

Use of Key Performance Indicators at review stage in Service Level Agreements.

By Orla O'Donnell, IPA

As more and more local authorities use 'service level agreements' or 'service level contracts' when outsourcing services to external organisations or providing services to other organisations, there is an increasing use of specific metrics, also known as key performance indicators (KPIs) during the review stages of these contracts.

In this article, we will examine the use of key performance indicators in the review stage of service level agreements, including the advantages and disadvantages involved in their implementation. A number of examples are referenced in this article to highlight good practice templates.

What are the differences between Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Service Level Agreements (SLA)?

Business process management uses a number of techniques, such as Service Level Agreements (SLA); Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Operational Performance Indicators (OPI) to measure specific aspects of an organisation's business. (Wayne, 2015)

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is 'an agreement between two parties in terms of a particular service. Specifically, an SLA is defined as a contract between a service provider and a customer, it details the nature, quality, and scope of the service to be provided. It is also referred to as a 'service level contract'

Wayne (2015) outlines that 'a complete contract for goods and services

may contain multiple service level agreements, one for each specific task or item, and different agreements for different aspects such as quality, quantity and schedule. In addition, you can set up an SLA between different departments within your company.'

In more detail, Hiles (2000) defines a SLA as 'an agreement between the support service and the user quantifying the minimum acceptable service to the user.' Hiles also notes that SLAs are particularly useful 'in time-critical processing and that they may be complex and lengthy or simple one-page documents, but, are mainly seen 'as indispensable to providing good service and sound relationships between vendor and customer.'

For example, The Office of the Attorney General in New Zealand (2004) outline that 'the international infrastructure management manual, Creating Customer Value defines service levels as service parameters or requirements for a particular activity or service area against which service performance may be measured. Such service levels can relate to dimensions of, for example, quality, quantity, reliability, responsiveness, environmental acceptability, and cost.'

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined as key metrics that target the tactical and strategic objectives of service providers organisations. KPIs 'measure a supplier's performance against business-critical areas.'

Wayne (2015) provides a number of examples of KPIs: KPIs for a restaurant would include tables filled, income

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per night, food costs, labour costs and advertising budget. KIPS for an online store would include income per category and costs for bandwidth, advertising, goods sold and shipping. KPIs help your business succeed by keeping you up-to-date on the “vital signs” of the company.’ They measure efficiency and effectiveness of a service and the status of service operation. It is important to note that not all metrics are automatically KPIs as KPIs are bound to organisation or service goals and should drive efficiency and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, Wayne (2015) highlights that ‘operational performance indicators (OPIs) are similar to KPIs in that both refer to the vital metrics of an aspect of your business. But while a KPI looks at broad categories, an OPI measures a specific function or operation –typically one at a “bottleneck” for your business. An OPI for a shipping company would look at the process for loading trucks, while an OPI for a fast-food restaurant would measure the make process for meals.’ In summary, Wayne (2015) underlines that ‘setting up systems for your business [organisation] doesn’t mean choosing among SLA, KPI and OPI for your metrics. A strong business plan will apply all three metrics at appropriate points.’ In particular, Wayne notes that ‘OPIs will measure the performance of key points of your operation, while KPIs will rate how well your business interacts with the market. You’ll use SLAs to make sure the businesses you depend on keep delivering what you need on the schedule and in the quality you require.’ (Wayne, 2015)

Blackwell and Dixon (2003) in their analysis of SLAs, stress that the key difference in the use of SLAs appears to be in their application. ‘For example, service level agreements can either be applied to the provision of internal services by one area within an organisation to another (Boyd & Proctor, 1995; Bucholtz, 1999) or to the delivery/receipt of services with an external organisation (Rozwell, 2000). When applied to internal service provision, the SLA forms an agreement between the parties (Hiles, 1993; Boyd & Proctor, 1995; Karten, 1998; The Art of Service, 2001) while its use with external organisations is often that of a contract (Cooperman, 1995) which is

legally binding.(Blackwell and Dixon, 2003)’ Similarly, CIPS (2005) explain the difference between internal and external SLAs. ‘Internal SLAs are not intended to have legal consequences, since customer and service provider are members of the same organisation. There will also be no monetary compensation, although non-compliance may be penalised indirectly.’

However, the Oakleigh Consulting white paper on ‘Developing Service Level Agreements in Local Government’, notes that effective SLAs between support and frontline delivery services don’t necessarily have to fit this mould. It is noted that when assessing local authorities’ use of resources, the local government sector needs to find the best ways of integrating both support and service provider functions to provide value for money to the customer. The Oakleigh Consulting white paper, stresses that ‘in this context, the SLA can be adapted as a critical management tool, especially if it is seen as part of a wider performance management framework. It can lay the groundwork for a consistent ‘customer-driven’ approach, not just to the outside world but to the network of internal customers of support services.’ (Oakleigh Consulting Ltd., White Paper) External SLAs will have contractual implications. It is recommended that they are generally a part of the outsourcing contract and should be treated as a schedule (or part of a schedule) to the agreement.’ ‘SLAs and KPIs are agreed with the supplier, and form an essential ingredient for effective Supplier Performance Management. While Relationship Audit evaluates the overall strategic alignment of the buyer-supplier relationship, SLAs and KPIs tend to focus on the operational aspects:

- The service provided
- The level of service required
- A timeline for delivery
- Responsibilities for both parties
- Provisions for legal and regulatory compliance
- Performance monitoring and reporting methods
- Payment terms

- The process for dispute resolution
- A confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement
- Termination conditions.’ (SpringTide Consulting Ltd. (2010))

In brief, ‘SLAs are about minimal, expected and agreed quality of a service to a customer; however, KPIs are about desired operation efficiency and organisation goals. It is important to measure both service level compliance and key performance indicators in order to keep promises and excel service quality.’ (<https://martinskemme.wordpress.com/2013/05/09/sla-vs-kpi-service-level-agreements-vs-key-performance-indicators/>)

In summary, key performance indicators (KPIs) are increasingly being used in the review process of service level agreements or service contracts as a means of gauging the progress achieved under ‘service level agreements’ or ‘service level contracts.’ In this article, we examined the use of key performance indicators at the review stage of service level agreements, including the advantages and disadvantages involved in their implementation and looked at a number of good practice examples.

It is evident from the international examples referenced in this article, that the service levels are achieved successfully where the service level contracts stipulate specific measurements and indicators of service provision, including, ongoing reviews with partner organisations to ensure a continuous improvement in service. Failures occur where at the outset of the service level agreement, there is a lack of understanding of the level of service to be provided by the local authority and the partner organisation; a lack of consultation with the customer or community from the outset; lack of useful indicators to benchmark service changes and a robust review mechanism as part of an ongoing continuous improvement strategy.

As an Attorney General’s report (2013) in New Zealand noted ‘a public entity cannot contract out all responsibility for what is done in its name.’ Therefore, robust service level agreements embedded in a continuous improvement strategy can provide the necessary bulwark against service level issues and any difficulties that may arise in maintaining and improving service levels.

Note: This article is based on a forthcoming IPA Local Government Research Series Report entitled 'Service Level Agreements and Key Performance Indicators: a review

of national and international examples' to be published in the autumn and will also be available on the IPA website, at www.ipa.ie

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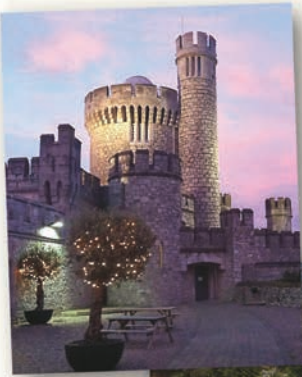
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Delivering for Tipperary innovation and leadership

By Patrick Moran, Executive Area Engineer with Tipperary county council

In September 2011, due to inadequate sludge processing and high sludge removal costs from wastewater plants, my focus turned to see how this could be addressed for plants in my functional engineering area. Previously operation of sludge holding tanks on sites, resulted in watery low dry solid sludge being produced and insufficient holding processing of sludge in the plants, with a knock on effect from the plants final discharge to the receiving river.

I engaged my team in planning the construction and operation of new sludge dewatering beds with innovative decanting doors and weather resistant breathable covers. We then engaged with John Mooney T/A Lisheen Engineering in the detailed design & construction of this sludge management infrastructure on our wastewater sites. The infrastructure created varies slightly from site to site governed mainly by process control and individual sludge characteristics.

Our previous accomplishments, included reducing waste and pollution, increasing water quality, and reducing energy usage, with works, such as:

- Construction of intake works and automated screen installation to wastewater plants and rag catchers to pump stations which have improved effluent quality and greatly reduced blockages.
- Contracted a company and project managed them carrying out robotic cleaning of live reservoirs which meant continuity of water supply could be maintained throughout and leaks in the reservoir structure could be identified due to the head of water, which were then later repaired. This robotic technology eliminated the

- need for staff to enter a confined space.
- Implemented and had carried out a programme of unidirectional scouring of public drinking water networks.
- Managed the rehabilitation of water boreholes, supported by CCTV surveys.
- Managed the electrical modernisation of Roscrea wastewater plant, got our combined heat and power plant certified and signed a contract with the ESB for payment for electricity we are exporting from the combined heat and power plant running on sludge bio gases.
- Implemented energy efficiency improvements resulting in reduction in electrical consumption in water and wastewater plants

Why these dewatering beds as the solution?

These beds are simple to operate and energy efficient, providing the least cost technology option for efficiently dewatering sludge.

The operation and maintenance costs have to be considered as a labour cost, although this work is carried out by



Borrisoleigh wastewater plant new dewatering beds, with decanting doors and covers

full-time caretakers, who also perform various other duties at these plants.

The dewatering beds:

These beds were constructed of reinforced concrete to hold wet heavy corrosive sludge. The bed floors have sharp cross and longitudinally falls to decanting doors.

Decanting doors:

The new beds were fitted with self bleeding stainless doors designed with slots at intervals to mimic the old laths decanting system, but operating to continuously bleeding the water at all levels from the sludge. These decanting doors were manufactured in stainless steel due to its corrosion resistance and pliability which aid their cleaning by tapping with a hammer or water jet.

Recognising Ireland has very high annual rainfall, and therefore, the typical problem is that the efficiency of the traditional sludge dewatering beds decreases as a result of rainfall inputs. We decided to cover the beds which have proven to produce sludge with higher dry solids, resulting in further reduced sludge volumes.

The frame for dewatering bed covers:

Following materials review the decision

was made to have the frame for covers to the drying beds fabricated in stainless

steel, due to its corrosion resistance and strength to weight ratio making them maintenance free, durable and easy to lift when required.

Dewatering bed covers:

Resulting from materials review the decision was made to have the bed covered with black water resistant breathable woven polypropylene fabric. The black cover means all light rays pass through it creating heat under the cover which aids evaporation of water from the sludge. The black woven polypropylene fabric is lightweight strong, breathable, water resistant, durable, flexible so transpiration of the moisture can also occur through the cover yet keeping the rain off, and requiring no maintenance. See below photos showing a sample of the sites where this infrastructure was installed.

1. Supporting strong economy

In late 2011, I selected Roscrea wastewater plant as a sludge hub for the smaller plants in the Eastern half of North Tipperary. Roscrea was selected as a hub because it has a sludge digester linked to a combined heat and power plant with excess capacity to harness and convert the gas from sludge, including sludge imported from our satellite plants, as identified by prior volatile test results for sludge's from these plants.

Roscrea wastewater plant is exporting electricity to the national grid from its combined heat and power plant system running on sludge bio gases. Our chp has been certified and an agreement has been signed with ESB networks and a smart meter was installed on our electrical supply so as to receive payment for electricity we are exporting.

Sludge transport savings, income from exported electricity should act to subsidise Irish waters operating costs, so savings should be passed on to the public. Since importation of these sludge's the use of calor LPG to assist in heating the digester has reduced resulting in a significantly reduced spend. Sludge bio gas generated by the digester has risen resulting in increased

chp running hours and the generation of electricity for more hours each day. Surplus electricity above what is used on site is exported to the national grid, generally during night time hours.

2. Impact on quality of life of the community:

Wastewater continues to affect our lives, even after it disappears down the drain. Wastewater treatment has the potential also to effect health, the local economy, recreation, utility bills, taxes and other aspects of everyday life. Laboratory results show that since the installation of this sludge management infrastructure final effluent performance from these plants has improved regarding discharges to the rivers from these plants.

There is also the local benefit for children on school trips, engineering students, other local authorities and Irish Water agency staff visiting these plants as they are acting as a practical demonstration of innovation in sludge management, and such like, thus planting the seed of learning, creative thinking and future innovative initiatives in the community.

3. Impact on quality of Environment:

Reduced nuisance and greater recreation on uncongested roads reduced dust, noise, co2 emissions, less damage to road surface, better road safety due to decreased truck movement as result of greatly reduced number of loads of sludge being removed from sites per year.

Results:

- €200,000+ saving annually to the public due to greatly reduced sludge volumes needing to be removed off sites, as the new infrastructure increased typical sludge dry solids from previously 0.4% to 8% thus greatly reducing sludge volumes.
- Significantly reduced spend on LPG gas at Roscrea wastewater plant due to replacement with bio gases from sludge's.
- Reduced electricity bills at Roscrea plant due to generating more of our own power on site.

- Irish water to receive revenue for electricity we are exporting to the national grid from Roscrea plant.

Our achievements feed into three strategic themes of our corporate plan, namely, a strong economy, quality of life and quality of the environment.

1. Strong economy

Our improvements encourage and support business growth in the local economy around these plants, the reduction of waste, reduced spend on LPG and electricity Roscrea plant, significant financial savings, revenue from electricity generated export to the grid.

2. Quality of life

Better public health due to less noise & vibration, less damage to roads and better road safety due to deduced truck movements. Visits to these sites provide practical learning opportunities, promoting creative thinking and innovation initiatives in the community.

3. Quality of Environment

Improved air quality reduced truck volumes Co2 emission and improved river water quality from discharging wastewater plants.

Learning, Credits, Future:

The infrastructure provided has made a significant contribution to the economy through the design and delivery to the public service financial savings through innovation and lean business initiative creating process efficiencies.

I am proud of what we have achieved and must acknowledge my team some who have recently retired. Their assistance and diligence in engaging and embracing this new infrastructure was paramount in making it the success it proved and continues to be. This success is a major recognition of the outstanding work undertaken each day by the team. We in water services are most fortunate to have such creative, motivated and committed office and outdoor staff. We are currently working on developing sludge as a product, not a waste.

Search Begins for Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur

The Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, T.D.; the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, T.D., and the Local Enterprise Office Donegal have launched the search to find Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE), with a total investment fund of €2million available nationally and up to €50,000 on offer for three local winners through Local Enterprise Office Donegal.

Aimed at those aged between 18 years and 30 years in every county, the competition is an integral part of the Action Plan for Jobs and is supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation through Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices. The Taoiseach and Minister Bruton urged all young people with a start-up or a business idea to apply through their Local Enterprise Office before 31st July. The competition is free to enter, and further information is available from the Local Enterprise Office (www.localenterprise.ie) as well as at

Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur 2015 (**#IBYE**), website: www.ibye.ie or on social Media: **#IBYE**.

The first stage is a county-based competition, with a closing date of July 31st 2015 through the Local Enterprise Offices, leading to the naming of the Best Young Entrepreneur in each county.

This will be followed by eight regional finals, with one young business-person being crowned Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur later in the year at the national finals in Google's European HQ in Dublin. Up to €50,000 will be awarded to three winners in each county. The winners at national level can then receive up to an additional €50,000 and over 400 young entrepreneurs will also win places at regional Business Bootcamps with mentoring supports, to further develop their business skills.

