

Directly Elected Mayor for Dublin

by Dr. Philip Byrne, IPA

The purpose of this article is to examine a number of options for a directly elected mayor (for the Dublin Metropolitan area) and these options were considered by the steering committee of the colloquium for their meeting held on the 29th of August, 2013. This article, will build on the presentation made by Dr Philip Byrne, IPA to the colloquium (forum) in July, 2013 and will firstly examine some international directly elected mayor (DEM) models that are currently in place. Having examined the latter, this article will propose a number of options that could be adapted to a Dublin directly elected mayor model.

Putting People First, Action Programme of Effective Local Government

Putting People First, Action Programme of Effective Local Government, paragraph 7.3.8, outlined that, "it is intended to convene a special forum or colloquium of the elected members of the four authorities to consider the options for the introduction of a directly elected Mayor for a Dublin metropolitan area, which will be put for decision through a plebiscite in 2014. This would provide for suitable democratic debate and consultation on all dimensions of the issue. Among other things, it would allow for due democratic consideration of the powers, structures and functions of an office of mayor and the changes required in the powers, structures and functions of local authorities and other relevant bodies in this context. Proposals for a directly elected mayor for the Dublin area would, as is the case in the local government system generally, be subject to the need to maximise efficiency in local government arrangements, to avoid cost increases and to achieve savings where possible".

Furthermore, *Putting People First*, Action Programme of Effective Local Government, paragraph 11.3.10, noted that 'taking account of these four considerations, the Government has decided to take the following approach to address the future of local governance in the Dublin area:

(a) Having regard to the importance of obtaining the views of the electorate in the Dublin area on this matter, the Government proposes to hold a plebiscite in 2014 on the question of whether a directly elected Mayor should be introduced.

(b) In the interim period, work will be undertaken, involving relevant consultation on the options that will be put for decision in a plebiscite.

(c) Consideration of relevant Mayoral options will be developed through the establishment of a colloquium of the elected representatives of the four Dublin authorities. This forum will allow shape to be put on the range of considerations relevant to developing a fully workable approach and one which is likely to gain support of the relevant electorate.

(d) It is also envisaged that the proposed colloquium would be convened by the Lord Mayor.

(e) Irrespective of the decision in relation to the specific issue of an office of Directly Elected Mayor, it is envisaged that proposals will be developed for appropriate metropolitan governance arrangements in Dublin, and consideration will also be given to decision-making to be exercised by the elected members below the plenary Council level, similar to decision making that will take place at the municipal district level in other counties.

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Subsequently, Minister Hogan's letter to the Lord Mayor on the 25th April, 2013 outlined the following criteria, the colloquium should consider:

- A directly elected Mayor (DEM) is proposed under the revised local government arrangements
- To examine experience abroad
- In terms of powers, functions, budgetary capacity – significant changes in existing local government arrangements are required
- Functions that would be transferred from the 4 local authorities to the office of DEM
- Strategic/co-ordinating role of DEM across the region/metropolitan area
- Functions currently being done by central government or national agencies that could be transferred to DEM office
- Relationship with the proposed 3 new regional assemblies
- Powers of the DEM office and an elected executive (e.g. Cabinet) vis-à-vis the powers of the elected members in the local authorities and the latter powers being diminished
- Possibility of the Office of the DEM being an additional layer of governance on top of the current local government system
- Allocation of resources including staffing, budgetary resources
- Governance, oversight and accountability arrangements of the office of DEM
- The extent of public support for the creation of office of DEM will be of vital consideration.
- The proposals are to be put before the electorate in the functional areas of the 4 local authorities, in the form of a single plebiscite alongside the 2014 local elections

Looking at the requirements for the establishment of an office of Directly Elected Mayor (DEM):

- A Directly Elected Mayor must have substantial functions and related

budgetary powers, which can only come from either central or local government.

- local government's range of functions is currently relatively narrow and it has proved difficult to date to achieve a range of functions for devolution from central to local
- The London Directly Elected Mayor, for example, has a large budget and substantial powers in areas such as police, economic development, major planning applications, transport, health, fire, and waste strategy.
- it is essential that the Directly Elected Mayor functions do not duplicate those of local authorities, which was, for example, considered to be a particular problem with the former Greater London Council, especially in terms of friction with the local boroughs
- A key rationale for an office of Directly Elected Mayor would be to exercise a strategic coordinating role.
- Accordingly, a Directly Elected Mayor must have a strategic remit across a regional or metropolitan area.
- There would be limited benefit in having a directly elected mayor for an individual local authority.
- Experience of Directly Elected Mayors abroad, including London, suggests that a Directly Elected Mayor should be accompanied by an elected assembly
- The elected assembly would have a scrutiny and accountability role in relation to the policies and programme of the Mayor with a view to ensuring adequate "checks and balances" relative to the degree of power concentrated in one individual

During 2013, the colloquium considered the options in conjunction with their own Councils and agreed a public consultation process for their own Council. A submission on behalf of each Council was completed by 23rd

August, 2013. The proposals are to be put before the electorate in the functional areas of the 4 local authorities, in the form of a single plebiscite alongside the 2014 local elections

This section looks at some international directly elected mayor (DEM) models that are currently in place and proposes a number of options that could adapted to a Dublin directly elected mayor model.

International Examples of Directly Elected Mayors

German Model

Germany is a federal Parliamentary democracy, made up of 16 federal states. Each state elects a Regional Parliament, for a four year term and this in turn appoints an administration headed by a minister-president. The states are responsible for areas such as culture, education, environment and policing, with a number of shared responsibilities with the federal government over legal and penal issues.

In all, but, one of the sixteen states, the council system exists whereby each local government, in the form of the municipal council, is generally elected on a five year term, though this can vary between four and six years. Each council is headed by a **directly elected mayor**, known as the *Bürgermeister* - or *Oberbürgermeister* in larger cities - who acts as head of both the council and the administration. This mandate can vary from four to nine years. Common responsibilities of the mayor include strong executive powers in relation to planning, water management, social welfare and the building and maintenance of schools. Some councils also engage in cultural, economic development and energy-related activities. Most of the councils have a cabinet system that is chosen by the mayor where the members of the cabinet have executive powers in the areas of

planning, water management, and such like.

Above the local tier and beneath the state, a tier of 300 units of local administration, known as districts, exist. These are overseen by a district council, with a mandate varying between one and four years. Aside from the legislative function of its council, the administration is headed by a district president, who is either appointed by the council or directly elected for a five to eight year term. This tier engages in the construction and maintenance of roads, some aspects of social welfare and waste management, though some are also able to engage in tourism promotion, libraries and higher education. Cities represent the lowest level within the three administrative levels (federal, state, city) in Germany. The Federation and the state put certain tasks to the municipalities – they are also supposed to allocate the corresponding funding with it which, in reality, is not always the case. Within the framework of self-administration, the cities organise and administrate their own voluntary activities which they also have to pay for from the cities own budgets.

UK Model

- There are currently 326 councils in England and, in all, but, 16 of these they are led by a Council Leader elected by their fellow councillors. Since 2002 a small number, as well as Greater London, have been led by mayors elected directly by local voters. Most of the elected mayors in England have responsibility for all local services, with two district council mayors responsible for only environment, planning and housing. All 16 elected mayors (Bedford, Bristol, Doncaster, Hackney, Leicester, Lewisham, Liverpool, London, Mansfield, Middlesborough, Newham, North Tyneside, Salford, Torbay, Tower Hamlets and Watford) are elected on

four year terms by the instant run-off Supplementary Vote. There are no elected mayors in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

The **London Directly Elected Mayor**, for example, has a large budget and substantial powers in areas such as police, economic development, major planning applications, transport, health, fire, and waste strategy. The first directly elected mayor in the UK was introduced in Greater London in 2000 as part of the statutory provisions of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. It is noteworthy that in a number of referenda held in the UK in May 2012 proposals for the introduction of an office of Directly Elected Mayor were rejected in the vast majority of cases and the voter turnout was generally very low. The **Greater London Authority (GLA)** is the top-tier administrative body for Greater London, England. It consists of a directly elected executive Mayor of London, currently Boris Johnson, and an elected 25-member London Assembly with scrutiny powers. The Mayor of London has a four-year term of office and Boris Johnson is on his second 4 year term. The GLA is a strategic regional authority, with powers over transport, policing, economic development, and fire and emergency planning.

