awards in 2014. The award was for Clonakilty 400 Urban Design Masterplan Phase 1 designed by Giulia Vallone, Town Architect, Cork County Council. Through her role as town architect, Vallone has reinvigorated Clonakilty’s town centre, making it a place, which favours people over cars, with a sense of community on the streets.

Waterford was up against Greenwich Market, London and Leicester Market, Leicester for the award. The restoration and landscaping of the Waterford Viking Triangle was by Waterford City and County Architects with contribution by GKMP Architects. The Viking Triangle is one of the oldest and most significant urban quarters in the country. In this project, the highest quality materials and street fittings are used to make a series of spaces that reflect the civic and



historical importance of the area. The overall approach is to repave the streets in granite and to make the surrounds of the Cathedral in Irish blue limestone, with large inset areas of Ballylusk gravel. Though specific in context, place and materials, the project is characterised by a positive uncertainty with regard to use. Its emptiness assumes change, across a season or a century. The scheme was Commended in the RIAI Irish Architecture Awards 2014.



Source:
<http://architectureireland.ie/clonakilty-waterford-2017-urbanism-awards>

Library Strategy in 2017 will “build communities and expand knowledge”



Minister with responsibility for libraries at the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Mr. Damien English, T.D., outlined to the Library Association of Ireland (Public Libraries Section) Conference on Thursday 10th November, 2016 in the Faithlegg House Hotel, Co. Waterford, that “as the final year of *‘Opportunities*

for All’, the strategy document for our Public Libraries nationally approaches, *I look forward to working with staff and stakeholders around the country on creating an ambitious and all-embracing successor strategy to further the economic, social and cultural mission of our Public Libraries, and of our country overall.*”

Minister English underlined that “these early years of the 21st century have seen rapid change. Public libraries are now at a turning point. We need to re-establish what people and our communities need. We have to determine what additional services will be offered in our communities and what the best way to deliver these services will be. Particularly, we have to focus our attention on the non-member, or those who will become our new library users in the years ahead, as well as bridging the digital divide for older people. As Minister, I believe our new Public Library strategy should be firmly focused on maximising the number of people who can access our library services. In the development of the new strategy we must broaden the library’s role in the community. We need to expand its reach and connections to support larger community goals. I value the input and ideas of all staff in this work.”

Staff contribution vital

Speaking at the event Minister English told delegates: “Your personal engagement and genuine interest has contributed greatly to the successful implementation of the current strategy. Your contribution is vital to the next new chapter for public libraries in Ireland. So far in the lifetime of the current strategy, you have reached out and connected with over 850,000 library members. You have enhanced their confidence in using the library service. I look forward to working with staff and stakeholders to develop a world class strategy for our Public Libraries. A strategy that will stand the test of time and allow libraries remain the ‘Foundation’ for our main streets of our towns.”

€200,000 funding for Lough Derg Blueway initiative

At the end of November, 2016, the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs allocated €200,000 under the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) initiative for the marketing, development and promotion of The Lough Derg Blueway, which includes the soon to be completed Lough Derg Canoe Trail. Managed by a Steering Committee comprising the Lough Derg Marketing Group, Clare County Council, Tipperary County Council and Waterways Ireland, the project aims to build on the existing tourism and recreational infrastructure as well as improve economic activity surrounding the Blueway on Lough Derg by working with communities in the towns and villages in its hinterland.

Councillor Mr. Bill Chambers, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council noted the valuable opportunities presented by the Blueway for the rural communities to attract more visitors. “There are approximately 70,000 visitors to the Lough Derg region on an annual basis, worth over €10 million to the local economy.” “The recent success of the Mayo Greenway and the Shannon Erne Blueway has highlighted the potential for new enterprises to emerge in rural towns and villages as a result of such experiential tourism offerings. The completion of the Lough Derg Canoe Trail early next year will provide evidence of the economic benefits that can accrue from such a development for the towns and villages.” Cllr. Ms. Siobhan Ambrose, Cathaoirleach, Tipperary County Council welcomed the announcement of funding for the Lough Derg project stating, “The Lough Derg Lakelands is an excellent hub for activities both on and off the water attracting increasing numbers of domestic and international tourists annually. The REDZ funding will allow us to invest in marketing and promoting Lough Derg as a world class destination offering a memorable visitor experience and the capacity to engage with the

communities around Lough Derg during the process.” Also welcoming the funding allocation, Mr. Joe MacGrath, Chairperson of the Lough Derg Marketing Group and Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council, explained that the REDZ initiative is about community participation, boosting employment, tackling rural isolation and helping communities to identify the issues and also the solutions. “The concept of a REDZ involves supporting communities to avail of opportunities to help themselves and their local areas and it is the essence of what a community led approach to rural development is all about. Clare County Council and its partner agencies look forward to engaging with the local business, community and voluntary sectors in the Scarriff and Nenagh REDZ areas during the coming months to deliver on the opportunities presented by the Lough Derg Blueway.”

Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council said the project will result in a high quality product that will increase tourism to the local towns and villages located close to the western and eastern shores of Lough Derg. The value of the Blueways lies not only in the recreational opportunities that they offer but also in their potential to stimulate local business and regenerate local areas. We will be engaging with businesses and communities throughout the Scarriff and Nenagh REDZ areas while the Blueway’s network of walking, cycling, heritage, food and canoe trails will be marketed and promoted as a signature experience on Lough Derg. It is intended that the initiative will deliver one of the key objectives of the ‘Roadmap for Experience Development and Destination Marketing 2014-2017’ for Lough Derg.”

Meanwhile, the proposed Lough Derg Canoe Trail, which is scheduled for completion by January 2017, will see canoe facilities and services blocks installed in Killaloe, Ballycuggeran, and Scarriff, Mountshannon and Dromaan harbours. The Trail project is an initiative

of the Lough Derg Marketing Group and is being funded under the Lough Derg Stimulus Fund. Waterways Ireland is leading the design and development of the project in partnership with Clare County Council, Galway County Council and Tipperary County Council.

Source:
Clare County Council Communications Office

€16.6 Million Worth of EU funding to Transform Cross-Border Business Research & Innovation

Donegal County Council has welcomed this week’s announcement from the Special EU Programmes Body that approximately €16.6m has been offered under the EU’s INTERREG VA Programme to develop the Research & Innovation capacity of over 1,400 SMEs on a cross-border basis, through the ‘Co-Innovate’ project. The funding offer is the first to be announced under the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme. Upon completion the project will increase the proportion of SMEs and micro-businesses involved in cross-border R&I collaboration within Northern Ireland, Western Scotland and the Border Region of Ireland from 22% to 33%. InterTradeIreland will act as the lead partner for the project, alongside Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and delivery agents Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise office’s based within the Border Region of Ireland.

With five distinct strands the project will provide education and capability support tailored to the needs of all participating SMEs and micro-businesses. It will deliver 469 separate innovation audits to support new product and process development and will give SMEs and micro-businesses access to up to 70 ‘innovation interns’ to help implement enhanced R&I activity. The project will also increase the number of businesses actively participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects. Match-funding for ‘Co-

Innovate’ has been provided by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland, the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland and Scottish Enterprise alongside Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Mr. Michael Tunney from the Donegal Local Enterprise Office in Donegal County Council welcomed this announcement stating that “the Local Enterprise Offices have been working with our partners, particularly, the Local Enterprise Agencies within the Enterprise Northern Ireland Network and InterTrade Ireland, on this project over the past two years”. He added “the project is focussed on developing and driving innovation in small and micro businesses and aims to identify how this can be done in each business. The project will be an additional support to small businesses in Donegal and we will seek to integrate it into our current suite of supports to maximise its impact. We hope that through the Co-Innovates programme that up to 80 Donegal businesses will be able to engage in the first stage of the project and that from these a strong cohort will be brought forward to the second stage.”

Source:
Donegal County Council Communications Office

EU Committee of the Regions replacement members announced

On Tuesday, July, 5th, 2016, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D., announced that the Government has agreed to the nomination of three full members and four alternate members to the EU Committee of the Regions to fill vacancies which arose after the recent Dáil and Seanad elections. There is no salary or allowance for members of the Committee of the Regions, but, they are entitled to claim for travel and subsistence expenses relating to their attendance at meetings.

These members, along with 11 existing members, will represent Ireland on the EU Committee of the Regions. Nominations are made by Member States to the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers), which then makes the formal appointments to the Committee of Regions. The Committee is composed of 350 full members and the same number of alternate members. It was established under the EU Treaties in 1994 to give elected members of local and regional authorities in EU Member States an opportunity to be consulted on any proposed EU legislation that may have implications at regional or local level.

The following are the newly nominated members:

Full Members:

Cllr. Michael Murphy (Fine Gael)
(Head of Delegation)
Tipperary County Council

Cllr. Deirdre Forde (Fine Gael)
Cork County Council

Cllr. Gerry Murray (Sinn Féin)
Mayo County Council

Alternate Members:

Cllr. Barry Ward (Fine Gael)
Dún Laoghaire/
Rathdown County Council

Cllr. Irene Winters (Fine Gael)
Wicklow County Council

Cllr. Eamon Dooley (Fianna Fáil)
Offaly County Council

Cllr. Dianne Nolan (Sinn Féin)
Kerry County Council

Councillors Michael Murphy and Deirdre Forde were already alternate members of the Committee of Regions but will become full members following these nominations.