During last year's highly successful inaugural competition, over 1,000

applications were received, 400 young entrepreneurs took part in Business Bootcamps and 93 young entrepreneurs throughout every county in Ireland won cash investments for their businesses.

At the first-ever National Final, Eamon Keane of Xpreso Software in South Dublin clinched the overall title of 'Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur' for his parcel delivery software company, ahead of runners-up from the tourism and food sectors.

The aim of the initiative is to support a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in Ireland, to promote entrepreneurship as a career choice, and to encourage Ireland's young people to set up new businesses which will ultimately create jobs. Part of the effort to attract applications from young people both in Ireland and abroad will be a comprehensive social media and marketing campaign. Launching the nationwide competition, the Taoiseach,



IBYE Group: Ellevyn Irwin (yellow dress) of Click Clinic from Buncrana with last year's finalists of the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneurs and Richard Bruton, TD. Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Enda Kenny TD stated that: “our vision for Ireland is to be among the most entrepreneurial nations in the world and to be acknowledged as a world-class environment in which to start and grow a business, including for young people with bright ideas. ‘Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur’ is a unique, interactive and challenging competition, but with clear and tangible results, from self-development and networking to the valuable financial aid available to category winners. Increasing entrepreneurial activity is a core theme of the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs with the aim of doubling the jobs impact of start-ups in Ireland over the next five years.”

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD underlined that: “two thirds of all new jobs are created by start-ups, so if we are to create the jobs we need we must support more entrepreneurs to start new businesses. That is why we have placed start-ups right at the centre of our Action Plan for Jobs, and put in place new measures like establishing a new system of easily-accessible supports through the Local Enterprise Offices.

Part of this plan is also fostering a stronger culture of entrepreneurship and promoting start-up business as a career option for young people. That is what is behind this new competition to find the best young entrepreneur in every county in Ireland also ultimately Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur.

Last year as part of the judging panel in the inaugural IBYE I was overwhelmed by the quality and the energy of the young business-people who took part in this competition. I firmly believe that IBYE can be a crucial means of encouraging more young people to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice and ultimately create jobs. I urge any person under 30 who has a business or a business idea to contact your local LEO or visit IBYE.ie and apply to become Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur for 2015”.

Speaking on behalf of the Local Enterprise Office, Michael Tunney Head

of Enterprise, reiterated that “the doors of the Local Enterprise Office are always open for anyone thinking of setting up a business or for those looking to grow their business.

Through important initiatives, such as Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur competition, we’re looking forward to supporting more of our young people with their business ideas and start-ups ventures. Our advice for anyone thinking of getting involved in this year’s competition is to take the first step by simply getting in touch with your Local Enterprise Office to start your entrepreneurial journey.”

Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur is a competition that is open to everyone with an innovative business idea (individuals; venture teams; partnerships; existing businesses with a new idea and people overseas (including Irish emigrants) who will headquarter in Ireland) We are looking for Ireland’s best young entrepreneurs.

If you are aged between 18 and 30, with an outstanding idea/commercial venture for a start-up or existing business then you should enter the IBYE Competition. Almost any young person with a business idea can enter this competition. It doesn’t matter what your background is.

Maybe you have been to University and researched a business idea, maybe you have always wanted to be your own boss, maybe you want to work for yourself, maybe you have an idea to improve your existing business or maybe you want to return home and set up your business in Ireland?

It doesn’t matter what you want to do all that matters is you have a good business idea that works. The IBYE competition is a national competition to find Ireland’s best young entrepreneur.

Applying is simple, with no entry fees, and there is a €2 million investment fund and targeted business supports on offer to help you turn your business idea into a reality.

The competition is broken down into three categories:

- **Best New Idea (pre-trading)**
- **Best Start up Business (up to 24 months)**
- **Best Established Business (over 24 months)**

Each Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is running a competition aimed at finding winners in each of the three categories as well as an overall winner in each county. Each LEO will have a total fund of €50,000 to invest in the three winning businesses according to criteria including businesses’ investment needs – overall county winners will be eligible for an investment of up to €20,000. The competition will then proceed to eight regional finals with winners identified in each category.

In total, 24 finalists will be selected during the regional finals, during the judging stage. All 24 finalists will win a place at the IBYE national finals, to be held before the end of the year. Again there will be winners identified for each category as well as an overall winner who will be crowned Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur.

There will be a total fund of €100,000 available for investment in the three winning businesses at the national finals, with the overall winner eligible for an investment of up to €50,000. Investment decisions will be made depending on business prospects and investment needs of the winning businesses.

Who can apply?

Before you start preparing your application, please make sure that you’re eligible to apply:

- Aged between 18 (at date of application) and 30 (at 31st December 2015).
- Applicants aged under 18 at date of

- application are not eligible to apply.
- Original and innovative idea, start-up or existing business.
- Applicants must own, control and manage their business Intellectual Property.
- Not for profit and social entrepreneurship applicants must operate in a commercial domain.
- The applicant must be the main promoter i.e. has the lead role in the business and/or has a significant shareholding in the business.
- In the case of a family business, the applicant must set out when they took control of the business and demonstrate the transformational impact they have had on the business since taking control.
- Applicants must enter the competition in the LEO area in which their business is located.

IBYE 2014 Winners will be entitled to enter the IBYE 2015 competition if they satisfy the following criteria:

- Enter a different category.
- Enter the same category but demonstrate that the business has used the IBYE 2014 investment productively and has achieved significant commercial milestones since last year's competition.
- Enter a completely new idea or new business.
- Applicants must be Irish residents eligible to own, manage and operate a business in Ireland at the time of application.
- Applicants from overseas, in particular Irish diaspora, are encouraged to



IBYE Taoiseach and Minister: The Taoiseach, Enda Kenny with Richard Bruton TD Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation launching the search for Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur in 2015.

apply. Overseas applicants must identify which LEO they wish to be associated with and the applicant must be in a position to engage with the LEO in relation to evaluating their competition entry (e.g. site visit / skype interview).

To receive an investment, an overseas applicant must have relocated to Ireland and registered their business in Ireland, that business being the beneficiary of the investment.

- Applicants must submit an online

application and optional video by the closing date of the 31st July 2015.

- One project submission per applicant is allowed.

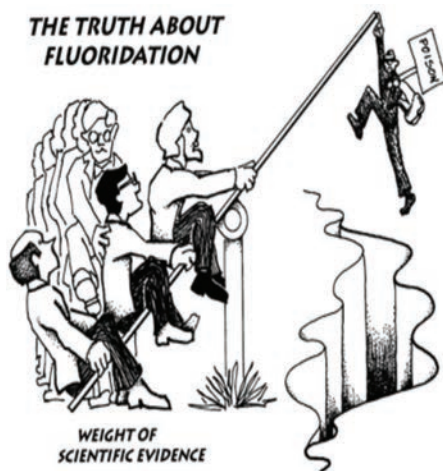
The deadline to apply for this year's Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition is Friday, July 31st and the full details are available through www.ibye.ie or by searching #IBYE on social media and YouTube.

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

Opinion piece: At a glance the debate on water fluoridation appears pretty one sided.

by Kenneth L. Mitchell, B.Eng, H.Dip., M.Sc. C.Eng, MIEI

In one corner we have national and international researchers, dentists and public health experts, in the other; we have libertarians, alternative health practitioners and conspiracy theorists. Yet recently five councils have passed motions calling for the forty year practice to end. Why? For a start these motions were preceded by one sided presentations by the anti-fluoridation lobby with little or no factual or scientific input. As scientists we are taught to ignore reputations and look at the evidence. It was with this in mind, that I decided to take a look at the issue and the claims of the anti-fluoridation lobby.



The facts

Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water and fluoridation is the addition of it to the optimal recommended level for the prevention of dental caries (tooth decay). It began in Ireland in 1964, costs Approx €3.86m (2011) and it is added at the rate of 0.8 ppm (parts per million). The World Health Organisation recommends 1ppm and the EU specifies no more than 1.5mg/L.

Research, Chemistry and Other Countries

There has been a wealth of peer reviewed research into water fluoridation both internationally and nationally and they overwhelmingly show massive dental health benefits. Surveys to measure effectiveness are conducted on a regular basis in Ireland and these show a substantial benefit of up to 63% decrease in primary cavities, when compared to Northern Ireland. The research put forward from the anti-side purports extremely high doses of fluoride which is not representative of the Irish situation or community fluoridation schemes in general.

The US National Academy of Sciences and the World Health Organisation list fluoride as one of the trace elements “considered essential for human health and metabolism.”

Like all chemicals (including water) fluoride is poisonous in large amounts, but, similarly to salt; it is beneficial in small amounts and it is not accumulative in the body. A lethal dose of fluoride would require a 70kg man to consume 350ltrs of 1ppm fluoridated water in one sitting. Claims that the fluoridation chemical HFSA is an industrial “waste” product has no basis in logic. It is a side-product, similar to alcohol being a side product of yeast fermentation or indeed oxygen being one of photosynthesis.

This point is moot, however, because we don’t use HFSA in Ireland, we use Fluorosilicic acid and it is mined directly from a raw material source, the mineral fluorospar.

Legally, the Irish Supreme Court has ruled that water fluoridation is constitutional

and the EU Commission has stated that it does not have any difficulty in law with the practice. The Irish Dental Association strongly supports the policy of fluoridation in Ireland as an essential element of oral health policy. The World Health Organisation and the US Center for Disease Control have recognized water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.

25 countries fluoridate for 377 million people including the United States, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, Spain, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland. 28 countries (such as Denmark and Italy) have a natural optimum level of fluoride in their water (280 million).

Due to the large number of separate water sources, countries such as Switzerland, France and Germany utilise salt fluoridation. Milk (UHT) fluoridation is used widely in Chile, Peru, Russia and parts of China. Scandinavian countries give dental fluoride rinses yearly to improve oral health.

Mass Medication and Cost Effectiveness The argument that fluoridation is “mass medication” is more a philosophical debate. Technically, it is described as “mineralisation” and has been described as similar to adding vitamin D to milk or folic acid to cereals. It should also be noted that other chemicals, such as, chlorine are added to water for its anti-microbiological effect.

Calls for “pure” “chemical free” water show a misunderstanding of water chemistry as a “chemical free product” could make you sick as it would be loaded with bacteria from the old pipes and indeed completely unmineralised water has a leaching effect which would remove nutrients from your body and

food if consumed and/or used. Another more philosophical argument is that we should instead use the approximate 4 million euro to educate and encourage people to brush their teeth more often, but the obvious question is would it be as cost effective?

The fact remains that Ireland is amongst the worst countries in Europe for high frequency consumption of sweets by children, therefore, the use of fluoridated toothpastes alone is insufficient to prevent tooth decay.

It is estimated that, if water fluoridation stopped, the nation's dental health would deteriorate over time to the point where the average five-year old could expect to have 4 to 5 more decayed, missing or filled teeth. There is statistical evidence that water fluoridation may have particular advantages for persons on lower income in Ireland.

Dental Fluorosis

There is only one rare side effect of water fluoridation; mild dental fluorosis. Dental fluorosis is a cosmetic condition; it has no health consequences (Irish Medicines Board) and as the graph below indicated, the majority of cases of dental fluorosis are not caused by water fluoridation.

At the levels at which fluoride is present in Ireland's water supplies (0.6 - 0.8ppm) any occurrence of dental fluorosis is only detectable by a dentist as faint white flecks on the surface of teeth.

Baby Formula

One of the most recent arguments put forward by the anti-lobby side is that infant formula should not be made using fluoridated water due to an increased risk of developing mild dental fluorosis in babies that are 100% bottle fed. This appeal to "think of the children" is illogical as most infants go onto other foods at six months and when on a rare occasion dental fluorosis is discovered with an infant, it is on the minor end of the scale.

The Food Safety Authority in Ireland and the Irish governments Expert Body on Fluoridation advise that there is no significant evidence of any adverse effects to the health of infants consuming infant formula made up with fluoridated tap water. They add "It is not recommended that people switch from using tap water to bottled water to make up infant formula."

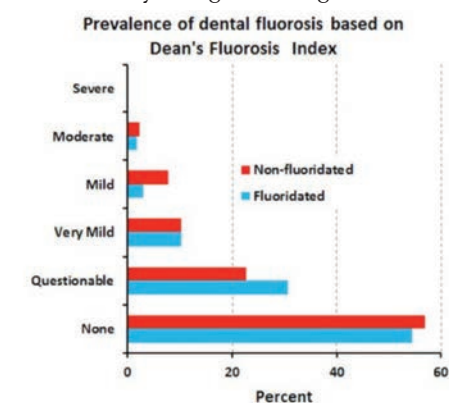
The Centre for Disease Control in the United States takes a slightly different stance recommending, that for peace of mind, to sometimes use unfluoridated water in preparing formula for 100% bottle-fed babies. This recommendation is not a "warning" - it is a peace of mind advice for concerned parents.

Conclusion

As I stated at the start these council motions were preceded by one sided presentations by the anti-fluoridation lobby with little or no factual or scientific input. It is said that the

scientist is constrained by reality, while the conspiracy theorist is constrained only by plausibility and their passion; this is a classic example of that.

County Councilors want to help people and like most people they can be swayed by a passionate truly held argument notwithstanding those arguments being based on the facts and reality of the situation. This debate has served to highlight the need for councils to get factual advice on scientific issues, to do research, to talk to local science teachers or doctors or the relevant expert in the field. It has also encouraged those experts living in the community to contact their local representatives and offer to give advice on such complicated matters and this can only be a good thing.



2009 New Zealand Oral health Survey

This article is written by Kenneth L. Mitchell, B.Eng, H.Dip., M.Sc. C.Eng, MIEI. Kenneth Mitchell is a Chartered Engineer in the fields of Chemical and Environmental Engineering. Contact: meathmitchell@gmail.com.

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New Tourism Project Opened at Malin Head

The Malin Head Marine Tourism project was formally opened by Cathaoirleach Cllr Ciaran Brogan on Tuesday, June 16, 2015. The opening of the new facilities at Malin Head will enhance the visitor experience and boost tourism in the area, creating long-term benefits for the local community.

The Malin Head Marine Tourism project works include the building of passing places along the narrow roads leading to the headland. Cliff top trails and a viewing area with telescopes allow the visitor to safely enjoy the fabulous views across to Inishtrahull Island and the Scottish isles beyond. Overlooking the stunning coastline, information panels inform visitors of trail conditions and the wildlife they may see, as well as interpreting the landscape and seascape!

This project is one of several Loughs Agency marine tourism and angling development projects funded through a €4 million programme of investment derived from the European Union's INTERREG IVA programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU structural funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IV designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region



Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D. with Cathaoirleach Cllr. Ciaran Brogan and Cathal O'hOisin MLA representing the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michelle O'Neill MLA cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the Malin Head Marine Tourism project on Tuesday.

of Ireland and Western Scotland. The INTERREG IVA 2007-2013 Programme, funded through the European Regional Development Fund, is worth €256 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. It has two distinct priority measures to create co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable cross-border region. For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu

The Loughs Agency is an agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC) established under the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Loughs Agency is a statutory body that enforces regulations to conserve and protect fish species in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. The objective of the Loughs Agency is to ensure conservation and protection of fish stocks to ensure that they are

sustainable for the future. The Chief Executive of the Agency is Mr John Pollock. For further information please contact Gillian Simpson by e-mail gillian.simpson@loughs-agency.org

Attending the June 16th opening, Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Joe McHugh TD also referred to the Wild Atlantic Way. "Under the banner of the Wild Atlantic Way, Malin Head will benefit from a now internationally recognised brand which has been a resounding success for tourism on the western seaboard". He went on to say how, in his role as a Sponsoring Minister for the Loughs Agency on the North South Ministerial Council, he knew of "the success the Agency has had in recent years in securing some €15M in EU funding for investment in



Charlie McConalogue T.D., Michael O'hEanaigh, Donegal County Council, Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Donegal County Council, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Ciaran Brogan, Cllr. Rena Donaghey Cathaoirleach of Inishowen Municipal District, Cathal O'hOisin MLA, Pat Mahon, Loughs Agency attending the official opening of the Malin Head Marine Tourism project on Tuesday.