There are currently 7 Deputy Mayors in the GLA and the Deputy Mayors are members of the London Assembly and are appointed by the Mayor of London. Boris Johnston has given his deputy mayors responsibility for transport, policing etc. The Greater London Authority is mostly funded by a direct government grant and it is also a precepting authority, with some money collected with local Council Tax.

The authority was established to replace a range of joint boards and quangos and provided an elected upper tier of local

government in London for the first time since the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986.

Three functional bodies: the Transport for London Authority, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority are responsible for delivery of services in these areas. The planning policies of the Mayor of London are detailed in a statutory London Plan that is regularly updated and published.

Elsewhere in the UK, there is a cabinet system in operation where the directly elected mayor has the power to appoint up to nine councillors as members of a cabinet and to delegate powers, either to them as individuals, or to the Mayor and Cabinet committee, or to subcommittees of the Mayor and Cabinet committee. The Mayor retains overall responsibility in this model.

US Model

More than eighty per cent of American citizens now live in large cities, suburbs of cities, or towns. People's needs – from police to sanitation, education to fire protection, housing and public transportation – are seen to, mostly directly, by city governments. There are, broadly speaking, three forms of it: the mayor-council form, the commission form and the city or council-manager form. Almost all large US cities have strong mayor systems.

Mayors, and the city council, are directly elected. The length of a term and the number of term limits are in the city charter. In the mayor-council form, which is the oldest of the three, there is (not surprisingly) a mayor and a council consisting of a number of members, sometimes called aldermen. The structure is patterned on that of the state and federal governments. While the mayor is elected at large, the aldermen are sometimes elected, or in other cases selected, from wards or

districts. The mayor is head of the executive branch, presiding over council meetings, appointing chiefs of departments, perhaps with the council's approval, and is often the budgetary officer of the city. He/she can veto ordinances passed by the legislative branch, the council.

Two forms of mayor-council rule – the strong-mayor and the weak-mayor – have evolved. The 'strong mayor' can appoint and remove heads of city departments. Few officials, in that scenario, are elected. He is the preparer of the budget and has power of veto. Throughout the last couple of decades, the strong mayor-council form of city government was most popular in cities where the form of government has been decided by the state and where the citizens of the city have and exercise the right, under state law, to decide their form of municipal government.

Where the mayor is a significant policy-maker, an administrator may be given responsibility for daily operations. The legislature, in general, adopts the budget and general policy positions, passes resolutions with legislation, and audits the government's performance.

The mayor in the other kind of mayor-council city government, the 'weak' mayor, has more limited powers of appointment, removal and veto, and the elected officials and boards are more numerous. The council's more extensive legal powers preclude his being a chief executive in any truly meaningful sense and, in this case, has a much more representational role.

The commission form of city government in the United States combines, in one group of usually at least three, and often five or seven officials, the executive and legislative dimensions. It is also, sometimes, called the Galveston Plan, after the town in Texas where it originated in 1901 (and

which has since abandoned it). All members are elected, and each commissioner is responsible for at least one city department. One of them is the chairperson and may be called the mayor, but he or she has no extra powers. Historically the commission form is regarded as an important manifestation of the impulse in the direction of efficiency through employment of experts, but others have seen that tendency in a negative light – as a movement depriving those without any particular 'expertise' – the working class, in other words – of their influence.

It has also been seen as a stage in the development of the city manager or council-manager form of municipal government. Commissions whose members all have different interests but equal powers have a predictable predisposition to unresolved disagreement. Bringing in a business manager was, and has increasingly been seen as the solution. The city manager has most executive powers, including those pertaining to law enforcement and service provision. He carries out the decisions of the elected council, who decide on ordinances and policy, and he, again, produces the city budget. He is thus not elected, but hired, and has no term of office, continuing in his or her role while it meets with the requirements of the council.

The Mayor of the City of New York (Michael Bloomberg) is head of the executive branch of New York City's government. His office administers all city services, public property, police and fire protection, most public agencies, and enforces all city and state laws within New York City. The mayor appoints a large number of officials, including commissioners who head city departments, and his or her deputy mayors. According to current law, the mayor is limited to three consecutive

four-year terms in office. The Mayor of New York City may appoint several deputy mayors to assist him and to oversee major offices within the executive branch of the city government. The powers and duties, and even the number of deputy mayors, are not defined by the City Charter. The budget overseen by the mayor's office is the largest municipal budget in the United States at \$50 billion a year.

The office of the New York Mayor has substantial powers and employs approximately 250,000 people, spends about \$21 billion to educate more than 1.1 million students, levies \$27 billion in taxes, and receives \$14 billion from the state and federal governments.

Possible Options for a Directly Elected Mayor for the Dublin Metropolitan area.

Option 1: Directly Elected Executive Mayor

This proposed option would be similar to the New York or London model where the directly elected mayor would be given strong executive powers in strategically important areas for the Dublin metropolitan area, such as : transport, traffic management, planning, and such like. The benefits of a strong executive mayor, for a city such as Dublin, with its strategic importance in Ireland (e.g. 40% of GDP comes from the Dublin Metropolitan area; 28% of the Population; 51% of Income Tax; 62% of VAT and 59% of Corporate Tax) is compelling. A strong executive mayor could ensure that services are delivered much more effectively, efficiently and economically. For example, there are currently more than 40 quangos and committees dealing with Dublin's transport and traffic, such as: the National Transport

Office (NTA); Civil Service Departments; CIE (and its subsidiaries); Office of Public Works; Area Committees of the City & County Councils; Strategic Policy Committees of the City & County Councils; Iarnrod Eireann, etc., which makes decision-making and service-delivery difficult.

It is also proposed that there would only be one mayor for Dublin and that the mayors of the 4 Dublin authorities would take on a chairpersons' role in relation to their respective authorities. It could be argued that it would become too confusing for the public to have more than 1 mayor for Dublin. Because of the strategic importance of a strong executive mayor it is also proposed that the mayor would be given substantial representational powers as is the case with the Mayors of London and New York. To this regard, the representational powers and duties of the Lord Mayor of Dublin City and the Mayors of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, South Dublin and Fingal county councils could transfer to the directly elected mayor.

It is also proposed that an assembly system be set up to act as a scrutiny mechanism in relation to the powers and duties of the Dublin DEM. However, in order to avoid cost (as stated in the *Putting People First* Document), the assembly would not be a specifically elected assembly (unlike the UK or New York models) but members could be selected from, for example, the Dublin Regional Authority, which is currently made up of councillors from Dublin City and the 3 Dublin County Councils.

Option 2: Directly Elected Mayor/cabinet (collaborative) model

This model would be similar to most of the local authorities with DEMs, in Britain, Germany & the US, where the local authorities remain administered by a permanent staff of officers led by

a chief executive. This model would represent a more collaborative type of model where the DEM selects his cabinet and assigns them with executive powers. Similar to the UK model (other than London), the Dublin directly elected mayor could select up to nine members (and again perhaps the members could be selected from the Dublin Regional Authority) to form his/her cabinet and assign the members executive powers, particularly in strategically important areas, such as, planning, traffic, transport, etc.

Again similar to Option 1 above, the 4 Dublin mayors would act as chairpersons of their respective authorities and all their representational powers would be transferred to the Dublin directly elected mayor.

Option 3: Representational Directly Elected Mayor

The third option proposed is to have a representational directly elected mayor who would act as a full time ambassador for the City. In this model, the directly elected mayor could subsume all the representational/ceremonial roles of the Lord Mayor and other 3 mayors and act as a super representational mayor for the metropolitan area. This would be similar to some of the US directly elected mayors. Again in this option there would only be one DEM and 4 chairpersons, but, in this case, the directly elected mayor would have no executive powers which would be very similar to the structures that are currently in place in Dublin.

Conclusion

This brief article has examined a number of options for a directly elected mayor for Dublin. When examined from an international context, it could be strongly argued that successful international directly elected mayor models have dealt very

effectively with the fragmentation (where there may be ambiguity in relation to "Who does what?" and "Who is responsible for what?" at public service level) and coordination of public service delivery. Successful international models also suggest the a directly elected mayor is a visible manifestation of the area at local level and at national level and is more directly accountable to the public which in turn will enable the directly elected mayor office to tackle the 'silo' mentality within the local authority, and between the local authority and other agencies.