The Government decision was made on a proposal from the Minister for the Environment, Community and

Local Government, Simon Coveney TD following cross-party consultation. The Minister outlined that *“the Committee of the Regions is part of the EU’s legislative framework. In these uncertain times it is especially important for Ireland to maintain its full representation and actively contribute at all levels of EU legislative and policy formulation. I am*

pleased that the membership of Ireland’s local authorities and their communities will continue to have a voice and be strongly represented at European level”.

Source:

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/governance/committee-regions/government-appoints-replacement-members-eu-committee>

Clare Tourism at World Travel Market in London

At the beginning of November, 2016, the Clare tourism sector was well represented at the World Travel Market (WTM), which took place in London. The leading global event for the travel industry attracts more than 50,000 senior industry executives each year.



Promoting Clare at the World Travel Market in London in front of a billboard for Star Wars, the latest edition of which was partially filmed in the Loop Head Lighthouse Peninsula, (1 to r) Gerard Dollard (Director of Service, Clare County Council), Mark O’Connell (W2 Consulting), Cathal Reynolds (W2 Consulting), Caroline Madden (W2 Consulting), Peter Costello (Emerald VIP Services, Shannon), Katherine Webster (General Manager, Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience), Maura Fay (Marketing, Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience), Joan Reilly (Doolin2Aran Ferries) and Cllr. Bill Chambers (Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council).

Norwegian Air decision a potential 'game changer' for Shannon Airport and wider region

The Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council outlines the decision of the US Transportation Department to grant approval to Norwegian Air to commence low cost flights between Ireland and the United States presents "huge opportunities" for Shannon Airport, its customers, and tourism and business interests in the West of Ireland. Councillor Bill Chambers described the granting of the permit as a "potential game changer" for the County Clare airport in its ongoing efforts to expand the range of transatlantic services provided. *"An Taoiseach Enda Kenny's suggestion that Shannon could be a possible beneficiary of the US Transportation Departments decision is encouraging. It is important that the region's tourism interests, business lobby groups, multinationals, local authorities, political representatives and of course, the wider public make their collective voice heard as management at Shannon Airport and Norwegian respond to this latest development. The proposition of low fare flights to the United States will be welcomed by consumers and business interests across the West of Ireland. We should not underestimate however, the huge potential draw for business interests and US tourists of being provided with low cost access to a region that is already popular amongst American tourists and is home to many US multinationals."*

The Chief Executive of Clare County Council has also welcomed the US Transportation Department's approval of a permit. Mr. Pat Dowling stated "Clare County Council has identified the importance of a thriving Shannon International Airport as a key element of its economic strategy for County Clare and the wider region. Building on the continued expansion of services at Shannon Airport and the Local Authority's supporting role in this success, Clare County Council is committed to playing a leading role in supporting and promoting Shannon's status as a premier international airport, a catalyst of regional growth, a gateway into Ireland for American visitors, and

one of the key reasons for multinationals choosing to invest in County Clare and the Mid-West Region. I want to congratulate Shannon Group plc for having the foresight to begin exploratory talks with Norwegian in 2014. It is this type of forward planning that will see Shannon Airport expand further and continue to deliver for customers and the economy of County Clare and the wider region in years to come."

Fingal Towns and Villages To Benefit From Government Funding

Seven of Fingal's town and villages are to benefit from a €10m Government initiative, the 2016 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Under the scheme, a wide variety of improvement projects identified by Fingal County Council in conjunction with local community groups and businesses will be funded. Funding awards for the seven Fingal projects range from €29,000 to €100,000.

The projects awarded funding under the scheme will increase footfall and stimulate the local economy of the county's town and villages. Funded projects will include the development of a playground, the installation of outdoor exercise equipment at a number of sites, streetscape and environmental enhancements, and new pathways and signage that will unlock existing amenities to both visitors and local residents.

The Fingal towns and villages announced in November by Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Ms. Heather Humphreys TD as beneficiaries of the scheme are:

Ballyboughal **€34,000**

- Installation of outdoor exercise equipment

Balrothery **€100,000**

- To undertake landscape improvements at the entrance to, and the exit from the village
- To build a new pathway linking Glebe Park to an existing heritage trail through the village
- Installation of outdoor exercise equipment in Glebe Park
- Boundary improvements to Balrothery graveyard

Balscadden

€34,000

- Installation of outdoor exercise equipment

Donabate

€39,000

- Install signage to direct people from Donabate train station to Newbridge House and Farm.
- In addition, the project will open up, widen, and replace, an old gateway at the back of the estate, making the facility more accessible for local residents.