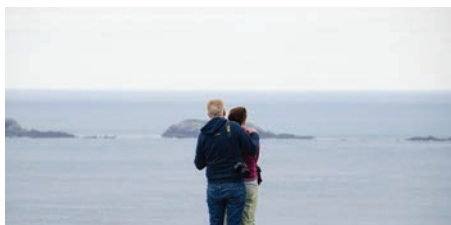
Members of the local community with Pat Mahon, Loughs Agency, Cllr. Ciaran Brogan, Cathaoirleach and Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D. at yesterday's official opening of the Malin Head Marine Tourism Project



Official launch of the Malin Head Marine Tourism Project by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Ciaran Brogan with Minister of State Joe McHugh, T.D. and Cathal O hOisín MLA with invited guests including representatives from the Loughs Agency, the SEUPB, Fáilte Ireland, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Inishowen Municipal District, local community, land owners and local tourism providers.



Seamus Neely, Chief Executive Donegal County Council testing out the new telescopes at Malin Head as Cathaoirleach Cllr. Ciaran Brogan looks on with Charlie McConalogue T.D. and Cllr. Rena Donaghey in the background.



Visitors enjoying the breathtakingly beautiful scenic seascape at Malin Head.

local amenities with real community dividend and for key research to underpin its core functions”.

Speaking at the event, Donegal County Council Chief Executive Seamus Neely reiterated Donegal County Council’s commitment to developing signature destination points along the Wild Atlantic Way, stating that “the Malin Head project is an addition to the strategic tourism development being carried out at Sliabh Liag and Fanad Lighthouse and places the county in a strong position to benefit from the aggressive international marketing of the Wild Atlantic Way”.

Equally, newly elected Donegal County Council Cathaoirleach, Cllr Ciaran Brogan, believes the partnership model of cooperation is key to the development of this and other tourism

products in the county. “We know from past experience that these projects need the buy in of all stakeholders, be they statutory agencies, the local authority, community group or private business. This project should serve as a model for other groups looking to build on the critical mass of tourism product in their locality”.

This point was supported by Inishowen Municipal District Cathaoirleach, Cllr Rena Donaghey who also believes “that the community must be involved at all levels in terms of both developing and rolling out the actions on the ground”.

Mr Cathal Ó hOisín, MLA, a Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, represented the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michelle O’Neill MLA, at the official opening event. On behalf of Minister O’Neill, he paid tribute to the project partners, the Loughs Agency and Donegal County Council, on the effective cross border cooperation on this and other projects.

The Loughs Agency is co-sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR). Phil Mahon, Loughs Agency board

member, expressed the Loughs Agency’s pride in the Malin Head project and explained how it was an “excellent example of EU funding being invested in infrastructure that will grow local and regional tourism”.

She went on to state that “the generous support of landowners has been key to the success of the Malin Head project - from the owners of property who permitted the construction of passing places to the farmers who allowed development of foot paths across their land”.

The concept of sustainable development is internationally agreed protocol developed to try and ensure that the natural resources that we have available to us today are available for our children and our children’s children.

If you see anybody acting suspiciously on a river or any act of water pollution or anybody fishing illegally we would be grateful if you would contact the Loughs Agency on our 24 hour response line 02871 342100.

Source: Donegal County Council’s Communications Office.



Members of Inishowen Municipal District with guests at yesterday’s official opening of the Malin Head Marine Tourism Project, from left to right: Cathal O hOisín MLA, Pádraig McLochláinn T.D., Cllr. Bernard McGuinness, Charlie McConalogue T.D., Michael O hEanaigh, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, Cllr. Paul Canning, Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Cllr. Ciaran Brogan, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Rena Donaghey, Cllr. Albert Doherty, Cllr. Martin McDermott, Cllr. Martin Farren and Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D.

Local government cannot be treated as internet giants (Data protection)

by Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

In the frame of the revision of the EU's data protection rules, CEMR called on negotiators to consider the impact of the revision on the public sector and moreover on local and regional public administrations. As explained in this CEMR press release, we support a reform of the data protection rules to guarantee our citizens' rights, while increasing business opportunities in the Digital Single Market. However, we deplore that the proposed text does not meet public administration requirements and has been drawn up solely with private sector needs in mind. For further information, I invite you to read our press release and the key messages we addressed to several EU stakeholders involved in the negotiations (MEPs, Commission, Council) as well as to EU and local media.

Ahead of the opening of the trilogues to revise the EU's data protection rules, we call on negotiators to consider the impact of the revision on the public sector. At CEMR, we support reform of the data protection rules to guarantee our citizens' rights, while increasing business opportunities in the Digital Single Market. Unfortunately, the proposed text does not meet public administration requirements and has been drawn up solely with private sector needs in mind.

In a letter sent to negotiators, representatives from the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the Parliament, we draw attention to the issues that might be dangerous for municipalities and regions:

Flexibility for the public sector is crucial

The public sector uses personal data

to provide services for public general interest, such as allotting house allowances, and not for commercial purposes as the giants from the private sector, like Google, Amazon or Facebook. This major discrepancy in the use of data protection calls for a differentiated approach between the public and private sector at legislative level.

Regulation should not lead to disproportionate costs and administrative burden for local government

Costs of implementation of the Regulation have been estimated up to €292 million/year (£250 million) in the UK, €200 million in the first years in Finnish local and regional authorities and at least €80,5 million for Danish local authorities. Local and regional governments oppose any new provision which would force them, for example, to hire inordinate data officers, to significantly invest in ICT services and to (re)train their staff, without there being clear added-value for citizens or for improved delivery of public services. The new Regulation must lead to a positive cost-benefit ratio. The digitalisation of public

administrations can transform the traditional public services into more citizen-oriented high quality services, for instance through the use of open data, electronic archives or cloud services. However, the evolution to e-government should not be hampered by unsuitable data protection rules.

European General Data Protection Regulation

CEMR key issues for the negotiations in the Trilogue

- Flexibility for the public sector is essential.

The public sector uses personal data to provide services for public general interest, and as such has a duty and responsibility to treat personal data in a way that safeguards trust, while the use of data by the private sector is for commercial purposes. This major discrepancy in the use of data protection calls for a differentiated approach between the public and private sector at legislative level.

- Opportunities for promoting digitalisation in the public sector

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should not be hampered by the introduction of unsuitable data protection rules.

Digitalisation can transform the traditional public services into more citizen-oriented high quality services, if the potential of digitalisation can be use efficiently. Data protection rules for the public sector should guarantee citizens' rights without jeopardising innovative ways of digitalisation such as the use of big data, open data, profiling, electronic archives, cloud services in public services.

- Regulation should not increase the administrative burden and create costs for local and regional authorities without bringing visible value to the economy as well as to the citizens.

Costs of implementation of the Regulation have been estimated up to €292 million/year (£250 million) in the UK, €200 million in the first years in Finnish local and regional authorities and at least €80,5 million for Danish local authorities. Therefore it is necessary to deliver evidence that ensures the suitable proportionality between costs and benefits, and the appropriate economic balance of the new Regulation's outcomes. Local and regional authorities oppose any new provision which would force them, for example, to hire inordinate data officers, to significantly invest in ICT services and to (re)train their staff, without there being clear added-value for citizens or for improved delivery of public services.

- Employment conditions should be excluded from the scope of the Regulation. Local governments undoubtedly require room for manoeuvre, as regards social agreements and collective bargaining. Avoiding an excessively detailed approach and the exclusion of employment conditions from the scope of the legislation is essential, as it is unclear how this might affect labour law and the procedure in labour market.

Walk The Camino For Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland has launched a new charity challenge for 2015!

This year the homeless charity is calling on the public to sign up for the Camino Walk. This once in a lifetime adventure takes place from the 5th to the 12th of September and will give participants the chance to experience the stunning scenery and culture of the famous Camino Way in Spain whilst also raising vital funds for Focus Ireland's homeless services.

The tailor-made challenge and walking holiday will see you expertly guided along the 100km route from Sarria to Santiago via Melide, finishing in the stunning Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

This unique spiritual and physical journey will see you meet new friends and meet the locals whilst also raising funds for people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.

Managing Editor of The Irish Times Peter Murtagh undertook the Camino Walk in 2010. Peter was co-author, with his daughter Natasha, of Buen Camino – a father-daughter journey from Croagh Patrick to Santiago de Compostela. He says The Camino Walk is unforgettable,

"It's such a fantastic experience, I came back with so many wonderful memories. The Camino is so special – it's the people you meet, the beautiful landscape and the fulfillment you feel from living simply and being away from the real world. I would highly recommend people walk The Camino.

This is the perfect opportunity to undertake this powerful journey and raise funds for a worthy cause."

Focus Ireland is reminding the public that places on the trip are very limited and are urging people to sign-up now for the unique challenge.

This is an all-inclusive package covering flights, accommodation, transfers and breakfast and dinner each day.

Each participant will raise/donate €2,000 - half of which covers the trip costs and the remainder comes directly to Focus Ireland.

For more information about the Camino Walk check out www.focusireland.ie or call 01 881 5916.

Carrigtwohill's Tullagreen Community Walkway Officially Opened by Mayor of the County of Cork

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Alan Coleman, has officially opened the Tullagreen Community Walkway, a new recreational routeway connecting the IDA Business Park with the nearby Fota Business Park in Carrigtwohill. The initiative, which has been in development since 2011, was spearheaded by the Carrigtwohill Community Council, in partnership with Cork County Council and the global biopharmaceutical company, AbbVie. To facilitate the walkway, GE Healthcare generously donated a parcel of land, while AbbVie has so far allocated €20,000 to the development of the project and is committed to its

ongoing upkeep and maintenance. The walkway forms part of the old Cork to Midleton Road, which had fallen into disuse and become overgrown. Following an agreement between Carrigtwohill Community Council, Cork County Council and AbbVie in 2012, work got underway on the project which initially involved removal of topsoil, the clearing of undergrowth and the widening of the pathway. This was followed by the laying of tarmacadam, installation of light ducting and the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers.

Pupils from the senior classes in the local primary school, Scoil Chlochair Mhuire

Girls' National School in Carrigtwohill, have also taken a keen interest in the walkway and undertook school projects to gather local and historical information on the area. The winners of the projects, Aysha Shareef, age 12, from Garryduff in Midleton, and Jannel Kyle, age 15, from Fota Rock in Carrigtwohill, were presented with gift prizes recognising their efforts at the official opening.

Cllr Alan Coleman, Mayor of the County of Cork, believes the new walkway will offer a very valuable amenity to the local community: "This initiative is a wonderful example of a community coming together with the local authority





and a leading employer in the area to make a difference and create something really special. I have no doubt that the walkway will be of tremendous benefit to local people and visitors alike for many years to come. I want to commend all involved for their work on the project and for their vision in seeing it through to completion. Now that the summer is upon us, I would encourage all in the local community to come out on what will hopefully be many long, bright, sunny evenings ahead and take full advantage of this fantastic new amenity."

Ollie Sheehan, Carrigtwohill Community Council, was the inspiration behind the project:

"Since the bypass of Carrigtwohill was opened in 1994, anyone who wanted to walk from the Glounthaune Road towards Carrigtwohill, would have had to walk on the grass verge, navigate a roundabout and negotiate traffic. So when AbbVie came to me a few years ago wanting to work with the local community on a project that would make a real difference and have a long-term impact, I knew immediately what we had to do. Having initially secured agreement with GE Healthcare who very kindly provided the required land to facilitate the walkway, we have worked closely with our partners in Cork County Council and AbbVie to construct the walkway. The result is a much-enhanced entrance to the village of Carrigtwohill. On behalf of the Community Council, I

would like to express my sincere thanks to both organisations for their wonderful support throughout this process and look forward to continuing our collaboration for many years to come."

Peter Power, Site Manager at AbbVie in Carrigtwohill, commented that "as a responsible corporate citizen, AbbVie is committed to contributing to our communities in partnership with others. The walkway provides a tranquil recreational space for local people in which to enjoy nature and take some time out from our busy lives. Of course, more than that, it provides much-improved safety for pedestrians who would otherwise have to negotiate a busy roadway. Adhering to the highest standards of health and safety in the workplace is one of AbbVie's core values and the new walkway is also reflective of our wider commitment to safety. During the development of the walkway, we were thrilled to have our employees volunteer with members of the local community to help in the clean-up and to clear the route of undergrowth. We are also committed to maintaining the walkway and to ensuring that it continues to be an attractive amenity for the enjoyment of the whole community going forward."

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott.

It employs more than 400 people at five manufacturing and commercial sites across Ireland. The company's commercial headquarters is based in Dublin as is a separate international manufacturing and engineering services centre. AbbVie has two manufacturing plants in Sligo and one in Cork. The company's mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world's most complex and serious diseases. Together with its wholly-owned subsidiary, Pharmacyclics, AbbVie employs more than 28,000 people worldwide and markets medicines in more than 170 countries. AbbVie in Carrigtwohill in Cork employs approximately 130 people and is a modern 'bulk tablet' finish facility which manufactures solid and capsule formulations. These range from small-scale clinical trial supply to large commercial manufacturing. AbbVie in Cork is accredited to ISO 14001, the Environment Management Systems Standard, OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems, and ISO 50001, the international standard for Energy Management Systems, which provides a robust framework for optimising energy efficiency. AbbVie is committed to maintaining its role as a global philanthropic leader, and has won several national and international awards. AbbVie continues to make a remarkable impact on the community, its employees and the environment.

The development of the Tullagreen Community Walkway was supported by Donal Kelleher General Contracting Ltd and Noblewood Landscapes.

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For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.com. Follow @abbvie on Twitter or view careers on our Facebook or LinkedIn page.

WEEE IRELAND AND THE IRISH PUBLIC RECYCLES OVER 75 MILLION ELECTRICAL WASTE ITEMS SINCE 2005

10 YEARS OF WEEE IRELAND DIVERTS 250,000 TONNES OF ELECTRICAL WASTE FROM LANDFILL

BUT OVER 25% OF IRISH PEOPLE ARE STILL HOARDING OR THROWING OUT ELECTRICAL WASTE AT HOME

WEEE 10 FAST FACTS:

- 75 million waste electrical items collected since 2005, that's over 70 electrical items per household
- 250,000 tonnes of electrical waste diverted from landfill since 2005. Packed into 50,000 truckloads, nose to tail, the diverted electrical waste would stretch from Dublin to Paris (1,066km)
- In 10 years 2,300 tonnes of portable waste batteries collected – the equivalent of over 125 million AA batteries
- Most of us are now aware that we can recycle WEEE for free but 1 in 4 Irish people are still hoarding or putting electrical waste in the rubbish bin at home
- Since 2005 the fridge freezer recycling programme has diverted the equivalent of almost 90,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions from the atmosphere
- Ireland is a WEEE recycling champion – all WEEE Ireland's recycling contractors have recently received the European WEEE label of excellence standard – WEEELABEX for high quality electrical waste management processes
- WEEE Ireland would like to thank all electrical stakeholders for their recycling efforts in the last 10 years

On Monday, 15th June, 2015, WEEE Ireland, announced their milestone figures for electric and battery recycling over the past 10 years. Since 2005 WEEE Ireland have increased the WEEE take back rate in their collection areas to over 50% of household WEEE. This means the Scheme has already surpassed the 2016 EU target (45%) on behalf of its Members. However, with continuous increasing EU targets designed to encourage us all to recycle more the challenge remains for Ireland to hit a 65% collection for recycling level by 2019.