In relation to the 3 options, developed above, and indeed there may be other options that the steering committee might explore, it would be logical to have the office of the directly elected mayor reside in the Mansion House in Dublin, particularly, from an international historical perspective.



Local Government Bill, 2013 – ‘radical reform of local government’

In mid-October, Mr Phil Hogan, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, announced the publication of the Local Government Bill 2013 to fundamentally reform the local government system in Ireland. Minister Hogan stressed that “this is the first time in over 100 years that we have attempted such a radical reform, but, it is necessary to bring our local government system up to date and to provide the kind of service our citizens deserve.”

The Local Government Bill 2013 will provide for the necessary changes that were approved by Government in October 2012, following the publication of the *Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First*. The Bill provides for the necessary reforms to local authority functions, structures, funding, performance and governance to achieve the overall vision of a local government system that is the main vehicle for public service delivery at local level, leads economic, social and community development and represents citizens and communities effectively and accountably.

Speaking at the launch of the Bill, the Minister stated that “the whole point of local government reform is to ensure that local Councils deliver better services to their citizens.” The Bill provides that in future, no separate structures will be established outside of local government for the delivery of public services, unless clearly necessitated.

The Minister underlined that “for too long, local government has been by-passed by quangos. I want Councils to do

more for citizens and local communities. But I accept that first local government must regain public trust, this will take time, but, the reforms will facilitate by helping to renew the relationship between the citizen and their local Council. This is critical and will be achieved in two main ways:

- Firstly, citizens will have better engagement with their local Councillors on how and where money is spent through the Local Property Tax (LPT). And this engagement will be strengthened even further from 2015 onwards when Councillors will be given the power to vary the LPT.
- Secondly, citizens will be better able to judge how well their Council is doing at providing local services, how well they are performing relative to others Councils, and citizens will also be asked how satisfied they are with the services they get. It is only through this comprehensive form of measurement that we will be able to demonstrate that we have real reforms that citizens can see and benefit from.”

The main provisions of the Bill outline the structural reform of local government for greater efficiency, improvements to local government funding, accountability and governance, as well as, providing for local government taking the lead in economic and community development.

The major structural reforms outlined in the Bill will be the most radical and visible.

- The number of local authorities will reduce from 114 to 31 and the number

of elected members will fall from 1,627 to 949.

- There will also be a new integrated system of municipal districts throughout each county, to replace the 80 town councils. The new municipal districts will be fully representative of the population as distinct from the town councils which had limited functional, territorial and operational scope;
- The creation of new unified local authorities in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford as successors to the existing city and county councils;
- New regional assemblies, with a more focussed role in spatial and economic planning, will be established to replace the current eight regional authorities and two assemblies; and
- A single set of councillors for district and county levels, replacing the existing dual mandate for many Councillors. Councillors will also have wider functions at district level to ensure that the needs of their communities are fully represented and met. Local Councils will be given a greater say in local enterprise and economic development and in local and community development activities. The reforms provide for the alignment of the local community development sector with local government through the establishment of Local Community Development Committees, which will be mandated to prepare Local Community Plans to bring strategic coordination to the millions of euro spent each year on local and community development initiatives.
- There will also be a new Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic

Development in each Council to prepare local action plans to guide and foster economic activity and stimulate job creation within the area; and provide the planning, oversight and accountability of the new Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), which will replace the County Enterprise Boards.

The Bill also provides for a range of measures to support local democracy, to strengthen governance and ensure that there is greater accountability for the delivery of local services. In particular, the Bill provides for a rebalancing of responsibilities between the elected members and the Council executive, to further strengthen the decision-making powers of Councillors for the benefit of the communities and citizens they represent.

Specific provisions in the Bill are as follows:

- The establishment of a new post of chief executive to replace the former city and county managers. The role of the chief executive will be more clearly defined to advise and support the elected Councillors in their policy making role and there will be enhanced management reporting arrangements to the Council. The Bill also provides for greater involvement by the Council in guiding the appointment of the chief executive;
- A standardised commercial rate across each county to be introduced over a period of 10 years. Also, the level of vacancy refund of rates will be standardised at a rate of 50% nationally in line with current practices in Dublin, Cork and Limerick cities;
- Greater involvement in and oversight of local authority budgets by members. In particular, municipal district members will have delegated powers to decide programmes of works to be carried out within their district;



*Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan, T.D.
Photo by Niall Carson (PA Wire)*

- A new National Oversight and Audit Commission for Local Government (NOAC) will be established to provide independent scrutiny of local government performance and in providing value for money for service delivery. NOAC reports will be made public and the Chief Executive will prepare an implementation plan to address any issues raised by the NOAC.
- The Bill also provides for a plebiscite in 2014 to allow the people of Dublin to decide for themselves if an office of a directly elected mayor should be established for the greater Dublin area.

The Minister emphasised that the local government reforms are an essential step forward in the Government's wider reform programme and his intention to see the Bill enacted by the end of the year

to ensure the necessary provisions are in place well before the local elections in 2014. "This Government was elected with a strong mandate for reform. We have already shown our bona fides in delivering significant reforms to the financial sector, major reforms of the Oireachtas, measures to increase the number of women in politics and to make political funding more transparent. This legislation is just one in a series of measures to deliver a better, more efficient and relevant local government system. We are also working to ensure the financial stability of local authorities with the local property tax so that your taxes work for your own communities.

Source: *Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentReform/News/MainBody,34299,en.htm>*

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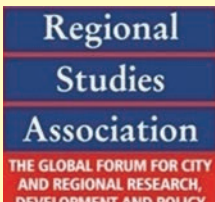


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REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION IRISH BRANCH

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government launched his reform proposals to generally underwhelming degrees of debate on the 12th October 2012 and a year later the Oireachtas is considering these reforms with the Local Government Bill 2013. Outside the Department and the Oireachtas, the debate receives very little attention and input from the rest of us.

The Regional Studies Association – Irish Branch aims to stimulate a more public debate. The editors of the PoliticalReform.ie blog have offered to host this debate.

On Thursday, November 28th, 2013, we kicked-off with a post, setting the scene for the debate and identifying potential issues.

<http://politicalreform.ie/2013/11/28/debating-local-government-reform/>

Please check in regularly over the next couple of weeks. We encourage comments and debate. Over the next two weeks RSA Committee Members and other interested parties will offer opinion pieces, with the view of driving debate on a range of topics related to the Local Government Bill 2013.

If you are interested, you can send opinion pieces to chris.vanegeraat@nuim.ie

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Energy Performance Contracting: Alternative Finance, Reduced Risk

By Sharon Waters, PR & Communications Assistant, Codema



Codema, Dublin's energy agency, is working with local authorities to introduce Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) schemes which will achieve substantial energy savings at a reduced risk to the local authorities. Codema advises Dublin local authorities on energy-related issues, including assistance with reducing energy consumption, implementing energy efficiency measures and promoting sustainable energy.

Speaking at an Information Seminar on EPC, organised by Codema, Project Leader, Joe Hayden, explained: "In simple terms, EPC adds energy performance criteria to the standard contract for energy services which has a significant impact on financing and risk. EPC can be best summed up as offering an alternative source of finance for efficient energy services at a reduced performance to the user."

The Codema EPC Information Seminar in the Dublin Docklands on 7 November 2013 brought together local authority officials, Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and the international partners from the European Energy Services Initiative 2020 project. The seminar gave local authorities an opportunity to get to grips with the practical implications of EPC, drawing on the experiences of other European cities, and to learn about the supports available for introducing EPC in Ireland.



Mr. Owen Keegan, Dublin City Manager speaking at the Codema Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) seminar in November, 2013.

The seminar was opened by Dublin City Manager, Owen Keegan, and included presentations from Sabine Pillar, Berliner Energieagentur GmbH (BEA), Stjohn O'Connor from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and Joe Hayden, Executive Engineer with Codema. In his opening remarks, the Dublin City Manager summarised the key questions for local authorities considering the use of EPCs:

1. How can energy saving projects be

implemented without sacrificing value for money?