Loughshinny

€29,000

- Streetscape and environmental enhancements to a strategic site at the entrance to Loughshinny Village on the R128 Rush Skerries Road.

Rush

€99,000

- Delivery of a playground in Harbour Park

Tyrrelstown

€45,000

- The development of a network of paths through Tyrrelstown Park

In each case, these awards will be further supplemented by funding from Fingal County Council .

Mr. Paul Reid Chief Executive Fingal County Council outlined that "I am delighted with this news and I wish to congratulate all and acknowledge the hard work that went into putting these submissions together. This news comes on the back of the fantastic successes enjoyed by Fingal's towns and villages in this year's Tidy Towns competition and it further recognises the cooperation and partnership enjoyed by the local communities and Fingal County Council and shows what is possible. We recognise the potential that exists in Fingal's communities and we actively support them through initiatives like the recently held Cleaner Community Awards 2016. It is no coincidence either that our towns and villages form part of our tourism proposition and I am pleased to note Minister Humphreys' comments that this scheme will be available again in 2017 and I look forward to more benefits for Fingal's towns and villages."

Source:

Donegal County Council Communications Office

A new Strategic Partnership focusing on the North West region

Senior Government officials from North and South will participate in a new and innovative Strategic Partnership focusing on the North West region with a view to bringing about real and positive benefits for the area. The inaugural meeting of the North West Strategic Growth Partnership will take place on Wednesday, December 7th, 2016 in Derry. It is anticipated it will meet once every six months. As well as Chief Executives from both Councils, the Cathaoirleach and Mayor of each Council and the Chair and Vice Chair of the North West Regional Development Group will meet along with senior representatives from key government departments, North and South, and key regional stakeholders. The North West Strategic Growth Partnership, led by Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council and comprising senior representatives from Government departments from the Republic and Northern Ireland, is the first grouping of its kind on the island of Ireland.

In addition to the two Council Chief Executives, An Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council and the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, and the North West Regional Development Group, government representatives from the following departments will be in attendance:

The newly-established Partnership will provide joined-up planning and collaborative resourcing of growth for the North West region and work collectively to build on the work being carried out by the North West Regional Development Group. This partnership with government, which is being supported by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), has been endorsed by the two Governments through the North South Ministerial Council and is the culmination of over two years intensive planning and development.

Mr. Seamus Neely, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, emphasises that the Partnership will provide opportunities to deliver a coordinated and durable partnership between the North West region and Central Government in Ireland and Northern Ireland. *“We hope that through the Partnership we can facilitate greater day to day joint working across the administrations and local government through shared approaches and co-ordinated planning and delivery, focusing on three key pillars of economic growth and investment, physical and environmental development and social and community cohesion and well-being. The Partnership will provide a Forum to outline our key strengths and our commitment to the North West becoming a resilient economy.”* Mr. John Kelpie, Chief Executive with Derry City and Strabane District Council, outlines that the establishment of the North

West Strategic Growth Partnership is hugely significant and a very strong endorsement of the close collaborative working relationship between the two Councils, and their commitment to promoting and maximising the opportunities that exist for Ireland North West. *“The establishment of the North West Strategic Growth Partnership is a major enabler for us and evidence of the groundwork that has been done over the past number of years between the two Councils and Government representatives from both sides of the Border who acknowledge the importance of the region to the economy of both jurisdictions. The North West region includes Derry-Londonderry, the fourth largest city region on the island of Ireland, and this focused co-operation and unique partnership will ensure that we can release the region’s full potential. It is a unique model of partnership across the two jurisdictions that will allow us to drive forward our strategic priorities for the North West region and help assist in the delivery of the Programme of Government, north and south. We strongly believe that this Partnership will allow regional and local government, in partnership with central government, to put into place specific arrangements to assist the North West in maximising the opportunities that exist for it to reach its full potential as a net contributor to the economy.”*

Source:
Donegal County Council Communications Office

Republic of Ireland

Department for Public Expenditure and Reform
 Department for Housing, Planning and Local Government
 Department for Social Protection
 Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Department for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht
 The Taoiseach’s Office
 Department for Education and Skills
 Department for Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources
 Department for Health
 Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport
 Department for Finance
 Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Northern Ireland

Department for Communities
 Department for Finance
 Department for Infrastructure
 Department for Education
 Department for Health
 Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
 Department for the Economy
 NI Executive Office



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Prosperous 2017
for you and your
families.



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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