Ireland is a superb student when it comes to electronic recycling and has graduated with honours from the first decade of WEEE recycling as one of the top WEEE recyclers in Europe. Since the creation of WEEE Ireland in 2005, the compliance scheme have managed to divert over 250,000 tonnes of electrical waste from landfill, the equivalent of 50,000 truckloads, who, when lined up would fill the distance from Dublin to Paris. This was made up of over 75million waste electrical items including old TVs, dishwashers, kettles and toasters, DVD players, electrical toys, tools and more, meaning on average every Irish household recycled 70 items in that 10-year period. This included 3 million monitors and screens.

WEEE recycling has of course significant environmental benefits:

- The WEEE recycling processes ensure heavy metals, chemicals and

other potential environmental hazards are captured and managed in an environmentally responsible way

- Recycling electrical waste and batteries recovers resources for use again in manufacturing – part of a new drive toward circular rather than wasteful economical models in Europe
- The correct recycling of fridge freezers by WEEE Ireland has also seen 90,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent diverted from entering the atmosphere over the past ten years

Currently WEEE Ireland is collecting for recycling, 50% of the weight of new electrical items sold in Ireland by retailers. However this means up to 50% may not be disposed of correctly at its end of life. 1 in 4 people are unfortunately still hoarding WEEE at home or putting it in the rubbish bin, despite the opportunity to dispose of this electrical waste for free at over 5,000 collection points all over Ireland. WEEE Ireland have also put a large emphasis on the take back of waste batteries which has been hugely successful, with over 2,300 tonnes of portable batteries collected in the last decade. The campaigns have seen the take back rate for waste batteries go from 3% in 2007 to 33% in 2014 and the target for 2016 is now set at 45%.

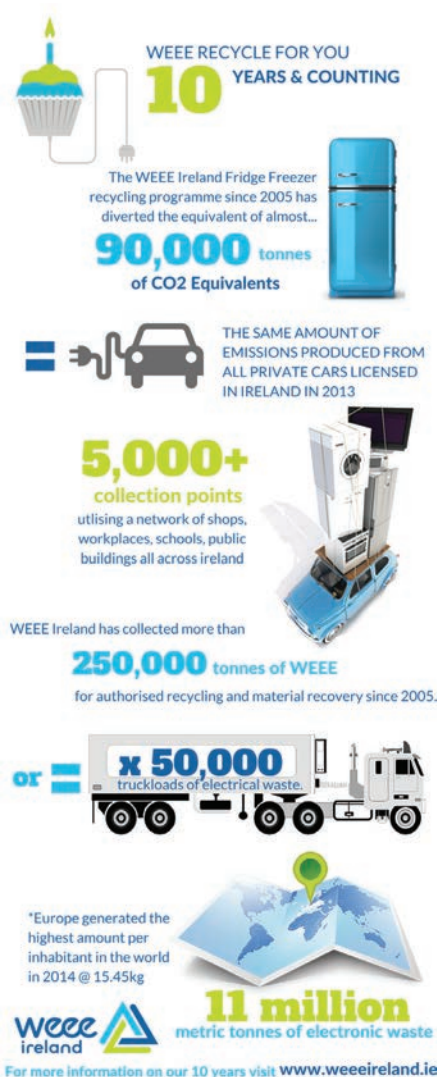
A central partnership in achieving such a large take back rate from waste batteries has been WEEE Ireland's relationship with Laura Lynn. This has seen over

€185,000 raised for the charity since 2011 encouraging more and more people to Recycle for Good with the Scheme.

Leo Donovan, CEO of WEEE Ireland, commenting on the achievements of the last ten years: "The landscape of electrical recycling in Ireland has completely changed since WEEE Ireland was established by the Producers of electrical appliances in 2005. We have all moved from putting WEEE and waste batteries into our rubbish bins to automatically taking back for recycling to retailers or Local Authority recycling centres or weekend collection events. As a country we have been outstanding in reaching our WEEE EU recycling targets to date. We thank all of the stakeholders involved in the system since 2005 but in particular the people at home for recycling with our Scheme. However the bar is continually being raised to encourage us to recycle more waste and recover resources and we need to continue to get more communities and people involved and thinking about how we manage our electrical waste. It has never been easier to recycle WEEE for free with Local Authority recycling centres, thousands of retail collection points and local collection events all over Ireland. We have been a Europe leader in this area and we want to lead the way in achieving 65% take back rates in the coming years."

With 10 years of great work completed, WEEE Ireland have outlined the main ways that we can continue to be a European leader in the school of WEEE recycling:

- **PREVENT WASTE** by having your appliances repaired by an authorised service provider
- Ask friends and family could they **REUSE** appliances that are still in good working order when you are finished with them
- Take back older and broken appliances for **RECYCLING** to electrical retailers when you purchase new electrical items
- Put your waste batteries in the WEEE Ireland blue boxes to **RECYCLE FOR GOOD** and help The Lauralynn Children's Hospice Charity



- **DON'T RUBBISH IT** – recycle all household electrical waste for free at WEEE Ireland collection points. See www.weeeireland.ie for the nearest point to you
- Recycling with WEEE Ireland **SUPPORTS IRISH RECYCLING INDUSTRIES**
- WEEE Ireland thank you for your support to date and ask everyone to **KEEP WEEE RECYCLING!**

For more information on WEEE Ireland then log on to www.weeeireland.ie

For further information please contact: Grace O'Reilly, Insight Consultants, grace@insightconsultants.ie



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€28.00

As part of the overall housing sector, renting has seen a considerable increase in the first 14 years of the twenty-first century. Numbers renting are now similar to those of the 1950s, when Ireland was a very different place economically and socially. Today renting is driven by forces ranging from necessity to choice to ongoing urbanisation: it is becoming the tenure of preference for many, while remaining the tenure for others with no choice. Governing legislation, providers of rental accommodation and the various rental sectors' economic value and importance are all in flux. The traditional divide between state supplied social housing and the private rented sector is blurring in the face of political preference for market-led solutions and for the voluntary and private sectors to be the main, if not sole, providers of rental accommodation in Ireland.

Renting in Ireland brings together for the first time a range of housing experts and practitioners to discuss and analyse renting's role in Irish society. It comprises sections on the private rented sector; the social rented sector; and other relevant issues including renting and minorities, legislation, space standards and the experience in Northern Ireland. It is hoped that *Renting in Ireland* will help to contextualise discussions on renting, inform debate, and provide insight into how renting affects society and ideas on where to go next for a sector that has never quite received the attention it deserves.



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News items

18 Irish local leaders appointed to EU regions assembly

In January, 2015, 18 local politicians from across Ireland were formally appointed to the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) – the EU’s political assembly of local and regional authorities. The delegation – proposed by the Irish government and formally approved by the Council of the EU – will sit on the Committee representing the interests of Ireland’s cities and regions in the EU.

The Irish delegation – made up of 9 full and 9 alternates – will form part of the new 350-strong CoR assembly of local and regional politicians which begins a new five year mandate next month. The Irish members are nominated by the Irish Government to reflect gender and geographical balances in Ireland.

They will join delegations from all EU member states as the CoR begins its new mandate. The CoR has existed since 1994 following the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht and was established to allow Europe’s local and regional governments to have a voice within the European Union. All 350 CoR members are required to be politically accountable in their home towns and regions. The local and regional politicians gather in Brussels a few times a year to discuss political priorities and adopt opinions on EU legislation.

The Irish delegation will meet on 11 February in Brussels during the first plenary session of the new CoRs’ term of office where all members will also elect a President and First Vice-President of the assembly.

FULL MEMBERS		
NAME	LOCAL / REGIONAL AUTHORITY	POSITION
Ms. Maria Byrne (EPP)	Limerick City and County Council and Southern Regional Assembly	Councillor
Ms. Rose Conway-Walsh	Mayo County Council and Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor
Ms. Kate Feeney (ALDE)	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	Councillor
Ms. Mary Freehill (PES)	Dublin City Council and Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Jerry Lundy (ALDE)	Sligo County Council and Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Kieran McCarthy (EA)	Cork City Council and Southern Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Hughie McGrath (EA)	Tipperary County Council and Southern Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Neale Richmond (EPP)	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Enda Stenson (EA)	Leitrim County Council and Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor

ALTERNATE MEMBERS		
NAME	LOCAL AUTHORITY	POSITION
Ms. Deirdre Forde (EPP)	Cork County Council	Councillor
Mr. Jimmy McClearn (EPP)	Galway County Council and Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Declan McDonnell (ALDE)	Galway City Council and Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor
Mr. Niall McNelis (PES)	Galway City Council	Councillor
Mr. Michael Murphy (EPP)	Tipperary County Council	Councillor
Ms. Fiona O’Loughlin (ALDE)	Kildare County Council and Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	Cathaoirleach (Chair)
Mr. William Paton (PES)	Carlow County Council	Councillor
Mr. Maurice Quinlivan	Limerick City and County Council	Councillor
Ms. Mary Shields (ALDE)	Cork City Council	Lord Mayor

European People’s Party - EPP, Party of European Socialists (PES), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), European Alliance (EA), European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)

The Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is the EU’s assembly of regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU’s decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult

the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the EU Court of Justice if its rights are infringed or it believes that an EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

CoR website: www.cor.europa.eu;
Follow us on Twitter: @EU_CoR
For more information, please contact:
David French, email:
David.French@cor.europa.eu

Donegal County Council joins unique marine bio-diversity project

Donegal County Council marked World Oceans Day on Monday 8th June 2015, with news of its participation in a unique marine bio-diversity project.

SeaEurope is a transnational Sustainable Tourism Route that connects European coastal destinations with a rich marine biodiversity and vivid seas.

This will place the county on the map of unique places where you will be able to experience marine wildlife through water sports and outdoor activities.

The Route will deliver great travel hints on unique adventures that you can experience in coastal destinations allowing you to make responsible contact with marine species in the wild, while learning about their ecology and participating in efforts to preserve them.

Donegal County Council's Chief Executive, Seamus Neely, stated that "this is a new and exciting partnership of regions for the Council.

The outputs from the project will include new resources which can help to effectively market the regions for unique marine bio-diversity and species to create a truly pan-European network of nature tourism experiences."

The Route will also offer valuable information on Donegal and Europe's best coastal destinations, natural sites of interest, flag species, important habitats, as well as on currently on-going scientific efforts and projects aimed at their conservation.

The project results will include:

- Development of the Management Plan, Business Plan and Marketing Strategy of the Transnational Route

- Mapping of Key 'SeaEurope' Route Resources, Attractions and Stakeholders
- Capacity Building on Sustainable Tourism Practices and Sustainable Tourism Experiences Development
- Promotion of the Route through specialized Tourism channels and own marketing resources.(including producing promotional video)
- Workshop 'Bringing Natural Values to Life in Coastal and Maritime Tourism Destinations across Europe'

Project SeaEurope has the financial support of the Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) of the European Commission (EU).

Donegal is a member of FEDETON and this network provided opportunities for the Council to participate in this project.

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

Malin Head Marine Tourism Project to be launched

Malin Head, Ireland's most northerly point, is widely accepted as one of Donegal's most important tourism resources and Donegal County Council in conjunction with the Loughs Agency, Failte Ireland, Malin Head Development Association and National Parks and Wildlife Service are in the process of developing Malin Head as a key visitor destination.

To this end funding amounting to €220,341 has been secured from the Interreg IV Programme through the SEUPB to complete a number of actions. Donegal County Council previously provided funding of approximately €35,000 to develop interpretation signage for Malin Head and the surrounding area.

Donegal County Council's Chief Executive Seamus Neely emphasised that similar to the ethos behind the Wild Atlantic Way, Donegal County Council envisage the Malin Head project to be an evolving venture which will build and develop over the years:

"Malin Head is an area that is rugged, unspoilt and spectacular. It offers a great visitor experience from walking, fishing, swimming, photography, studying rock formations or rare flora and is a wonderful attraction for the Inishowen Peninsula.

It is the intention of Donegal County Council to develop Malin Head as a first class visitor attraction that helps service the needs of the local community and businesses as well as visitors to the county."

The current phase of the project work is now complete and includes:

- Roads (widening and passing bays to allow ease of access).
- Pathways (800m of walkways along the scenic Malin Head point between Banbas Crown and Hells Hole).
- Accessible viewing platform with multi-lingual talking telescopes.
- Upgraded parking area to the west of Malin Head with signage and talking telescope.
- Interpretative Signage Panels for the Walks.
- Seating.

The Malin Head Marine Tourism Project will be launched at Malin Head Community Association, Ballygorman, Malin Head on Tuesday 16 June 2015.

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

Groups appointed to Review Local Government boundaries

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Alan Kelly TD, on Friday, 19 June 2015 announced the establishment of statutory committees to review local government boundaries in Athlone, Carlow, Drogheda and Waterford. Minister Kelly outlined that “the main rationale for boundary alteration is to bring the administrative jurisdictions into line with the current settlement and development position and the reviews I have announced are clearly warranted given the significant overspill of population in each of these cases into another county.”

This process follows on from the previous announcements earlier this year (January) in respect of the review of local government arrangements for both Cork and Galway City and County.

Further outlining the benefits of boundary updates, the Minister noted that “bringing all of a town or metropolitan district within a single local authority area eliminates anomalies and distortions of divided administration, service provision, regulatory/enforcement responsibility and electoral representation, including problems such as competitive policies and practices between authorities in relation to planning, rating and charges, which can impact negatively on town centres. Consolidation of administrative responsibility can also strengthen the economic performance of the town or metropolitan district, both by eliminating the anomalies I have referred to and ensuring that there is a single authority working on its behalf.”

The committees will be convened shortly and will be tasked to review the local authority boundaries in Athlone, Carlow, Drogheda and Waterford. The Committee undertaking the Drogheda and Athlone reviews comprises: Jack Keyes (former Cavan County Manager) (Chair); Ciaran Lynch (Limerick Institute of Technology [Thurles Campus] and former Chief Planner, Clare County Council) and Joe Allen (formerly of Department of the Environment,

Community and Local Government). In the case of Waterford and Carlow membership of the committees carrying out both reviews, the committee is as follows: David O’ Connor (former Fingal County Manager)(Chair); Ciaran Lynch (Limerick Institute of Technology [Thurles Campus] and former Chief Planner, Clare County Council) and Ollie Killeen (former Head of Finance, Limerick County Council).

- The groups will be established under section 28 of the Local Government Act 1991, which precludes elected representatives from participating and will act independently. In accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Act 1991, the committees will be required to carry out a review of the boundaries between the respective counties, and city and county in the case of Waterford, having regard to the environs of the urban areas in question located in another county.
- They will make such recommendations with respect to the boundary, and any consequential recommendations with respect to the area of the Municipal, Borough or Metropolitan District that they consider to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government; and
- They will prepare and furnish to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, a report in writing of that review and its recommendations.
- Given the common membership of the committees to examine Drogheda/ Athlone and Carlow/Waterford, the reviews will each be carried out over a period of 6 months, with staggered deadlines for completion of their work, as follows: Drogheda and Waterford – 30 November 2015; and Athlone and Carlow – 29 February 2016.

Source: <http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/>

[LocalGovernmentReform/News/MainBody,41934,en.htm](http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernmentReform/News/MainBody,41934,en.htm)

Ministers Alan Kelly and Ann Phelan announce funding allocation of €2.48million for Public Participation Networks

On Thursday, June 11th, 2015, Alan Kelly T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and Minister Ann Phelan announced a funding allocation of €2.48million for Public Participation Networks. In 2014, the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government (see full Working group report on Citizen Engagement with Local Government,

February 2014 is available at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Community/CommunityVoluntarySupports/FileDownload,36779,en.pdf>),

made recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision-making processes at local government level as part of the Local Government Reform programme and recommended the setting up of Public Participation Networks (PPNs) across the local government sector.