2. Will the cost of transferring risk prove unfeasible?
3. Do local authorities such as Dublin City Council (DCC), have the skills and expertise to manage contracts such as EPCs?
4. How important is scale in bringing about projects?
5. Is the market for providing EPCs sufficiently developed to provide real value for money?

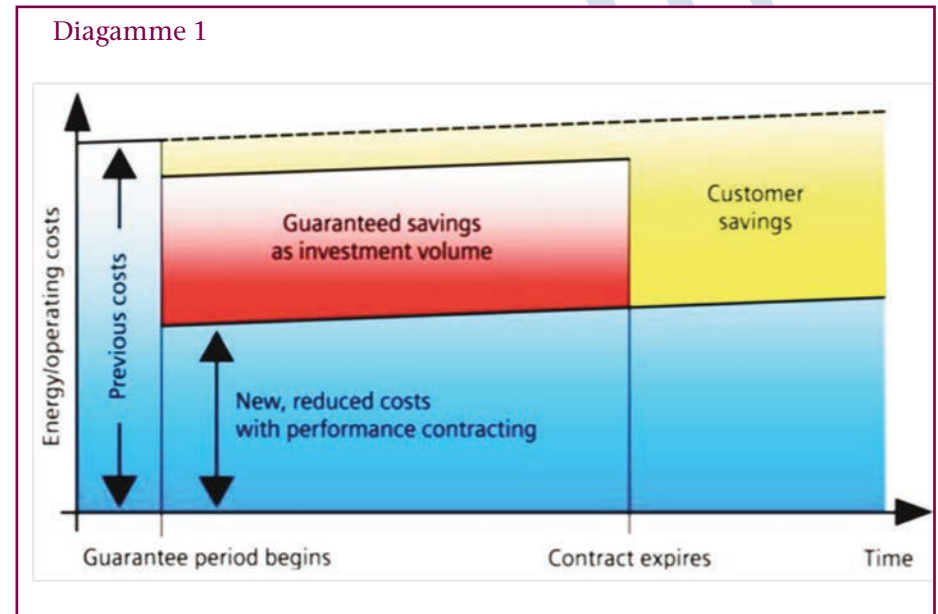
What is an EPC?

EPC works by using the principle of repaying the energy efficiency investments directly from the saved energy costs. Over the term of the contract, the user retains the balance of the savings of the reduced energy costs after the performance related contribution has been made to the ESCO. Once the contract is complete, the user benefits from the entire savings. The user is further advantaged by shifting the technical and economic risks to the ESCO. In essence, in an EPC, the risk is transferred to the ESCO in return for a share of the savings made from the reduction in energy costs.

EPC offers an alternative method of financing a project at a reduced risk. In a traditional contract, the building owner provides financing, develops the project specification and goes into the market to locate the best value service provider. In this model the building owner assumes all of the risk, including the risk that the original specification was not fit for purpose. In an EPC, some or all of these risks are transferred to the energy services company in return for a share of the energy savings. In this case, instead of going to the market with a project specification, the building owner goes out to tender for energy savings and leaves the development of the specification and the performance risk to the ESCOs, which are the expert in the area.

(see *Diagamme 1*)

Typically EPC projects have an energy baseline of €500,000. Where this is not available in a single structure buildings can be pooled. During the Information Seminar, the delegates had an opportunity to address some of the practical implications of pooling and to benefit from the experiences of the EESI 2020 partners. A number of options for pooling were suggested, including: combining buildings with high-saving potential with those where only small



savings can be made, or combining buildings with a diverse energy profile or combining buildings with the same or similar functions. Location is not always a determining factor but it can be helpful to look at a district.

Localised energy schemes where the local authority buildings are pooled with local private properties can also be used to good effect.

The seminar stressed the need for a good working relationship between the client and ESCO. Transparency of information, trust and regular dialogue are essential ingredients in successful EPC. In this regard, energy agencies, such as the partners to EESI 2020, have a valuable role to play in facilitating EPC and in providing the expertise to support the management of EPC projects.

EESI 2020

The Energy Services Directive (2012/27/EU) advocates the use of energy services such as Energy Performance Contracting for the refurbishment of buildings and for the upgrade of public infrastructures. The European Energy

Service Initiative towards the EU 2020 energy saving targets, or EESI 2020, aims at fostering the use of EPC in major cities and metropolitan regions across Europe. Codema is the Irish partner and joins Berlin Energy Agency, Germany; SEVEN – the Energy Efficiency Centre, Czech Republic; Graz Energy Agency, Austria; Norwegian Energy Efficiency Inc, Norway; European Labour Institute, Bulgaria; Factor 4, Belgium; Catalan Energy Institute, Spain; and North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency, Croatia. Codema have a budget of €156,000 for the project, 75% of which is EU funding. EESI 2020 is funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme of the EU; further information is available at www.eesi2020.eu.

Delegates at the Information Seminar heard from Sabine Piller from BEA the coordinator of EESI 2020, who explained that there are non-technological barriers hindering the EPC market. These include lack of capacities; lack of information; lack of motivation; and high investment costs.

The EESI 2020 project is working to overcome these by supporting nine cities to integrate long-lasting EPC schemes in

to their energy plans. The measures being taken include: improving market transparency through an EPC database, advancing quality criteria and evaluations of EPC projects; producing guidelines for facilitators, developing practical political recommendations; fostering the market; promoting EPC and capacity building. The project anticipates the implementation of a minimum of 20 EPC projects, representing an investment of approximately €15 million and resulting in primary energy savings of 7,000 toe/year and 15,000 tCO₂e/year.

Codema is being trained as a facilitator by the senior EESI 2020 experts. As a facilitator, Codema will identify the most relevant EPC project opportunities in Dublin's public buildings, using its long term experience of working with the Dublin local authorities. Once potential projects have been identified, Codema will offer support with project development, tendering procedures and

long-lasting implementation. EESI 2020 is also generating marketing materials which Codema will customise for the Irish market to present a strong case for EPC to potential clients.

EPC in Ireland

To help establish the EPC market in Ireland, SEAI and DCENR have developed the National Energy Services Framework to bring suppliers and buyers together under an agreed set of protocols. The framework is intended to overcome barriers to EPCs by acting as a 'rules of the road' for suppliers and buyers which will deliver standard reference material on procurement, model contracts and technical support. The framework is underpinned by the creation of an Energy Efficiency Fund.

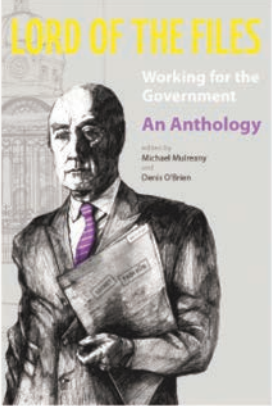
Through this framework SEAI are providing best practice guidance on engaging the services of ESCOs and have

also developed a handbook on EPC and Energy Performance Related Payments (EPRP) which outlines a five-stage development process for developing and procuring projects for the public and private sectors. In order to "road test" this process 22 exemplar projects have been selected, 11 from the public sector and 11 from the private sector. Codema are facilitating one of the public sector exemplars involving three of the Dublin City Council's largest leisure centres at Ballymun, Fingal and the Markievicz Leisure Centre in Townsend St.

In its role as facilitator, Codema provided an initial financial and technical analysis to allow an estimation of potential energy savings. These became the bases for the decision to investigate project feasibility in more detail and to join the energy framework. Having determined through a preliminary energy audit with SEAI that EPC was a viable option for the project, Codema's role is to assist in establishing and managing the project team, to facilitate the collection of baseline data and the drafting of tender documents. Throughout the project, Codema will facilitate communication between all of the stakeholders.

Joe Hayden says: "Ireland has made considerable progress toward EPC type energy services in recent years, in particular with the introduction of the National Energy Services Framework. Borrowing from the experience and facilitation expertise of the EESI 2020 project partners, Codema aims to be at the forefront of developing EPC in an Irish context and moving from pilot projects to mainstream application.

"We hope that our work in educating and capacity-building will give local authorities the confidence to embark on EPC schemes."





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News

Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina municipalities visit Ireland to learn about greater engagement of Local Government with Community and Voluntary sector

In November, 2013, the Institute of Public Administration organised, on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a study tour for 15 representatives of municipalities of Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the Reinforcement of Local Democracy Project (LOPD) funded by the European Union.

The LOPD project seeks to provide support to Bosnian municipalities in improving their working relationships with civil society organisations (CSOs); it particularly aims at strengthening the capacity of local Government stakeholders in better engaging in this relationship and in encouraging CSOs to professionalise their activities by adopting a longer-term planning perspective, becoming more responsive to local needs and less dependent on current donor priorities. In this regard, various study visits to EU countries were earmarked by the UNDP, with the view to provide representatives of municipalities an opportunity to have an insight into good EU practices regarding the cooperation between local authorities and civil society sector. After preliminary discussions, it was suggested that Ireland could provide a valuable example of a successful relationship between the Community/Voluntary sector and local authorities and the IPA was tasked to map out a two-day visit along this theme.

A central objective of the visit was to offer the Bosnian delegation a direct

insight into the forms of cooperation established between the civil society sector and the local authorities in Ireland, with a particular focus on the manner in which Irish CSOs input into local policies and contribute to an annual programme of work (strategic planning linkages). In keeping with themes resonant of the Bosnian reality and, in particular, the Bosnian Federation's challenge to re-build a peaceful and trustworthy inter-ethnic society, the participants were exposed to innovative schemes of support to communities and local agencies in achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality.

Initially, IPA specialists gave participants a comprehensive overview of the key structures and services provided by Irish Local Authorities and the type of interaction established between Irish Local Authorities and Civil Society organisations through the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) and the County Development Boards (CDBs); the group was also introduced to the forthcoming reform agenda for Irish local government and the implications it may have for the Community sector as a whole. Furthermore, a representative of Fingal City Council was able to bring her daily experience to bear and shared valuable lessons with the participants on the nature and challenges of the relationship between the City Council and the Volunteer sector on a wide range of projects.

The piece de resistance was undoubtedly the site visit to a series of projects organised with the assistance of POBAL¹ in the Ballymun/ Whitehall area. Bosnian participants were able to witness first-hand the reality of a large social regeneration project and had a series of presentation and peer-to-peer discussions and exchanges with community leaders and projects managers in fields as varied as health and wellbeing, young people education

and labour market induction. Participants expressed real appreciation for these visits and the interactive approaches employed which, centred on real-life experiences, optimised the learning and facilitated proper feed back to their own constituencies.

On the second day, participants were presented with key aspects of the Financial Management of EU funds by local authorities including spot checks, the principles and practice of systems and transaction audits, EU eligibility rules as well as the management of projects/contracts and EU requirements for the closure of programmes and projects

This type of project and study visit is highly reflective of the work the IPA is conducting for overseas clients over the last two decades, especially in supporting new and aspiring EU countries in preparing and optimising their public sector apparatus service to the challenges of EU integration.

'a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status that manages various funding programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU and which mission is to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through integrated social and economic development within communities.'

www.pobal.ie/Pages/Home.aspx

Local Government Bill Must Not Increase Cost of Business

On Tuesday, December 3rd, 2013, Chambers Ireland called on Government to ensure that the cost of doing business does not rise as a result of the Local Government Bill 2013. The call comes in advance of a meeting of the select Sub-committee on the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Chambers Ireland Deputy Chief Executive, Seán Murphy, stated that, “The Local Government Bill provides a welcome opportunity for much needed reform of Local Government. Reforms that are focused on significantly reducing back office costs and delivering front line services for all consumers are welcome. The introduction of Municipal districts is a chance to address the excessive costs placed on many small businesses; however, aspects of the Bill give rise to worries that some costs may actually increase for business as a result.”

Mr. Murphy underlined “Two key concerns for businesses under this Bill are commercial rates and increased charges such as parking in town centres. Where Town Councils are to be integrated into County Councils with higher commercial rates, the schedule for introducing a common rate band must be mandated to extend to ten years rather than a minimum of three years as is currently planned.”

Furthermore, Mr. Murphy stressed that “Of further worry to businesses in town centres is the planned funding model for the new Municipal Districts envisaged in the Bill. Chambers have major concerns that this model will incentivise the increasing of car parking charges in town centres. Set incorrectly, these charges act as a barrier to trade. New municipalities will effectively have their hands tied by provisions that penalize them from cutting parking fees. These provisions must be modified to enable Local Government to encourage consumers to shop in their local town centre rather than opting for out of town shopping venues with free parking facilities.” Overall, Mr. Murphy concluded that “the reform of Local Government is a positive step forward but it must not be at the expense of business or the local economy,”

For further information: contact Amy

Woods, Chambers Ireland on 01 400 4319, 086 6081605 or email amy.woods@chambers.ie

Dublin City Council and Ennis Town Council Scoop Top Awards at the Tenth Annual Excellence in Local Government Awards

On Wednesday, November 13th, 2013, Dublin City Council was named City Council of the year at the 10th Annual Excellence in Local Government Awards. Ennis Town Council was named Town/Borough Council of the year at the event held in association with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Ian Talbot, Chambers Ireland Chief Executive stated that, “While next year’s elections herald a new era for Local Government in Ireland, we have no doubt that the excellent work carried out by Local Authorities will continue to strengthen and grow during these times of change. We are honoured every year to host these awards and recognise best practice across the country. I’d like to give my congratulations to not only the winners on the night but to all those who made the shortlist.”

In presenting the awards, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government commented that “Every year these awards showcase just how imaginative and innovative Local Authorities can be. Whether it’s organising a festival, using new technology or dealing with a water supply issue, the quality of the projects and dedication of the people involved is always impressive. It is a pleasure for my Department to partner with Chambers Ireland in recognising these achievements.”

Individual awards were sponsored by: AIB; An Post; CBRE; EirGrid; ESB

Networks; GloHealth; Optic Nerve; The Gathering Ireland 2013; Shell E&P Ireland and Zurich. Winners were presented with a specially commissioned trophy designed by Tipperary Crystal.

Awards presented on the night:

City Council of the Year

- *Dublin City Council*

Town/Borough Council of the Year

- *Ennis Town Council*

Sustaining the Arts sponsored by Tipperary Crystal

- *Cavan Town Council – Trans-art Cavan 2012*

Supporting Active Communities sponsored by GloHealth

- *Kerry County Council – Building Community Resilience*

Festival of the Year sponsored by An Post

- *Cavan Town Council – Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*

Best Library Service sponsored by Optic Nerve

- *Wexford County Council – Discover, Imagine, Grow!*

Parks & Recreation sponsored by Zurich

- *Dublin City Council – Fairview Park Improvement Project*

Strategic Water Initiative sponsored by Tipperary Crystal

- *Limerick County Council – Kilmallock Water Supply*

Supporting Tourism sponsored by EirGrid

- *Enniscorthy Town Council – Rebellion @ The National 1798 Rebellion Centre*

Partnership with Business sponsored by AIB

- *Galway County Council – Made in Galway*

Joint Local Authority Initiative sponsored by ESB Networks

- *Cork City and County Councils – Cork Innovates*

Innovation in Technology sponsored by Shell E&P Ireland

- *Dublin City Council – Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS)*

Smarter Travel sponsored by Shell E&P Ireland

- *Cavan Town Council – Smarter Travel Scheme*

Sports Development sponsored by EirGrid

- *Carlow Local Authorities – McGrath Park Integrated Community Sports Facility*

Sustainable Environment sponsored by ESB Networks

- *Dublin City Council – Tolka Valley Greenway*

Outstanding Customer Service sponsored by Zurich

- *South Dublin County Council – Taking steps to be a literacy-friendly Local Authority*

Local Authority Economic Efficiencies sponsored by CBRE

- *Laois County Council – Road Recycling for the Restoration of Local and Regional Roads*

The Gathering Ireland 2013 – Community Gathering of the Year sponsored by The Gathering Ireland 2013

- *Clare County Council – Celebrate Scattery Island*

The Gathering Ireland 2013 – County Gathering of the Year sponsored by The Gathering Ireland 2013

- *New Ross Town Council – JFK50 – The Homecoming*

For further information contact Amy Woods, Chambers Ireland on 01 400 4319, 086 6081605 or email amy.woods@chambers.ie.

Fracking: local and regional authorities call for compulsory environmental impact assessments

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 and on Twitter: @EU_CoR*

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) has called for the EU to urgently introduce mandatory environmental impact assessments (EIA) for all shale gas and oil projects. In an opinion presented by Cllr Brian Meaney (IE/EA) and adopted by the CoR, the assembly warned that regulation was needed to mitigate against the potential environmental hazards of shale gas and oil exploration and ensure the protection of citizens' health.