These Networks will be the main link through which the local authority connects with the community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors without prejudice to other community consultation processes. Legislation Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides the legislative basis which gives effect to the Framework for Public Participation and the Public Participation Networks (PPNs). Section 46 was commenced on 1 June 2014, along with a number of other sections of the Act.

Where community representation is to be provided on appropriate committees of the Local Authority, such as Strategic Policy Committees or Local Community Development Committees, it will be sourced through the Public Participation Networks. Both Minister Alan Kelly and Minister Ann Phelan emphasised the critical role that Public Participation Networks will play in facilitating greater engagement between citizens, communities and local government.

Minister Kelly confirmed that a total of €1.55million central funding will be available for all 31 Local Authorities, with €930K being sourced locally, giving an overall total allocation of €2.480million for this purpose.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/CommunityVoluntarySupports/News/MainBody,41830,en.htm>

Trips to Ireland increased by 13.4% for period March to May 2015 compared to twelve months earlier

New CSO figures released on Thursday 11th June, 2015 confirm strong growth in revenue figures from overseas visitors for the first three months (Jan-Mar) of 2015. The Tourism and Travel statistics show that spending in Ireland by overseas visitors (excluding fares) for the first quarter of the year rose by 10.5% compared with the same period in 2014.

The data also shows that the number of trips to Ireland in the key target market of holidaymakers rose by 13.3%, while spending by holidaymakers was up 12.9% for Quarter 1 of 2015 when compared with the same period in 2014.

'In the period March - May 2015, the total number of trips to Ireland increased by 13.4% to 2,159,800 - an overall increase of 255,500 compared to the same period twelve months earlier. Trips by residents of Great Britain increased by 11.5% to 906,500 while trips by residents of European Countries other than Great Britain (Other Europe) increased by 12.9% to 789,300. Trips by residents of North America to Ireland increased by 17.1% to 347,100 while trips to Ireland from Other Areas increased by 21.5% to 116,900.

The total number of overseas trips made by Irish residents during the period March - May 2015 increased by 6.5% to 1,626,000. The total number of trips (Irish residents' trips overseas plus trips to Ireland) in the period March - May 2015 increased by 10.3% to 3,785,800 when compared with the same period twelve months earlier.'

Commenting on the figures, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Paschal Donohoe TD, noted that 'we were already aware that 2015 has started very well for the tourism sector, with increased visitor numbers from all our main markets. The statistics published today show that revenue from overseas visitors has also increased. This again confirms that the measures

undertaken by the Government to boost Ireland's attractiveness as a destination are working. In the first quarter of 2015 alone, our overseas visitors spent an estimated €590 million in Ireland, which is an enormous contribution to our economy and an increase of 10.5% on the corresponding period of 2014. We are not resting on our laurels however, and Tourism Ireland has a strong marketing programme in place for the remainder of 2015 to ensure that this strong economic return is maintained'.

The figures confirm strong growth in the number of holiday trips taken by overseas visitors to Ireland, and an increase in visits to friends and relatives. In terms of the spend associated with overseas visits, all of Ireland's main markets grew strongly in the first quarter of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014:

- Revenue associated with visitors from Great Britain grew by 5.8%
- Revenue associated with visits from North America grew by 16.8%
- Revenue associated with visits from Mainland Europe grew by 17.5%

The figures are based on detailed surveys of overseas visitors and the CSO release also contains detailed information on expenditure, purpose of visit, and bednights.

The Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Michael Ring added that: 'We were already aware that the number of overseas visits from January to March increased by 14.1%.

Today's CSO statistics show the economic benefit that has resulted from these visits. In line with the visitor numbers, revenues are showing growth from all our major markets. This represents an important boost to the tourism sector. We must never forget that tourism delivers this economic benefit to a wide range of businesses and services in thousands of enterprises across every part of the country,

	Trips to Ireland	Trips to Ireland by Area of Residence			
		Great Britain	Other Europe	North America	Other areas
Mar-May 2013	1,771,700	726,300	676,000	282,300	87,000
Mar- May 2014	1,904,300	812,800	698,900	296,400	96,200
Mar- May 2015	2,159,800	906,500	789,300	347,100	116,900
Jan - May 2013	2,488,500	1,069,900	917,300	369,100	132,200
Jan - May 2014	2,716,700	1,210,000	954,200	398,800	153,700
Jan - May 2015	3,046,500	1,332,100	1,087,500	453,200	173,700

Source: <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/ot/overseastravelmarch-may2015/#.VY0h5xtVhHw>

making a valuable contribution to job creation and our continued economic development’.

Commenting on the figures, CEO of Tourism Ireland, Niall Gibbons, said: ‘Today’s CSO figures represent an excellent start to the year – confirming that holidaymakers from overseas grew by +13% in the first quarter of 2015, with growth recorded from all of our market areas around the world. And, more importantly for the Irish economy, revenue from overseas holiday visitors grew by +12% during this period; an additional €24 million compared with the first three months of 2014. While it is still very early days, the first quarter represents about only 18% of total overseas business. This was a strong start to the year and reflects the sentiment we are hearing from our tourism partners overseas and here at home. It augurs well for the rest of the year. Our aim is to ensure that 2015 is the best year ever for Irish tourism.’”

Also welcoming the positive figures, Fáilte Ireland CEO, Shaun Quinn, emphasised: ‘Tourism’s strong growth continues and, on current trends, we may be looking at a record year for overseas visitors in 2015. Tourism businesses around the country are certainly upbeat with eight out of ten of them telling us in Fáilte Ireland that they expect their business to grow this year.

Our key objective now will be to ensure we can sustain this growth. Whether it is through new exciting propositions such as the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland’s Ancient East or via the latest innovations in digital and social media, Fáilte Ireland will be using every opportunity to maximise tourism growth and to ensure the sector delivers the additional revenue and jobs that it is more than capable of doing.”

Sources:

<http://www.dttas.ie/press-releases/2015/overseas-tourism-revenue-shows-strong-growth-first-3-months-year-%E2%80%93-donohoe>

<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/ot/overseastravelmarch-may2015/#.VY0h5xtVhHw>

Ministers Coveney and Phelan Seek Proposals Under New CEDRA Initiative to Advance Female Entrepreneurs in Rural Areas

On Wednesday, June 24th, 2015, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD and Minister of State for Rural Economic Development, Ann Phelan TD announced that their Department has issued a request for tender, under the CEDRA Rural Innovation and Development Fund, seeking service providers with the vision and capability to develop and run an entrepreneurial development programme which will assist aspiring female entrepreneurs living in rural areas.

A dedicated fund of up to €130,000 has been made available in 2015 to partially fund the development and running of a training, developmental and business orientated programme.

This programme will run for at least 3-6 months duration and is expected to involve up to 50 selected nascent female rural entrepreneurs who, on a competitive basis, best demonstrate their potential to advance their businesses. It is expected that the developmental programme should be ready to start around September. The tender has been posted on the etenders website: www.etenders.gov.ie with a closing date of 9 July 2015. A large number of interested parties have already expressed an interest in this tender and the successful tenderer will be the person or consortium which best meet the fund’s stated objectives on a competitive economically advantageous basis.

Minister Coveney expressed that he was delighted to announce that his Department has issued this request for tender. “Job creation is a huge focus for this Government and I hope that by targeting female entrepreneurs, who are currently under represented in start-up enterprises, that we can increase

the level of business and employment generation in rural areas.” Minister Phelan who is responsible for the implementation of the CEDRA Report, outlined that this CEDRA initiative aims to encourage a stronger level of enterprise development in rural areas. She also noted that “this programme is especially directed at women living in rural Ireland who have recently started or who have taken the first steps towards starting their own business. Its intention is to provide them with knowledge, support and networking opportunities so that their businesses can succeed and grow. Rural women’s entrepreneurship can contribute significantly to our economic growth and it clearly represents an untapped potential. For many rural women, entrepreneurship is part of a broader livelihood strategy, often undertaken on a part-time basis, and where it is difficult to separate production tasks, as well as market and non market work. Emerging businesses need support to flourish. I have always believed in the value of mentor and being able to turn to experienced and trusted advisors from a variety of industries for advice. Most women don’t have that support, which helps explain why around the world they see fewer opportunities for entrepreneurship than men.”

Source:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/press/pressreleases/2015/june/title,83470,en.html>

UNESCO Biosphere Status for Dublin Bay will enhance development of ‘Green City by the Sea’

#LoveDublinBay

Dublin Bay has been awarded a Biosphere designation by UNESCO in recognition of its unique ecological and cultural status. The Biosphere designation previously related to the Bull Island only but the awarding of Biosphere status to all of Dublin Bay means the designation now extends to an area of approximately 300km². To view a map and photos of Dublin Bay Biosphere, see: www.dublincity.ie/dublinbaybiosphere

The announcement was made by Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation at a special event at North Bull Wall at 10.30am on Wednesday 24th June, 2015. The award coincides with the public launch of the new Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership which will protect and promote the Bay. It has been established by Dublin City Council, Dublin Port Company, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council and The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It is the first time that these organisations have formed an alliance to promote the conservation and cultural heritage of Dublin Bay. UNESCO's new designation will greatly facilitate the ability of Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership to pursue a sustainable green economic model for the Bay. Dublin's Lord Mayor Christy Burke, speaking at the launch, noted that "Dublin Bay is a unique and valuable resource both locally and nationally. Achieving UNESCO Biosphere designation for the Bay means that our potential to develop it as an internationally significant destination has been considerably enhanced."

Minister Bruton also welcomed the announcement at the launch by underlining that "this is a great boost for the people of Dublin. Dublin Bay is a hugely important asset for our city, a great amenity for the residents of Dublin as well as a significant draw for tourists. Properly protecting and developing the potential of the Bay can enhance the quality of life of people living in the city, as well as fostering jobs and economic growth throughout Dublin. Today's announcement that UNESCO is awarding Biosphere status will help us create sustainable employment in a way that enhances the natural resources and cultural integrity of the Bay".

Speaking of the designation, Fáilte Ireland CEO, Shaun Quinn said: "This UNESCO designation for the capital is a tremendous accolade proving that Dublin certainly is the capital with a captivating coast. This recognition of Dublin Bay also dovetails with Fáilte Ireland's work to reposition Dublin as the

'city by the sea' – a must visit destination that rivals other European capitals and indeed, due to its proximity to sea and countryside, can offer more than most."

Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Barry Saul underlined that 'Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is proud of the fact that some of the most significant parts of the County will be part of the Biosphere including the expanse of Merrion Strand, the man-made marsh at Booterstown as well as what we think is one of the gems of Dublin, Dalkey Island, one of the most unique, unspoiled and much loved heritage sites in the city.'

Paul Reid, Chief Executive of Fingal County Council noted that "This achievement would not be possible without the work and collaboration of all three Local Authorities involved". The challenge for the Dublin Bay Partnership is to promote the natural and cultural heritage of the Bay to a wider audience and to provide a means for the communities around the bay to participate and contribute to achieving the ideals of a UNESCO biosphere. The strategy for the biosphere is based on the themes of conservation, research and education, tourism and recreation and sustainable business. Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership has organised a programme of events to celebrate the designation. These include a cruise of Dublin Bay on Saturday 27th June, an art exhibition in the Red Stables Gallery, St. Anne's Park, Raheny and a bird watching event at Coliemore Harbour.

Full details are available on **www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie**.

Dublin Bay Biosphere – some facts and figures

Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve encompasses over 300 km² of marine and terrestrial habitat. It includes North Bull Island, which has been a UNESCO Biosphere since 1981, and ecologically significant habitats, such as, the Tolka and Baldoyle Estuaries, Howth Head, Dalkey Island, Killiney Hill and Booterstown Marsh.

The Biosphere supports a variety of plants and wildlife including an internationally significant population of Brent geese that overwinters on North Bull Island.

Further information is available on www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie. Ireland's only other UNESCO Reserve is in Killarney National Park.

How will the new partnership promote the Bay?

Dublin Bay Partnership will promote and protect the Bay through: Conservation – the protection of the Biosphere through habitat management and monitoring; Learning – third level colleges, research institutes and the schools sector will be facilitated and encouraged to study the habitat and Dublin Bay Partnership will share this knowledge with the wider public; Development – the Partnership will develop links with communities and businesses to promote sustainable development in Dublin Bay

What is a UNESCO Biosphere?

It's a special designation awarded by UNESCO but managed in partnership with local communities, NGOs, local and national governments

Biospheres are recognised for their biological diversity but are managed to promote a balanced relationship between people and nature

There is a global network of 651 Biosphere Reserves in 120 countries.

Why is Dublin Bay a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve?

North Bull Island was designated in 1981 because of its rare and internationally important habitats and wildlife

The extension of the Biosphere to Dublin Bay in 2015 reflects the Bay's environmental, leisure, cultural and tourism significance. Leisure activities include walking, swimming, bird watching, boating/sailing, kite and wind surfing

What are the key areas in Dublin Bay Biosphere:

North Bull Island; Howth Head; Killiney Hill; The Tolka and Baldoyle Estuaries; Booterstown Marsh; Dalkey Island; Ireland's Eye

What kind of biodiversity lives in the reserve?

A huge diversity of mammals, birds, fish, insects and plants live and breed on the Bay's coastal habitats. Over 300 plant species have been recorded on North Bull Island alone

For further information contact:
Dublin City Council Media Relations
Office, telephone: (01) 222 2170, info@dublincity.ie <https://twitter.com/DubCityCouncil> www.facebook.com/DublinCityCouncil

Source:

<http://www.enterprise.gov.ie/en/News/20150624.html>

Ireland's First Advisory Council on Climate Change appointed

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly T.D., on Wednesday, 10th June, 2015 announced the appointments to the National Expert Advisory Council on Climate Change, the first of its kind to be established under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill. The group will comprise eleven members to advise Government Departments and agencies on the actions required to significantly decarbonise the Irish economy by 2050. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill, which has just completed Committee Stage in the Dail, commits to the appointment of this expert group as well as five-yearly national mitigation plans designed to develop the policies to bring about a low carbon economy. Ireland's national policy position on climate change, which was published in April 2014, sets out a long term vision to achieving an aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by

2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors and an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sector.

The National Expert Advisory Council on Climate Change, which will be chaired by Professor John FitzGerald, will comprise 11 members in total and will include 4 ex-officio members, namely; Laura Burke (Director General EPA), Professor Alan Barrett (Director Designate ESRI), Dr. Brian Motherway (CEO SEAI) and Professor Gerry Boyle (Director of Teagasc). In addition to Professor Fitzgerald and the heads of Agencies the Council membership also includes; Professor Ottmar Edenhofer (Co-Chair of Working Group III of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)), Professor Frank Convery (Chief Economist, Environmental Defence Fund, New York), Professor J Peter Clinch (Jean Monnet Chair of European Economic Integration and UCD Professor of Public Policy), Professor Anna Davies (Professor of Geography at Trinity College Dublin), Professor Alan Matthews (Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy in the at Trinity College Dublin) and Mr Joseph Curtin (Senior Research Fellow, IIEA).

In appointing the Council, the Minister noted that "this group will play a hugely important role in re-shaping the Irish economy towards a low-carbon economy. I think it is clearly evident to all that the combined calibre of this group is of such a standard as to ensure that the Council will indeed be a very strong force in advising Government to tackle the formidable climate challenge that lies ahead. I was particularly mindful of the need to balance both economic and environmental perspectives. This balance will be critical within the context of how Ireland transitions itself to a low carbon, climate resilient, environmentally sustainable economy particularly as our finances continue to stabilise and recover. In this regard I am also very pleased that John Fitzgerald has agreed to chair the council in guiding the important work to follow.