As Europe continues to look to alternative forms of energy as part of its efforts to become more sustainable and

reduce import dependency. Fracking – the process of drilling or injecting fluid into the ground to extract shale gas or oil – has been considered by some companies in the EU, hoping to emulate the experiences in the US. The Committee of Regions warned, however, that in addition to the serious environmental and health harm that can be caused by this activity, alongside other carbon energy it is simply not sustainable in the long-term. Cllr Brian Meaney (IE/EA) said, "There are still too many questions related to the extraction of shale gas and oil which pose significant questions and challenges, especially for local authorities. The EU must put in place safeguards to protect citizens' health and reduce the impact on the environment by urgently regulating the industry. It must also not be forgotten that this is not a remedy to our energy needs in the future".

Tighten regulation and let local government decide

The CoR urgently calls for the EU to put in place tight regulation and control, with limits on exploration and exploitation until a legislative agreement has been reached. Mandatory EIAs must be introduced and carried out, helping reduce air and water contamination often associated with the drilling for shale gas and oil. The introduction of mandatory EIAs would also improve transparency forcing companies, for example, to declare chemical content used during the process. Given the potential hazards, the Committee also calls for local and regional authorities to be given the right to decide whether such activity takes place in their region, especially in sensitive areas or in cases where they feel this could impede their efforts to meet greenhouse gas targets.

Not the answer to Europe's energy Counteracting claims made by supporters of fracking, the CoR argues

that shale gas and oil exploitation "will not reverse the continuing trend of declining domestic production and rising import dependency". The Committee also questions the wider implications that fracking will have in terms of releasing more greenhouse gases, including methane, into the atmosphere contributing to further climate change. Furthermore, offering support to shale gas and oil could undermine the EU's efforts to move to a resource-efficient society and hamper international climate agreements such as the UN Development Goal which promotes environmental sustainability.

The CoR fully respects the right of Member States to choose among the various energy sources available to them. Careful consideration should only be given to using shale gas and oil as a short-term solution and the opinion stresses that "it cannot be a political goal itself...it should not be promoted as an alternative for Europe's green energy future". Brian Meaney, a councillor from Clare County in Ireland, reinforced this concern commenting, "Shale gas needs to be properly reviewed but we must also focus our efforts to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel. The IPCC published a report just last week shows that we can no longer put more carbon into our atmosphere. We should concentrate on investing into research and development in renewable energy, whilst also assessing the risks from shale gas extraction".

Further information:

- *Draft CoR opinion: Cllr Brian Meaney (IE/EA), Clare County Council and the Mid-West Regional Authority: Local and regional authorities perspective on Shale/Tight gas and oil and free plenary high resolution photos*

For more information, contact:
David French, tel: +32 2 282 2535,
david.french@cor.europa.eu

Cohesion package: a step in the right direction, but contradictions remain, the CEMR deems following the vote at the European Parliament

The European Parliament's adoption of a new legislative package on cohesion policy (2014-2020) marks a step in the right direction. CEMR welcomes this adoption as it will allow local and regional authorities to negotiate their investment priorities for the benefit of companies, associations, citizens and communities, within a stable legal framework. However, several provisions approved at the plenary session contradict the needs of local and regional authorities and the reality on the ground.

Local and regional authorities firmly opposed to even partial implementation of conditions for allocation of funds

The possibility of suspending a percentage of aid in the case of a macroeconomic imbalance or excessive State budgetary deficit opposes the very objectives of cohesion policy – reducing disparities between the levels of development of the regions. As pointed out several weeks ago, "local and regional authorities are not responsible at all at a macroeconomic level in their countries. CEMR rejects all macroeconomic conditionality in the new cohesion policy package as it will make the municipalities and regions hostages to decisions over which they have no control." We therefore regret the lack of consideration on the part of the European institutions in regards to the local authorities who have engaged in binding crisis exit policies.

Cohesion policy must be designed for...and by local and regional authorities

According to a study carried out by CEMR and its association members in

2013, only a third of Member States defined their financial priorities in partnership with local and regional authorities. The Secretary General of CEMR, Frédéric Vallier, remarks: "we worry about the fact that certain States do not fully involve local and regional authorities – and sometimes not at all – in the design of, implementation of, and follow-through of cohesion policy programmes. The success of cohesion policy depends in large part on the involvement of local and regional authorities, so we call on central governments to not ignore them."

Although there is now a common general regulation for all funds, a larger harmonisation of rules for the funds is necessary

With new instruments, the possibility of a combined use of several European funds – regional, social, rural, maritime, and cohesion – on the same territory is a factor in the successful development of our territories. Unfortunately, the administrative costs linked to the use of these instruments remain very heavy due to dissimilar rules (audit, rapports, follow-up plans) for the funds. As a result, up until now very few governments and management authorities choose to use them. That is why CEMR call on the Commission to have more coherent rules and to facilitate their use by local and regional authorities.

For further details on the CEMR's position on the new legislative package on cohesion policy (2014-2020) is available at: http://ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_response_cohesion_policy_package_en.pdf

For more information, contact: Georgina Mombo Rasero, Press Officer, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Square de Meeûs 1, B-1000 Brussels, tel. +32 2 500 05 34, e-mail : georgina.mombo@ccre-cemr.org

Dublin to host 2014 European Evaluation Society conference



The 11th European Evaluation Society (EES) Biennial Conference will take place in Dublin on 1-3 October 2014 with a pre-conference on 29-30 September 2014. The conference and pre-conference sessions will be held in the Dublin Convention Centre. Some initial details on the theme of the conference are available here: <http://www.europeanevaluation.org/images/file/files/ees-newsletter-2013-06-june.pdf>

Further information at Irish Evaluation Network website: www.ien.dcu.ie

University of Manchester's i-Government working papers

The University of Manchester's i-Government working papers: <http://bit.ly/iGovt> cover a variety of topics relating to use of ICTs by government. Each paper has a linked educators' guide: a set of synopsis and development questions that can be posed to readers, enabling the paper to be used for training and other educational purposes. The guides can be found at:

www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/idpm/research/publications/wp/igov/educ-igov/

Contact: Richard Heeks, Director, Centre for Development Informatics, University of Manchester, UK, www.cdi.manchester.ac.uk

Esb Networks Goes For Gold: Mark Rohan Launches New Esb Networks Customer Service Improvement Plan

Double Paralympic gold medallist and ESB Networks employee Mark Rohan joined ESB Networks Managing Director Jerry O'Sullivan at the National Ploughing Championships at the end of September, 2013 to launch the new ESB Networks Customer Service Improvement Plan. The Plan is based on feedback from customers, and outlines ten key areas that the company will focus on over the period to 2016 to improve customer service. Speaking at the launch at the end of September, 2013 Jerry O'Sullivan, Managing Director of ESB Networks said, "As a double gold medallist, Mark Rohan

embodies the commitment and drive that is inherent in ESB Networks. In recent years, we have invested heavily in upgrading and enhancing the Irish electricity network, to deliver a smarter, more efficient and reliable system that is suitable for the needs of today's economy. Over the same period, we increased customer satisfaction levels from 69 per cent to 84 per cent.

Mr. O'Sullivan underlined that "we intend to build on these achievements over the next three years to ensure that we continue to deliver outstanding service to our customers. Over the period of the new plan, ESB Networks will enhance its web and social media services, including its popular PowerCheck App launched last year, which provides real time information to customers in the event of a power cut. It will also continue to roll out smart



Double Paralympic gold medallist and ESB Networks employee Mark Rohan joined ESB Networks Managing Director Jerry O'Sullivan at the National Ploughing Championships to launch the new ESB Networks Customer Service Improvement Plan.

network technologies to increase the efficiency, reliability and functionality of the Irish electricity grid. All of our staff will be actively engaged in delivering our commitments to customers under the new plan. We will literally be going for gold.