The presence of the ex-officio members will be crucial to the effectiveness of the council as the level of experience and expertise they bring in terms of practical implementation will be key strengths for the Council in performing its advisory functions. I am also very appreciative of the role the EPA will bring to the council in providing the necessary administrative support required for the effective operation of the Council.

A key function of the Expert Advisory Council is to advise and make recommendations to Government and Ministers in relation to the development of mitigation plans and adaptation frameworks and sectoral plans. As work is already underway on these projects, the Minister underlined that "it is a progressive and important step to establish the Council on an administrative basis in order to ensure that Government and relevant Ministers have early access to independent, expert advice during the crucial developmental stage of these projects." The Minister also advised that he will be launching a public consultation later today (Wednesday, 10th June 2015) on requesting input to the development of Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan. "The development of Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan will of course be a key consideration for the Advisory Council however I would also very much appreciate views from all stakeholders, including the general public in terms of helping to inform the process we are about to embark on and I would encourage all to contribute where possible".

Commenting on the announcement, Laura Burke, Director General of the EPA, stated "This is a very significant step in advancing actions to address the challenges ahead. It is not just about meeting 2020 targets, it is also about Ireland's transition to low emission, climate resilient, economy and society, and realising the benefits and broader opportunities that this entails. The Agency is very pleased to have been selected to host the Council secretariat. This honour both

recognises and enhances the roles of the EPA in addressing climate change. I very much look forward to working with all the members of the Council to assist in development of Ireland's response to climate change." Professor Fitzgerald, recently retired from the ESRI and commenting on his appointment, said, "I would like to thank the Minister for asking me to fulfil this important role and, indeed, I am honoured to be in such exalted company. The group is very conscious of how seriously the Government views the need to move Ireland to a low carbon economy. We face a challenging task in advising how best Ireland can tackle what is one of the key challenges facing this generation".

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/News/MainBody,41743,en.htm>

Consultation launched on the development of Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan to transition Ireland to a low carbon economy by 2050

Following on from the announcement earlier on Wednesday, 10th June 2015 re-the membership of the National Expert Advisory Council on Climate Change, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly, T.D., has also launched a public consultation on the development of Ireland's first National Low Carbon Transition and Mitigation Plan.

The Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development Bill 2015 sets out proposed statutory obligations in relation to the development of a National Mitigation Plan, incorporating measures relating to the four sectors responsible for the bulk of Ireland's CO₂ emissions – Transport, Agriculture, Electricity Generation, and the Built Environment. In anticipation of the planned legislation, work has already commenced on the process of developing the Plan, at both sectoral and national level. In line with

the National Policy Position on climate action and low carbon development, as well as mentioned above the statutory provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015 (which is currently before the Oireachtas), a national low-carbon transition and mitigation plan to 2050 – to be referred to as the National Mitigation Plan or NMP – is now being developed. A primary objective of the NMP will be to bring a clear and strong focus to both the challenges and the opportunities of transitioning to a low carbon future, and the importance of a positively-focussed and cost-effective national transition agenda. It will also track the implementation of steps already underway, and identify additional measures in the longer term to ensure that Ireland does its part in contributing to both EU and Global objectives in addressing the challenges ahead.

Minister Kelly outlined that "our transition towards a low carbon future that focuses on resource-efficient and innovative alternatives will have far-reaching but positive implications for all our people. It is therefore both timely and opportune to assess how the various stakeholders, including the general public, see both the challenges and the opportunities inherent in such a transition. It is still early in the development of the National Mitigation Plan and I want to ensure that we identify and consider all realistic options. The feedback we get will be an important input in preparing the National Mitigation Plan". It is envisaged that further opportunities for stakeholder engagement will arise in due course when consulting on the draft NMP to 2050 and the accompanying environmental analysis to be undertaken through Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

The Minister stressed that "with the Climate Bill nearing enactment and significant preparatory work already underway on developing the NMP, I would like to encourage all interested parties to participate via this public

consultation and let us know your views on what is a first for Ireland in preparing our way for a low carbon transition." To facilitate this round of stakeholder engagement, a background paper outlining the development of the National Mitigation Plan to date, and the process by which it will be developed, has been prepared and made openly available and may be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/PublicConsultation/>

The consultation period will run until Friday 31st July 2015. During this period, submissions on the National Mitigation Plan should be sent to:

NationalMitigationPlan@environ.ie

In addition to the current public consultation exercise, there will be a substantial open consultation on the National Mitigation Plan to 2050 and Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment reports, once these are available in draft form.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/News/MainBody,41740,en.htm>

Minister Kelly Publishes Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015

Climate Legislation will be on the Statute Book for the first time

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly, T.D., on Monday, 19 January, 2015 welcomed the publication of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015, having secured Government approval for the provisions of the Bill. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015 sets out the national objective of transitioning to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy in the period up to and including the

year 2050. In doing so, it gives a solid statutory foundation to the institutional arrangements necessary to enable the State to pursue and achieve that “national transition objective”. In this regard, the Bill provides for the preparation, and approval by the Government, of five-yearly National Low Carbon Transition and Mitigation Plans (or “National Mitigation Plans”) which will set out how our national greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced, in line with both existing EU legislative requirements and wider international commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In particular, each successive National Mitigation Plan will specify the policy measures that will be required to be adopted by each relevant Minister of the Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their sectors and to enable a whole-of-Government approach towards achieving the national transition objective. As Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions profile are predominantly made up of emissions from agriculture, transport, energy and the built environment, it is anticipated that it is in these sectors that most mitigation effort will be required.

By providing the institutional framework to ensure that iterative policy measures are developed, approved and implemented in a timely fashion, the Bill will also underpin the certainty required for policy makers and business in respect of what mitigation efforts are going to be taken up to 2020 and 2030, as well as setting the scene for future mitigation objectives beyond those timeframes up to the year 2050, at which point the Irish economy, along with most developed countries, will be required to be substantively decarbonised. Such a process will also be instrumental in identifying new economic opportunities that arise in transitioning to a low carbon economy. It is noted that in bringing forward this proposed national legislation, Ireland will also contribute – and be seen to contribute – its fair share of mitigation effort as part of global endeavours under the UNFCCC to limit the rise

in average global temperature to no more than two degrees over the pre-industrial level. These endeavours, if successful, will benefit us all, but particularly developing countries, where lesser capacities to respond and adapt render them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Minister Kelly stated: “Mitigation effort is a global responsibility and no more so in respect of our collective preparation for agreement in Paris at the end of this year, however it is important that developed countries such as Ireland provide leadership in terms of their contribution and the framework underpinned by this Bill will enable such a response to be developed well into the future”.

The Bill also deals with adaptation to climate change, in that it provides for the preparation, and approval by the Government, of successive National Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks which will outline the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors as well as by local authorities in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State and citizens to the negative impacts of climate change.

As the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rises with historic emissions, adapting to the inevitable changes in climate in Ireland, such as an increased frequency of severe weather events, becomes critical. In this regard, the National Adaptation Framework will set out those sectors, such as, flood defence and the protection of communication and electricity infrastructure, which will be required to develop sectoral adaptation plans to prepare for and invest wisely to minimise the likely impacts of a changing climate and extreme weather events. Minister Kelly stated that: “It is vital that we continue to prepare appropriately for adaptation, not only in the short term, as our recent experience with Storm Rachel demonstrated, but also in terms of the long term and the provisions within this Bill will facilitate that process”.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/News/MainBody,40045,en.htm>

Local communities to benefit through improved buildings, lower bills and local jobs

Minister for Energy Alex White, TD, on Wednesday 10th June 2015 awarded grants worth a total of €18.6 million to 29 community energy efficiency initiatives.

The projects will improve the energy efficiency of 2,435 homes and 400 public, private and community buildings. They are expected to deliver lifetime energy savings of €140 million in the localities concerned.

The grants are being awarded under the Government’s Better Energy Communities scheme, which has now awarded over €62 million to community energy efficiency initiatives.

Minister White outlined that “these projects will see community co-operatives all over the country coming together with local authorities, businesses and sports clubs to improve homes and local community facilities.

Energy efficiency improvements like these are demonstrating that energy efficiency technologies work, and that they deliver real benefits, which can save on bills while helping the environment. This will be crucial to persuading more people to undertake energy efficiency improvements in their homes or businesses.

It will also support jobs in the local areas where these projects are delivered. I am absolutely determined that community involvement will be at the heart of the new energy white paper, which will determine the path forward for the Irish energy sector to 2030.”

The projects include:

- Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative Ltd: Eight Tipperary communities coming together in a co-operative to carry out deep retrofits on 200 homes.

The aim of the project is to increase user comfort, reduce energy usage, and generate local employment.

- Castleblaney Credit Union in conjunction with Kingspan:

The project covers 24 homes in Castleblaney. The Credit Union will provide finance to 24 homeowners to improve the energy efficiency performance of their homes.

- Camphill Community: A charitable trust working with people with intellectual disabilities and other special needs is leading this project, which involves 99 buildings across all sectors (local authority, public sector, homes, and independent living and community facilities). It involves a mix of fabric upgrades, use of low-energy technologies and renewables.

Minister White made the announcement at the launch in Dublin of a Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) report on *Energy Efficiency Investment Pathways for Ireland*, which explores the potential for unlocking energy efficiency gains.

Minister White reiterated that “the Government is firmly committed to the ambitious goal of improving the energy efficiency of Ireland’s economy by at least 20% by 2020.

The report published today shows that this goal is achievable, and confirms that reaching our energy efficiency targets can lead to a sustained long-term increase in incomes, employment and economic activity.

It notes the significant progress we have already made on energy efficiency in Ireland, and it confirms that the policy foundation for energy efficiency is strong. Over the coming months and years this foundation needs to be strengthened and enhanced.”

For the full list of all projects to receive funding:

http://www.seai.ie/Grants/Better_Energy_Communities/Better-Energy-Communities-Projects-2015.pdf.

National Strategy to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water Published

Minister Alan Kelly, on Tuesday, 9th June, 2015 published a national strategy to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water.

The Minister stated that “the Government this morning approved a National Strategy to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water. The Strategy was prepared by my Department in consultation with the Department of Health, Irish Water, the HSE and the EPA, in order to map the scale of the problem and identify measures to mitigate any risks to human health posed by lead in drinking water. The primary focus of the Strategy is ensuring the protection of human health. The commitment that all publicly owned premises and buildings will be the subject of assessments to determine the presence of lead pipes underlies the Government’s determination to deal with this legacy issue. The roll-out of the national domestic metering programme by Irish Water has added to our knowledge around the extent of lead piping. Based on data emerging from the metering programme, we now know that up to 200,000 houses, primarily those constructed before the 1970s, may be at risk of having lead pipes.

Where Irish Water has information on the location of lead on the public and private side, this will be communicated to householders directly. For the first time, there will be a consistent and coherent national response to a legacy problem in relation to lead in drinking water.

A key element of the Strategy will be the introduction of a grant scheme for low-income households to assist with the replacement of lead pipes in their homes. Where a householder opts to replace any lead pipes, Irish Water will replace any corresponding lead pipes on the public side of the property. I will announce further details of the grant

scheme following consultations with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform but I expect householders will be able to avail of the grant later this year.

The Water Services Act 2007 provides that the owner of a premises is responsible for the maintenance and renewal of the internal water distribution system and shall ensure that it is kept in good order and repair, so as to prevent a risk to human health or the environment and that the water meets prescribed quality standards. Responsibility for replacing lead pipes from the main stopcock to the house and within the house rests with the homeowner. The legally permitted levels of lead in drinking water have been reducing in recent years and the legal level reduced to 10 micrograms per litre in December 2013. At this level, the EPA has stated that the number of exceedances of the new limit will increase. It is important, therefore, that measures are in place to mitigate the risks to human health.

The key elements of the National Strategy to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water approved by the Government are as follows:

- advice for householders and property owners regarding the potential public health issues arising from the risk of lead in drinking water, as well as advice on how the risks can be mitigated;
- the introduction of an income-based grant scheme to assist lower income house-owners to replace lead plumbing, pipes and fittings;
- a commitment that where owners undertake to replace lead plumbing, Irish Water will replace any lead piping on the public side of the customer’s service connection pipe; and,
- a requirement for the owners of all publicly owned buildings (including all local authorities, Government Departments and Agencies) to carry out an assessment of the buildings in their ownership to determine if there are any internal lead plumbing

and pipes, and, where lead plumbing is found to be present, to develop plans for the mitigation of any risks including where appropriate, the replacement of lead pipes as part of capital/maintenance programmes and to ensure that details of public health advice is given to customers and patrons of those buildings.

Shortly, Irish Water will be launching a Lead in Drinking Water Mitigation Plan which will be subject to approval of the Commission for Energy Regulation. The Irish Water Plan will be in line with the overall National Strategy and will include a more extensive sampling programme to assess levels of lead and define priority areas for action, the provision of more detailed information for households and a range of other measures to mitigate exposure to lead in drinking water.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Water/WaterSectorReform/News/MainBody,41734,en.htm>

Opening of a Pilot CEDRA Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) initiative

Following on from her recent announcement making €2million euro available to support one of the most important CEDRA recommendations, Ms. Ann Phelan, TD Minister of State for Rural Affairs Friday, 29th May, 2015 announced the opening of a Pilot scheme. REDZ are defined as functional rather than administrative geographic areas that reflect the spatial patterns of local economic activities and development processes, for example, they are the sub-county zones within which most people live and work.

Research surrounding this element of the CEDRA report identified potential REDZ in all areas of Ireland and recommended the implementation of a pilot initiative that supports the formulation of a localised strategic approach to the development of REDZ.

The recommendation envisages full participation by communities at a local level in order to foster a sense of ownership of the REDZ development process.

In the draft Rural Development Programme (RDP), Ireland has outlined that based on the success of a REDZ pilot initiative it may be possible to provide funding for a more comprehensive REDZ scheme through the LEADER elements of the RDP. In this context the potential to invest €5 million euro in order to leverage a further €5 million euro for a more extensive scheme during 2016/2017 period has been factored into the plans for the LEADER elements of the RDP. It is envisaged that pending the success of the pilot initiative that a call for proposals for a more extensive REDZ initiative under the LEADER elements of the RDP could take place towards the end of 2015/early 2016 with a view to having the funding allocated and the work commenced by mid-2016.

Minister Phelan said that “I am delighted to be able to announce the commencement of this Pilot scheme today and look forward to seeing what emerges from the REDZ pilot process. This is a real “bottom-up” approach and will allow rural communities to actively participate in and drive their own local economies. It will allow communities within the designated REDZ area to access all relevant government supports working with such agencies as the Local Authorities, LEO’s, the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, to name but a few. The whole concept of Rural Economic Development Zones has a very sound logic and basis in fact and I am confident that people who live and work in these areas will actively engage with the process to support the economic development of their areas. With an allocation of €2 million euro it will be possible to fund up to 18 pilot projects on a regional basis and at different levels of scale. The pilot scheme is open to all local authorities in cooperation with their relevant REDZ communities. This pilot initiative will not provide 100% financial support for proposed projects and will require a level

of matched resources. My Department has finalised the development of the scheme criteria I am encouraging all interested communities to engage with their local authorities with a view to inviting all Local Authority Chief Executives to get involved and fully participate in the process.”

Further details in relation to the pilot scheme can be found on the Department’s website at

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/RuralDevelopment/>

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/GeneralNews/MainBody,41610,en.htm>

Announcement of €91 Million Housing Investment

Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government, Alan Kelly TD and Minister of State for Housing & Planning, Paudie Coffey TD have on Thursday, 28th May, 2015 announced over €91 million worth of housing investment. The funding will be used across a range of housing schemes to make more social housing available and to improve housing for people with disabilities, as well as retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency.