ESB Networks owns Ireland's electricity transmission and distribution system, and provides services to all electricity customers, regardless of their electricity supplier. Over the past decade, the company has invested €6.5 billion in upgrading the Irish electricity network to support increased demand and facilitating the integration of over 1800MW of wind generation onto the system. This investment has significantly enhanced the quality of the network, reducing power cuts by 42 per cent. The new Customer Service Improvement Plan can be downloaded from the ESB Networks website at www.esbnetworks.ie

For further information contact: Bevin Cody, ESB Corporate Communications, Tel: 087 6188031.

Dún Laoghaire Harbour is set to go green thanks to a €140,000 renewable electricity supply deal

In a deal worth over €140 000, Energia will supply 1.1 gigawatt hours of renewable electricity to Dún Laoghaire Harbour's facilities, including the Ferry Terminal, Harbour Offices, street lighting, recreational facilities and of course the renowned East Pier and Lighthouse. Tim Ryan, Operations Manager with Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company commented, "Achieving a high level of environmental protection and promoting sustainable development is a key objective for Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company. Our decision to switch to Energia was based on their competitively-priced green energy. By moving to green energy, we



Pictured announcing the deal are Shane Canavan, Key Account Manager, Energia and Tim Ryan, Operations Manager with Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company.

can reduce the CO² emissions from Dun Laoghaire Harbour which is one of our objectives in realising the harbours potential as a major marine, leisure, cultural and tourism destination, as well as securing the long-term sustainability of the Harbour." Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company (DLHC) is the statutory commercial body charged with developing Dún Laoghaire Harbour as a marine tourism gateway to Ireland, maintaining and enhancing the recreational and amenity value of the Harbour and promoting investment and commercial development to support the historic Harbour's long-term maintenance. For more information, please visit <http://www.dlharbour.ie/>

Shane Canavan, Key Account Manager, Energia commented: "Dún Laoghaire Harbour is one of the region's iconic landmarks and so we are delighted to help it switch to a green electricity supply from Energia. Energia Group comprises of Energia Supply, Energia Renewables and Energia Generation and is a leading supplier in the Irish business

energy market. Energia has a 28% market share of the Irish business electricity and gas market supplying the energy needs of over 65,000 business customers.

For further information, contact: Energia: Cian Connaughton, MKC Communications, tel: 01 703 8611 / 0876480809, e-mail: cian@mkc.ie <mailto:cian@mkc.ie>



Minister Hogan Announces €98M funding boost for Local Government

On December 12th, 2013, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., announced General Purpose Grants (GPGs) to local authorities of €275Mn for 2014 (11% increase). When taken with the water costs of some €730Mn that will be transferred from the local government sector to Irish Water next year, this represents a funding boost of approximately €98Mn to the sector next year when compared to the corresponding funding and costs for 2013. These allocations demonstrate that the local government reforms are working for services and for citizens.

Local authority financing will radically change in 2014: Irish Water will assume responsibility for the delivery, and funding of, water services; the Local Property Tax will operate on a full year basis; and the Non Principal Private Residence Charge will be discontinued.

Funding of Water Services in 2014

The establishment of Irish Water and its financial relationship with the local government sector will have a considerable impact on local authority financing from 2014. Irish Water will fund local authorities to deliver water services through Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The operational costs (exclusive of capital investment) of providing water services, domestic and commercial, next year is estimated at just under €730Mn.

GPG Allocations

GPG allocations to the local government sector from the Local Government Fund in 2013 amounted to €640Mn, and along with commercial water rates and the Non Principal Private Residence charge, the local government sector had gross income from these sources totalling some

€907Mn this year.

The GPG allocations to the local government sector for 2014 take into account the new SLAs with Irish Water, and their combined impact with the transition of water costs to Irish Water will result in gross revenue to the sector of over €1 Billion next year. This represents an increase of about €98Mn or 11% compared to 2013.

Announcing the GPG allocations, the Minister stressed his continued commitment to strong central government support for the local government sector and the importance of the services which local authorities deliver. The Minister underlined that “notwithstanding all of the changes in the sector, I have been clear in my determination to ensure that through the general purpose funding I’m announcing today and the funding being made available through Irish Water, that support for local authorities from these elements would be maintained at 2013 levels.

On foot of today’s allocations and the nearly €730Mn in water costs that Irish Water will be covering in 2014, the local government sector will in fact benefit to the tune of an additional €98m or 11% next year. The fact that the full Local Property Tax yield, supplemented by Motor Tax receipts, is being dedicated to funding local authority service delivery in 2014 is contributing to this positive outcome. These changes will translate into better services for the citizen in their local communities. The local government sector will continue to face many challenges in 2014; I am pleased that the funding I am providing today will assist the sector in meeting them.”

Source: *Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration/News/MainBody,34804,en.htm>*

Minister O’Sullivan launches Public Consultation on revised wind energy guidelines

On December, 11th, 2013, Minister for Housing and Planning, Jan O’Sullivan TD, announced the commencement of a public consultation process on proposed revisions to the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines.

Earlier this year, the Minister initiated a targeted review of the existing guidelines focusing on the issues of noise (including distance) and shadow flicker. As part of this process, Marshall Day Acoustics was commissioned to prepare a study on wind noise, which was a significant input into this review. The objective of this study was to obtain evidence upon which to evaluate the appropriateness of the existing Wind Energy Development Guidelines in relation to noise impacts and to suggest changes, where appropriate.

The revised noise and shadow flicker sections of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines being put out for public consultation today proposes;

- The setting of a more stringent absolute noise limit (day and night) of 40 decibels (dB) for future wind energy developments. This limit is an outdoor limit, in general the reduction of noise levels between the outside of a dwelling and inside would be approximately 10 decibels.
- A mandatory setback of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the nearest dwelling for amenity considerations.
- a condition be attached to all future planning permissions for wind farms to ensure that there will be no shadow flicker at any dwelling within 10 rotor diameters of a wind turbine. If shadow flicker does occur, the wind energy developer or operator will be required to take necessary measures, such as turbine

shut down for the period necessary, to eliminate the shadow flicker.

Minister O’ Sullivan underlined that, ‘it is my intention that the final Guidelines on wind energy development will have regard to the interests of communities, whilst at the same time recognising the importance of renewable, clean energy for the future of our environment and economy. I am now commencing a public consultation on these revisions to the draft guidelines to ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute their views before the guidelines are finalised next year. I anticipate significant interest in the public consultation process and look forward to receiving and considering evidence-based submissions on these draft revisions.’

The proposed revisions to the guidelines and the Marshall Day Acoustics noise study are available online at www.environ.ie in addition to information on making written submissions during the public consultation period. Marshall Day Acoustics have extensive international experience in this field and have previously participated in reviews of the wind farm noise guidelines for the Australian and New Zealand Governments.

The finalised guidelines will be applicable to any wind farm developments in Ireland. It should be noted that the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources is currently consulting on a policy framework for renewable energy export. Additional requirements may be imposed on export projects of scale once this policy is finalised in the course of 2014. Further information about this process can be found on the website of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Submissions can be e-mailed to

winds submissions@environ.ie.

In the interests of transparency, all written submissions received will be publicly posted on the website of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Submissions are invited up to February 21st 2014.

Source: Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/News/MainBody,34777,en.htm>

Minister Hogan announces €47.7 Million for the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) in 2014.

On December, 10th, 2013, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan T.D., announced the allocation for the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) in 2014 of €47.7 Million. Minister Hogan stated that “this will enable 44,000 people to engage through one-to-one interventions in 2014 to assist them in returning to employment, it will also sustain 650 jobs in Local Development Companies, providing services to communities”.

The LCDP is 100% exchequer funded. 44,000 persons are set for engagement through one-to-one LCDP interventions in 2013; at the end of Q3 almost 33,000 or 75% of target was reached. Similarly at the end of Q3:

- Over 8,000 individuals are participating in education;
- Almost 11,000 individuals are participating in labour market training;
- Over 4,000 individuals have progressed into employment/self-employment.

- Other services delivered through the LCDP included outreach programmes and advice/guidance actions where persons are signposted to other services and activities.

The LCDP is underpinned by four high level goals:

- To promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services;
- To increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural development activities and resources;
- To increase peoples’ work readiness and employment prospects; and
- To promote engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

The objectives of the LCDP include the following:

- Develop and sustain a range of services to support, prepare and assist people to enter the Labour Market;
- Develop and sustain strategies with local enterprises to increase local employment prospects;
- Develop and sustain strategies to increase local self-employment prospects.