Over 1,000 vacant social housing units will be refurbished and tenanted by people on the social housing waiting list at a cost of over €20 million countrywide. Dublin City and Cork City are receiving the largest allocations, with priority going to families facing homelessness. Funding was allocated to the local authorities with the greatest potential to deliver units quickly and address needs. Over 2,300 units were brought on stream last year with an average cost of refurbishment of €11,277. A further €50.5 million will be made available for Housing Adaptations for Older People and People with a Disability living in private houses. This will allow extensions to be built for people with a disability as well as housing adaptations to improve mobility aid (such as stair lifts, access ramps etc.)

with more funding set to come later in the year. A further €11 million will be made available for local authority house adaptations and extensions to meet the needs of tenants with a disability and to deal with overcrowding.

Meanwhile, Minister Kelly has made available a further €20 million for the improvement of local authority houses to make them more energy efficient. This programme continues to sustain and create jobs while making a significant contribution to Ireland's carbon emissions reduction targets and energy reduction targets for 2020, resulting in warmer homes and lower energy bills for local authority tenants. As part of the EU Operational Programme 2014-2020, the energy efficiency works on social housing will attract funding under the ERDF. This will see EU co-financing of 50% of eligible public investment under these programmes. Minister Kelly outlined that "the funding that I am announcing today, will significantly improve the quality of life of many people across Ireland. One of my huge frustrations is seeing boarded up social housing not being used, therefore it is important to see over 1,000 vacant units come back on stream as quickly as is possible. Secondly funding has been secured to allow older people and people with a disability extend their homes or provide aids to mobility within their home through the housing adaptation grants scheme. This is hugely important for those affected as it can greatly improve the quality of life for those who either have a disability or are reaching an age in life when they are less mobile; the grants provide significant social benefit by facilitating citizens to continued independent occupancy in their own homes." Minister Coffey stated that "this funding is part of a huge Government commitment to housing and improving the quality of life of those who are dependent on the system of public housing. This will provide a boost to the construction sector nationally."

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/GeneralNews/MainBody,41581,en.htm>

MyPay - payroll and superannuation shared service launched for local authorities

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly T.D., on Friday, 29 May, 2015 launched MyPay, the local authority payroll and superannuation Shared Service. MyPay provides services to local authorities from a single Shared Service Centre based in Portlaoise. Speaking at the launch of the centre, the Minister underlined that "the degree to which the local authority sector has embraced these changes is very encouraging and the speed with which new structures and practices have been put in place is inspiring. We should continue to embrace change for the better and continue to explore more imaginative and progressive ways of doing our business".

Shared Services is a key element of the Government's Public Service Reform Plan which also contains a range of other commitments for local government. A dedicated Project Management Office, set up as part of the Local Government Review Group, is leading the development of new methodologies and business practices which will deliver more efficient and effective public services. Minister Kelly described the creation of MyPay as "a milestone event for local government reform and an exemplar for the entire Public Service". In tracing the journey of MyPay's development, he noted some key facts:

- There are 15 of the 31 local authorities live in MyPay at the moment with over 15,000 payees. This will rise to 55,000 payees when everyone is live.
- 200,000 individual payments have been processed to date with a value of just over €160M.
- It is envisaged that when the service is fully operational it will save approx. €4M per annum in the sector.
- A pilot consisting of Laois and Offaly County Councils commenced in October 2013 and completed successfully in January 2014.

- Wave 1 consisting of Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon and Leitrim commenced in April 2014 and was completed on schedule in July 2014.
- Wave 2 consisting of Galway County, Carlow, Monaghan and Cavan commenced in August 2014 and was completed on schedule in December 2014.
- Wave 3 consisting of Kildare, Meath, Kilkenny, Louth and South Dublin commenced in January 2015 and was completed on schedule in May 2015.
- Wave 4 consisting of Kerry, Tipperary, Wicklow, Waterford and Limerick is underway.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/GeneralNews/MainBody,41598,en.htm>

Major Social Housing Construction Programme to commence with € 312m Investment

Over 100 projects to commence, 3,000 construction jobs and 1,700 of housing units to be built part of phase one of the social housing strategy. Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government, Alan Kelly, and Minister for State for Housing, Planning & Construction, Paudie Coffey, on Tuesday, May 5th, 2015 announced the first major direct build social housing programme with the kick-starting of over 100 separate housing projects. The move is part of the first phase of direct-build under the Government's social housing strategy. €312 million has been approved by the Ministers which will see an additional 1,700 social housing units come on stream by 2017 with an estimated 3,000 additional jobs in construction created.

- The projects, which cut across each local authority area, range in size from small numbers of units to projects of over 50 units for some of the Dublin local authorities.
- These projects have been subjected to a value-for-money review by officials

at the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government and represent the first phase of direct build under the social housing strategy.

- Local authorities submitted applications for direct building programmes with approval being granted to over 100 projects in just two months.
- Further assessments will be carried out throughout the rest of the year with some projects requiring planning approval. All will be completed by 2017.

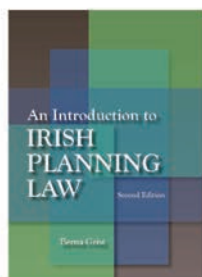
The move is part of the Government's €4billion social housing strategy to

deliver 35,000 housing units out to 2020 and to reduce the housing waiting lists by 25% nationally by 2017 based on the most recent housing need assessment report. The investment will be combined with further building projects under the Department's regeneration programme, a programme of refurbishment to deliver an additional 1,000 housing units this year as well as the social housing provision provided by approved housing bodies, NAMA and Part V units. There will also be a number of housing units bought or leased to provide housing for those in acute need.

Minister Kelly underlined that "this is the first major investment in local authority housing for many years. This announcement will see over 1,700

housing units delivered over a three year period, creating approximately 3,000 jobs in construction with all of these projects being assessed in under a two month period. It represents a good start but with much more needing to be done. For many years during the celtic tiger, house building was something many local authorities got out of. It has taken time, but with approximately 3,000 additional housing staff in local authorities, including planners and architects, the funding that is coming on stream, aggressive investment and action is being taken to tackle the housing crisis. The last major house-building announcement was for €68 million which has seen the commencement of over 50 construction projects starting in 2014. Between local

BOOKS FROM THE IPA

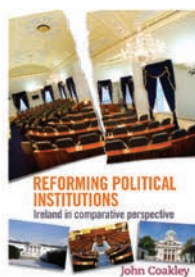


An Introduction to Irish Planning Law (2nd Edition)

As a result of the many amendments made recently to the four Planning Acts by Regulations introduced to ensure compliance with European environmental legislation, the need for an introductory work to assist in understanding the Irish planning system has again become apparent. This completely revised second edition

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provides up-to-date coverage of the subject. It addresses in turn the hierarchy of spatial plans and policy instruments, applications, appeals, strategic infrastructure, exempted development, enforcement (incorporating changes to control of quarries and substitute consent), compensation and amenities. A complete chapter explains the basic principles relating to the conservation of the natural and the built environment, distinguishing the requirements of environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment. There are further chapters on unfinished housing developments and related areas of the law, including archaeological protection and the water services legislation.



Reforming Political Institutions: Ireland in Comparative Perspective

In this book, John Coakley considers the case for reform of Irish political institutions in the light of economic collapse, political turmoil and external intervention in the management of the state. The author examines five specific institutions of great importance to Irish political life, setting them in comparative and historical context and

978-1-904541-33-2
€30.00

reviewing their current role. These include two important and well-known institutions, the Presidency and the Seanad, as well as the much-debated issue of the Dáil electoral system, and two largely ignored matters – the system of determining Dáil constituency boundaries, and the route to ministerial office whereby, almost uniquely, Ireland's ministers are drawn entirely from parliament. Warning of the dangers of 'the reflex calls for revision that have become so prominent since the crisis of 2010', John Coakley offers a timely, balanced and detailed assessment of the effects that might follow from changes to Ireland's political institutions and constitution, and of the extent to which reform is likely to serve as an effective antidote to the country's current ills.

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authorities and the voluntary housing sector, there are now in excess of 150 social housing projects currently under construction which will in time have an impact on housing waiting lists." Minister Coffey reiterated that "these 100 projects across the Country are shovel ready and will deliver hundreds of much needed homes in every county. The social housing strategy is a key component of the Construction 2020 Strategy and today's announcement is the first phase of new direct build social housing provision to be delivered by Local Authorities across the country this year. This is just one of the ways that we will be delivering social housing units and shows this government's commitment in addressing the current housing need." This announcement will also provide much needed jobs in the construction and trades sector and will boost employment in communities around the country.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/Housing/News/MainBody,41340,en.htm>

€14 Million Allocations announced under 2015 Rural Water Programme

Mr Alan Kelly, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government on Wednesday, 13th May, 2015 announced his Department's 2015 block grant allocations to local authorities for group water and group sewerage schemes. The 2015 allocation of almost €14 million for group water and sewerage schemes represents an increase of over 15% on the 2014 expenditure of €11.8 million. The allocations, which total almost €14 million, are provided under the Department's Rural Water Programme.

Funding is primarily aimed at improving water quality in group water schemes, and at upgrading and water conservation works in group water scheme distribution networks. The programme also provides funding for group sewerage schemes. The allocations reflect the high concentration of group water schemes and necessary improvement works still required in certain counties, including Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. In this

context, the Minister also confirmed that he has decided to accept a recommendation from the National Rural Water Services Committee, which advises the Minister on rural water policy and investment, to investigate whether some elements of proposed new group schemes would merit a special contribution to help address funding shortfalls. Minister Kelly stated that "I want to find a funding mechanism to facilitate the progression of proposed new group water schemes which are not viable at current grant rates. I have therefore requested my Department to liaise with Mayo and Galway County Councils on examining the feasibility of the Committee's recommendation for appropriate schemes in these areas on a pilot basis." It is also acknowledged that the Rural Water Programme benefits from funding under the European Regional Development Fund. The Minister stressed that "the Government remains committed to continued support of the Group Water sector as an important element of the water industry in Ireland, founded on co-operative community and voluntary engagement. The Government is also committed to investment in the sector, to sustain and improve quality, standards and performance. My Department will also be engaging with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes to explore the possibility of introducing a rolling, multi-annual funding programme to provide certainty to the sector on funding of projects".

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/GeneralNews/MainBody,41422,en.htm>

Increase in beach quality awards for 2015

Mr Alan Kelly T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, on Thursday, 28th May 2015 welcomed the presentation of 144 beach awards, an increase of 10 on the 2014 number. Presenting the Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards at a ceremony in Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry, the Minister expressed satisfaction with the awarding of 86 Blue Flags (81 beaches and 5 marinas) this year. This was an increase of 6 over the 2014 number. The Minister stated: 'I am pleased to say that a total of 144 Blue Flag and Green Coasts awards

will be made today. This represents an increase of 10 over the number of awards in 2014 awards. This is testament to the sterling efforts of local authorities, An Taisce and of local communities in ensuring that their beaches meet the standards of excellence required for a Blue Flag or Green Coast Award.'

The Minister also noted that Blue Flags represent excellence and are internationally recognised. 'Blue Flags represent excellence. They are a clear signal of quality and are something to be cherished. I am delighted to announce that today we will be awarding a total of 86 Blue Flags; 81 for beaches and five for marinas.

A blue flag flying at a particular location means that it has achieved excellent water quality to standards set by European and national Regulations, and a very high grade across a wide range of other criteria, including environmental education, management of the environment, facilities, safety and other services.' Minister Kelly also stated that 'Behind each of the 86 recipients lies a team of people who worked hard to make the grade and to each and every one of them I extend my sincere congratulations'.

58 Green Coast Awards were presented for 2015. This represents an increase of 4 on the 2014 number. Referring to the Green Coast awards, Minister Kelly emphasized that 'these also recognise excellence in environmental standards and sustainable management. They generally apply to beaches which do not have the full suite of facilities associated with the Blue Flag. Although visitor numbers to these beaches may not be as high, it is nevertheless important for the environment, the local community and tourists alike that these beaches also achieve high standards.'

An important aspect of the Green Coast Awards is the involvement of Coastcare Volunteer Groups. There are now over 430 active Coastcare groups established throughout the island. The Minister paid tribute to the work of these groups stating that 'their efforts are fundamental in achieving and maintaining Green Coast status.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/GeneralNews/MainBody,41580,en.htm>

13 Blue Flags awarded to Donegal Beaches joint top rankings with Kerry

An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland in cooperation with Kerry County Council held the 2015 International Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards Ceremony on Thursday, May 28th 2015 on Ballinskelligs Beach, Co. Kerry. The awards were presented by Mr. Alan Kelly TD, Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government.

At the awards ceremony thirteen of Donegal's beaches were awarded the prestigious Blue Flag award by Mr. Alan Kelly, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. The 13 Blue Flags awarded to Donegal places the County at joint top of the rankings with County Kerry having the most Blue Flags in the country.

The Council is delighted with this outcome considering the more stringent qualifying conditions and local difficulties arising from recent storms.

The 13 Blue Flags awarded to Donegal beaches:

Bundoran
Rossnowlagh
Murvagh
Fintra
Narin (Portnoo)
Carrickfinn
Killahoey (Dunfanaghy)
Marblehill
Portsalon (Magherawarden)
Lisfannon
Shroove
Culdaff
Downings

At the awards, Seamus Neely, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council highlighted that "at a time when the Council is actively promoting Donegal as a tourism destination, having the joint highest number of Blue Flags can only assist in promoting Donegal as an excellent destination for visitors.

The Blue Flag Award is the definitive international beach award recognised

in 46 countries as an assurance of beach cleanliness and safety. As a pre-requisite the bathing water at Blue Flag beaches must meet the highest standards of bathing water quality."

In addition to the Blue Flag awards five more awards were achieved by Donegal beaches. The Green Coast award acknowledges beaches that have a clean safe environment, excellent water quality and good beach management.

They may not have the built infrastructure required to meet the criteria set out for Blue Flag status however they are exceptional places to visit and enjoy our rich coastal heritage and diversity.

The 5 Green Coast awards for Donegal beaches are:

Ballyheirnan (Fanad)
Drumnatinney (Falcarragh)
Magheroarty
Port Arthur
Dooey

Seamus Neely added that, "Donegal County Council will continue to work closely with local communities in maintaining and retaining the Blue Flag and Green Coast awards for Donegal and will continue our efforts in 2015 to ensure that these prestigious awards are retained. The Council would also appeal to all beach users to be mindful of the safety of family and friends, especially children. All visitors to the County's beaches are asked to minimise any negative impact on the beach environment and always take their belongings and rubbish home."

For more information of Donegal's Blue Flag and Green Coast beaches visit:

www.govisitdonegal.com
www.blueflagireland.org
www.bathingwater.ie

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

Ancient artefacts return to Donegal from June 19th, 2015

Two ancient artefacts synonymous with the early Christian period in County Donegal arrive back in the county from mid-June on loan from the British Museum. Their visit will be marked by an official unveiling by Joe McHugh TD, Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on Friday, June 19 at 12.30pm in the Donegal County Museum, High Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal. St Conall Cael's Bell and Shrine will be on display at the Donegal County Museum, High Road, Letterkenny from 3pm Friday June 19 to Saturday July 11. Admission is free.

On Monday 13 July, Donegal County Museum will facilitate their display at the Dolmen Centre, Kilclooney in South-West Donegal, after which they will return to the British Museum. This location was chosen by the local Homecoming of St Conall's Bell and Shrine Committee because of its proximity to the original site of St Conall's monastery on Inishkeel Island at Portnoo.