The LCDP tackles poverty and social exclusion in disadvantaged communities and is a key tool of Government in providing supports for the ‘harder to reach’ in the most disadvantaged areas in society. The scheme assists people in training and re-skilling in order to re-enter the workforce. It is a locally accessible, frontline intervention, supporting disadvantaged communities.

The Minister noted that “we operate in an environment of shrinking resources; nevertheless we must continue to do more with less. I want to see Local Development Company’s maintain key



Phil Hogan T.D.

services and supports through prioritising resources at the front-line. There is an onus on all groups to strive to improve service delivery and to do so at a significantly reduced cost to the public purse. I am pleased to have been able to provide a significant level of funding that will support local communities in these difficult economic times for the country.”

The current LCDP comes to an end at the end of 2013. A successor programme to the LCDP is currently being designed based on the main findings of the Mid-Term Review of the Programme.

- To facilitate the redesign of the programme and to allow for the establishment of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in line with enhancing the role of local government in local and community development, transitional arrangements will apply for the first six months of 2014, which will entail the current LCDP framework being extended to 30th June 2014, on the same basis as the present arrangement.
- From 1 July 2014 the LCDCs will have oversight and management of the LCDP, based on the current programme framework.
- A new programme will roll out, through the LCDCs, from January 2015.

Source: Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/LocalCommunityDevelopment/News/MainBody,34765,en.htm>

Local Development Company	2014 Allocation
Avondhu/Blackwater Partnership Limited	€419,374
Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership Company Limited	€619,238
Ballyhoura Development Limited	€444,994
Ballymun/Whitehall Area Partnership	€721,201
Blanchardstown Area Partnership Limited	€884,866
Bluebell, Inchicore, Islandbridge, Kilmainham & Rialto Partnership Co. Ltd.	€853,588
Bray Area Partnership Limited	€818,496
Breffni Integrated Limited	€741,784
Carlow County Development Partnership Limited	€536,428
Cill Dara Ar Aghaidh Teoranta	€1,020,227
Clare Local Development Company Limited	€855,341
Comhar Chathair Chorcaí Teoranta	€1,211,826
Comhar na nOileán Teoranta	€527,272
County Kilkenny Leader Partnership Company Limited	€607,813
County Sligo Leader Partnership Company Limited	€673,005
County Wicklow Community Partnership Limited	€584,686
Donegal Local Development Company Limited	€966,071
Fingal Leader Partnership Company Limited	€363,686
Forum Connemara Limited	€227,396
Galway City Partnership Limited	€746,503
Galway Rural Development Company Limited	€896,437
Inishowen Development Partnership	€628,610
IRD Duhallow Limited	€387,147
Laois Community and Enterprise Development Company Limited	€564,064
Leitrim Integrated Development Company Limited	€603,046
Longford Community Resources Limited	€587,999
Louth LEADER Partnership	€1,355,623
Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company Teoranta	€562,019
Meath Community Rural and Social Development Partnership Limited	€346,264
Monaghan Integrated Development Limited	€651,864
North & East Kerry Leader Partnership Teoranta	€1,132,294
North Tipperary Leader Partnership	€518,561
Northside Partnership Limited	€1,119,336
Offaly Integrated Local Development Company Limited	€738,314
People Action Against Unemployment Limited (PAUL)	€1,424,307
Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership Limited	€676,921
Roscommon Integrated Development Company Limited	€629,842
South and East Cork Area Development Partnership Limited	€463,152
South Dublin County Local Development Company	€2,044,785
South Kerry Development Partnership Limited	€570,945
South Tipperary Development Company Limited	€603,889
South West Mayo Development Company Limited	€418,276
Southside Partnership DLR Limited	€1,074,127
Tolka Area Partnership Limited	€1,037,545
Waterford Area Partnership Limited	€766,098
Waterford Leader Partnership Limited	€365,171
West Cork Development Partnership Limited	€453,322
West Limerick Resources Limited	€601,766
Westmeath Community Developments Limited	€806,542
Wexford Local Development	€1,791,314

Minister Jan O’Sullivan reports major progress on tackling unfinished estates and discontinuation of the Public Safety Initiative in 2014.

On November, 28th, 2013, Minister for Housing and Planning, Jan O’Sullivan, TD, published the second annual progress report on tackling the issue of unfinished housing developments which points to “even more progress in bringing to a conclusion this most distressing of circumstances left over from the doomed tiger years.” Minister O’Sullivan was speaking at the launch of the report which also includes the results from the 2013 National Housing Development Survey. The survey has been tracking the extent and condition of unfinished housing developments since 2010 and it’s key findings are:

- A decrease of 56% in the number of unfinished developments since 2010
- 72% decrease in number of vacant units in remaining unfinished developments since 2010
- 553 developments effectively resolved in past 12 months

“The 2013 National Housing Development Survey highlights the progress that has been made since this administration came to office” she said. In announcing the results she paid tribute to all of the participants on the National Co-ordinating Committee on Unfinished housing Developments (NCC) “ I am particularly pleased with the progress made through our collaborative approach at NCC level and I must pay tribute to all of the contributors who have engaged meaningfully and proactively in that process”.

Of the remaining 1,258 unfinished developments, the Minister indicated that her objective is to move the issue to its endgame, particularly in relation to



the 992 developments with residents. “We will proceed with a multi-pronged approach. Resolution of the developments will in the first instance be by means of enforcement of planning conditions at local authority level and/or the release of funds from bonds.”

However, in the case of some developments where these options are not available to local authorities, a *€10 million allocation to the Site Resolution Fund announced in the last budget will be used to incentivise the resolution process.* The Minister also stressed that “by allocating funds to complete the public infrastructure, it is hoped to make such developments attractive for developers to finish out and release units onto the open market. This measure is also designed to stimulate the construction sector which has been moribund for a number of years.”

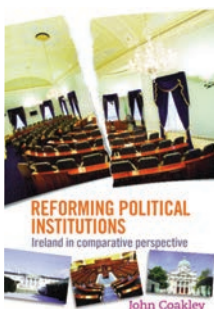
Minister O’Sullivan indicated that there would remain a cohort of developments which appear to be commercially unviable due to location, build quality, commercial demand or other factors. “We have worked with the funders of these developments who have identified that around 40 developments may not be viable in any long term

context and the best solution for them would be to return the sites to greenfield and it may be the case that further developments will in time be deemed unviable and subject to the same treatment. The identification of these developments and their partial or full site clearance, will serve as a signal that we have tackled the residual problems presented by the property crash.”

Minister O’Sullivan also announced the end to the *Public Safety Initiative*, introduced in 2011 to secure dangerous aspects of unfinished developments, where the developer could not be brought to account in the short term. “Applications for such funding has dwindled to a trickle, further indicating progress on this front. I intend to *discontinue the scheme in 2014* as it has achieved its objectives.” In conclusion, the Minister signalled that work in this area is nearing its end and she hoped that the majority of the remaining key tasks would be completed in the coming year.

Source: Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/Housing/News/MainBody,34655,en.htm>

BOOKS FROM THE IPA



In *Reforming Political Institutions: Ireland in Comparative Perspective*, 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. He makes some practical recommendations for the modernising and streamlining of systems of government.

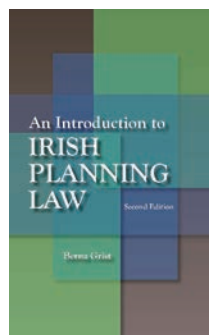
The author examines five specific institutions of great importance to Irish political life, setting them in comparative and historical context and reviewing their current role. These include two important and well-known institutions, the Presidency and the Seanad, as well as the much-debated issue of 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.

Reforming Political Institutions will attract attention from academics and students in the fields of political science and comparative government, from commentators in the media, from politicians and administrators, and from the general reader with an interest in how Ireland might begin to create the conditions for political and institutional progress.

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Planning is an extremely complex area of the law, both because of its technical nature and 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 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 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.

The text is written in non-legal language but is fully referenced to the various sections of the Acts and Regulations, enabling any reader wishing to do so to find their way towards further and more detailed sources of information.

This book is an invaluable resource for students and practitioners of planning and related disciplines, elected representatives, members of residents' and community organisations, indeed for anyone who wants to understand or participate in the planning process.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous 2014 for you and your families.

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

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