This visit of these iconic items represents a major coup for Donegal County Museum. This iron hand bell is said to have originally belonged to St Conall Cael in the 6th century. The bell is an early type made from a sheet of iron, its handle and loop for the clapper is missing. A plate of brass decorated with native Irish and Viking interlace ornament was added around the year 1000. Long after his death, in the 15th century ornate silver 'bell shrine' was made to protect and embellish the bell. It was worshipped by pilgrims during their turas on the island of Inishkeel.

When first recorded in modern times the bell and its shrine were in the possession of the O'Breslins. The bell was carried by its keeper and kissed by pilgrims during the turas on Inishkeel. After the suppression of the turas by local clergy in the early 19th century, the bell came



A view of Inniskeel Island, Portnoo where St. Conall's Monastic Site was originally based the original site of St Conall's monastery.

into the possession of Major Nesbitt of Woodhill House, Ardara. After his death in 1845, the bell and shrine passed through a number of hands until they were purchased by Sir Augustus Franks who appreciated their historical significance and presented them to the British Museum in London in 1889.

Donegal County Museum has worked in partnership with the British Museum to facilitate the loan of these items and have had to comply with stringent conditions regarding security, the environmental storage requirements and security, including the transportation of the artefacts by specialist fine art couriers.

"We have worked closely with the British Museum to facilitate the visit of these iconic artefacts to Donegal. From the germ of an idea first discussed with the late Malachy Mahon to this momentous occasion, we have been committed to ensuring that St Conall's Bell and Shrine can be displayed in the museum and can also visit the Dolmen Centre, Kilclooney, close to the original site of St Conall's monastery on Iniskeeel Island," stated Donegal County Museum Curator, Judith McCarthy.

The good news has also been welcomed by Donegal County Council Chief Executive, Seamus Neely. "St. Conall Cael's Bell & Shrine is an important part of the heritage of County Donegal. This is an excellent and unique opportunity for people to view these important artefacts and to learn more about their links to the story of Donegal. We are delighted to be involved with and to be approved by the British Museum for such a venture. It is a priceless artefact

from our ancient history and it is fantastic that it is returning to the area from where it originated almost 1,500 years ago."

Information: St Conall Cael's Bell and Shrine

St Conall Cael

According to the *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae*, St Conall was descended from the *Cenél Conaill*, one of the ruling families of Donegal. He was the son of a *Maine* or *Caelmaine*, who was a son of Cathair, son of Bogaine, son of Conall Gulban. He founded a monastery on Iniskeeel sometime in the 6th century. This ecclesiastical foundation was important to the spread of early Christianity in Donegal. St Conall died between 590 and 596 AD and is buried on the island. His feast day is May 22. St. Conall is also connected with two sites near Bruckless, a holy well and an area known as the *Relig*. There is a foundation at Drumconnell, Co Roscommon associated with him and he is the patron saint of Dromcliffe, Co Clare.

Inniskeeel Island

Inniskeeel is a tidal island in the Gweebarra Bay, Co. Donegal. Early Christian hermits often sought the peace and solitude of islands and it is possible that Iniskeeel was the site of an early hermitage.

On the island are the remains of two churches: St Conall's and St Mary's. St Mary's has a thirteenth century chancel and a later medieval nave. The ruins of St. Conall's Church provide evidence of a number of different building periods. The windows date to the 14th century.

There are several early cross slabs and grave slabs. These include a highly decorated cross slab known as the 'swan cross' which dates to the 9th century. There is a stone known as St. Joseph's Bed on the island and there are also two holy wells.

The Bell of St Conall

The bell of St Conall of Iniskeeel also known as the *Bearnán Conaill* is made from a single sheet of wrought iron, forged into shape and coated with bronze. A brass panel was added to the bell during the tenth century. This panel is decorated with animal and ribbon interlace and a design derived from a ring-chain pattern common on Viking sculpture in the Irish Sea Area.

The Shrine of St Conall

In the later medieval period a hollow box of bronze covered with decorated silver plates was made to enclose St Conall's bell. On the front, the top plate has a seated figure of God the Father flanked by the Virgin and Child and Archangel Michael.

The main panel with the crucified Christ in centre is surrounded by four figures; against a background of panels filled with scroll ornaments. The framing silver bands on the front and around the top bear inscriptions in Gothic script.

The bell was carried by its keeper and kissed by pilgrims during the *turas* on Iniskeeel. After the suppression of the *turas* by local clergy in the early 19th century, the bell came into the possession of Major Nesbitt of Woodhill House, Ardara. After his death the bell and shrine passed through the hands of

various collectors eventually finding its way to the British Museum.

Partnership with Donegal County Museum and The British Museum

Donegal County Museum would like to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the British Museum, Malachy and Brenda Mahon, The Homecoming of St Conall's Bell and Shrine Committee and the Dolmen Centre, Portnoo. The Donegal County Museum also wishes to acknowledge the generous financial contribution from Mr Tim Kelly, Kelly Communications.

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

Donegal County Council joins unique marine bio-diversity project

Donegal County Council marked World Oceans Day (Monday 8th June, 2015) with news of its participation in a unique marine bio-diversity project. SeaEurope is a transnational Sustainable Tourism Route that connects European coastal destinations with a rich marine biodiversity and vivid seas.

This will place the county on the map of unique places where you will be able to experience marine wildlife through water sports and outdoor activities. The Route will deliver great travel hints on unique adventures that you can experience in coastal destinations allowing you to make responsible contact with marine species in the wild, while learning about their ecology and participating in efforts to preserve them.

The Route will also offer valuable information on Donegal and Europe's best coastal destinations, natural sites of interest, flag species, important habitats, as well as on currently on-going scientific efforts and projects aimed at their conservation.

The project results will include:

- Development of the Management Plan, Business Plan and Marketing Strategy of the Transnational Route
- Mapping of Key 'SeaEurope'

Route Resources, Attractions and Stakeholders

- Capacity Building on Sustainable Tourism Practices and Sustainable Tourism Experiences Development
- Promotion of the Route through specialized Tourism channels and own marketing resources.(including producing promotional video)
- Workshop 'Bringing Natural Values to Life in Coastal and Maritime Tourism Destinations across Europe'

Donegal County Council's Chief Executive, Seamus Neely outlined that "this is a new and exciting partnership of regions for the Council. The outputs from the project will include new resources which can help to effectively market the regions for unique marine bio-diversity and species to create a truly pan-European network of nature tourism experiences."

Project SeaEurope has the financial support of the Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) of the European Commission (EU). Donegal is a member of FEDETON and this network provided opportunities for the Council to participate in this project.

Source: Donegal County Council Communications Office.

€1.5 Billion Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities up to 2017

Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government, Alan Kelly T.D., along with Minister of State, Paudie Coffey T.D., on Wednesday, 1st April, 2015 announced housing targets for each local authority area out to 2017.

Over €1.5 billion will be invested in a combination of building, buying and leasing schemes by local authorities designed to accommodate 25% of those currently on the housing waiting lists in social housing.

The move comes as part of the Government's €3.8 billion social housing strategy announced last November out to 2020. Each local authority was asked to bring forward housing unit targets and specific

building projects out to 2017. As part of the strategy, targets had to be agreed with each local authority in 2015.

In the case of the Dublin local authorities, these will be given housing targets over and above what they proposed to the Department of Environment to ensure strong delivery where the need is greatest. The combined funding total for the Dublin local authorities comes to over €500 million to 2017. Approximately 300 separate building proposals by local authorities are currently being assessed by the Department and will be announced in a number of phases starting in Mid-April. Construction is already underway for social housing in approximately 33 sites throughout the country.

Minister Kelly stressed that "housing is the number one priority for the Government. What we are announcing today is ambitious targets for each local authority right throughout the country for each local authority area. This will have a major impact for those on the housing waiting lists with a national reduction of 25% targeted over the period from these schemes alone. The recovering economy is allowing us to invest in vital public services such as housing and we are doing that."

Minister Coffey also outlined that "the Social Housing Strategy is a key action under the Construction 2020 Strategy and I am pleased to see it being progressed so that priority housing projects can be delivered in the years 2015-2017. €1.5 billion over the next three years is a huge investment in housing; and Minister Kelly and I now expect Local Authorities to deliver on the plans that they have submitted to our Department over the next 3 years." The various schemes will target the refurbishment of vacant social housing units and local authorities will have the option of both building and acquiring housing.

The average cost of building a social housing unit is €185,000 – meaning in some parts of the country it will remain cheaper and quicker to acquire as opposed to build. Local authorities will have some discretion to adapt to local circumstances, but all will

be expected to kick-start a building programme.

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/Housing/News/MainBody,41016,en.htm>

Ministers Kelly and Phelan Announce County Allocations for Leader Element of Rural Development Programme up to 2020

On 10th March, 2015, Alan Kelly T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, and Ann Phelan, TD Minister of State for Rural Affairs have announced the County allocations for the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme (RDP).

Both Ministers have allocated €220 million overall to individual sub-regional (county) areas for the purposes of the implementation of the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme by Local Action Groups within those areas.

As announced in Budget 2015, an overall €250 million will be allocated towards the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme. To bring the allocation to the full programme complement of €250million, an additional €15million will be allocated to two Agri-Food measures managed jointly by DECLG and DAFM. A further €10 million will be used to support cooperation projects over the lifetime of the programme with a particular emphasis on cross-border initiatives, this process will be coordinated by DECLG and delivered using the LEADER/Community Led approach. The final €5 million will be held in reserve to potentially support a more extensive Rural Economic Development Zones project should the pilot initiative recommended by CEDRA prove successful.

LEADER funding will be used to support sustainable economic development projects for rural communities ranging from tourism, agri-food and other business activities.

This money will be targeted at tackling social inclusion, rural isolation as well

as increasing the capacity of rural communities to participate in economic development. The exact nature of the projects chosen will be based on ideas that emerge from the communities themselves.

Minister Kelly outlined that “LEADER is a vital lifeline for many rural communities. These substantial financial resources allocated to each county for the delivery of LEADER will support the continued sustainable development of rural communities all over Ireland in the coming years.

Minister Phelan and I are determined to address issues of rural decline and I am confident that the 2014-2020 programme will be just as successful as the 2007-2013 programme which has seen funding going to 8698 enterprises that have supported the creation of 4084 jobs since 2009. I am aware of many excellent community facilities and amenities that LEADER support has facilitated and improved all over the country supporting social inclusion and community participation in very difficult times. I also believe the on-going work at a local level to ensure more coordination as outlined in the Government’s reform programme ‘Putting People First’ will serve only to improve the impact of LEADER funding in rural communities and ensure that rural Ireland is given the support it needs and deserves”.

Minister Phelan added, “I am delighted that we have reached the stage where every county now knows what allocation they will receive under the LEADER elements of the RDP. I now look forward to formally launching the selection process for the Local Development Strategies that will provide the framework for the delivery of this funding. Coming from a rural community, I am only too well aware of the challenges that are being faced by our local communities in the aftermath of the financial crisis. But, rural Ireland is ready to participate in the recovery. There is a wealth of resources and existing infrastructure across rural Ireland that can be utilised to ensure that recovery is felt throughout the country. I am confident that these resources will support the sustainable development of rural communities the length and

breadth of this country and very much look forward to seeing and hearing about new LEADER projects commencing towards the end of this year.”

Ireland is reconfiguring the way in which local and rural development interventions are implemented in sub-regional areas. This is in line with Government policy to ensure that local government is positioned to support the effective and efficient delivery of local and rural development interventions. In this context the overall programme complement will be allocated to Sub-Regional areas based on administrative (primarily county based) boundaries.

Table 1: LEADER Allocations 2014-2020

Sub regional Area	Programme Allocation
Rural Dublin	€6,370,438.43
Kildare	€5,261,600.01
Meath	€6,903,123.57
Wicklow	€6,336,549.00
Carlow	€6,416,803.43
Kilkenny	€7,791,572.91
Wexford	€9,840,140.56
Tipperary	€10,103,443.28
County Waterford	€7,522,796.18
County Cork	€13,938,823.22
Kerry	€10,219,868.29
Clare	€8,920,224.65
County Limerick	€9,276,593.96
County Galway	€12,195,883.61
Mayo	€11,121,431.88
Roscommon	€8,852,659.22
Louth	€6,101,862.01
Leitrim	€5,998,474.74
Sligo	€7,655,647.81
Cavan	€8,522,285.84
Donegal	€12,913,877.86
Monaghan	€7,592,719.51
Laois	€7,124,586.86
Longford	€7,597,623.07
Offaly	€8,036,763.90
Westmeath	€7,384,206.22
Total	€220,000,000.00

Source:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/RuralDevelopment/News/MainBody,40741,en.htm>

Call for Papers:
Regional Studies Association Irish Branch Annual Conference
in conjunction with The Southern Regional Assembly

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN IRELAND

Friday 4 September 2015, University College Cork

Theme:

The amount of attention given to regional development policy in Ireland tends to decrease during economic downturns. Developments during the last economic crisis have appeared to be no exception. In 2008 the allocations for the Gateway Innovation Fund were withdrawn. In 2012, the Action Programme for Effective Local Government included the consolidation of eight Regional Authorities and two Regional Assemblies into three new Regional Assemblies. In 2013, the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 was effectively abandoned, without a clear timeline for developing a successor.

However, the spatially selective nature of the incipient economic recovery has moved regional development in Ireland very much to the forefront of attention again. Regional development policy and governance is in a state of flux with different Ministries and their agencies establishing a new direction of action. The three new Regional Assemblies were established in January 2015 with newly minted powers to devise Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.

The Department of Enterprise has installed a National Spatial Strategy scoping group to prepare a report on the development of a new National Planning Framework which, in turn, is expected to be finalised by the end of 2015. Meanwhile, under pressure from increasing public attention, the Department of Enterprise Jobs and Innovation and its agencies are developing their own regional policies. In January 2015, as part of its Action Plan for Jobs 2015, the Department announced a €25 million fund to support regional initiatives. One month later it launched the Framework for the Development of Regional Enterprise Strategies. A pilot has been applied in the Midlands region, after which it will be rolled out to other regions. The same month IDA Ireland launched its new five-year plan Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019 in which the IDA has committed itself to increasing the level of investment into each region of Ireland by between 30% and 40%. The main aim of this annual conference is to understand the direction of the current policies and actions, and/or provide direction where required.

Submission themes

We call for presentations from policy makers, academia and practitioners active in the field of regional studies. Post-graduate students are encouraged to submit. We call for presentations dealing with, amongst others, the following themes:

- Developing Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies - process and content
- National Oversight and Audit Commission
- Regional Enterprise Strategies and Action Plan for Jobs - progress and analysis
- The Midlands pilot
- IDA and Enterprise Ireland regional strategies
- Property-based regional development policies
- A new National Planning Framework
- Local and regional economic forums
- Entrepreneurship and firm formation
- Social Economy and regional development
- The Greater Dublin Area

Submissions

Please submit proposals for presentation in the form of a 250 word abstract through the Regional Studies Association – Irish Branch online portal by 31st July 2015.

Submission of abstracts can be made online at

<http://rsa-ireland.weebly.com/abstract-submission.html>

Registration

It is possible to register for the conference online at

<http://rsa-ireland.weebly.com/register.html>

Please note that there is a €70 fee for attending the conference and this includes lunch. Payments are processed via PayPal.

Conference updates

Updates on the conference will be available on the RSA-Irish Branch website at

<http://rsa-ireland.weebly.com/>

It is encouraged to subscribe to the RSA-Irish Branch's newsletter to have updates delivered to your e-mail as they become available as well as news of other RSA events.

It is possible to subscribe to the newsletter at

<http://rsa-ireland.weebly.com/mailling-list-and-newsletter.html>

For further information Please contact chris.vanegeraat@nuim.ie

Venue: **Brookfield Health Science Building, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland.**

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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