

CORRESPONDENCE

MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK

DECEMBER 2015

- Letter received on 23rd November, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Health in reply to resolution adopted by the Metropolitan District of Limerick calling on the Minister for Health to re-open the A&E units in St. John's, Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals and the 1,600 hospital beds closed nationally since 2007 and provide the extra staff urgently needed to solve the health crisis.
- Letter received on 26th November, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Finance in reply to resolution adopted by the Metropolitan District of Limerick calling on the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Finance for the introduction of real rent controls, linking rents to inflation, to stop the sky-rocketing of rents currently taking place.
- Letter received on 30th November, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in reply to letter sent to the Minister where Members noted that Limerick City and County Council was not represented on the Local Government Review Body and requesting that the Council Members be represented on same.
- Letter received on 9th December, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Health in reply to resolution adopted by the Metropolitan District of Limerick calling on the Minister for Health to re-open the A&E units in St. John's, Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals and the 1,600 hospital beds closed nationally since 2007 and provide the extra staff urgently needed to solve the health crisis.



20 November 2015
MVP3986-15

Mr Christy O'Connor
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services and Change Management
Limerick City and County Council
Merchangs Quay
Limerick



Dear Mr O'Connor,

The Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar, T.D., has asked me to thank you for your letter dated 17/11/15 concerning the A&E units in St. John's, Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals which is receiving attention.

Yours sincerely

David O'Connor
Private Secretary



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

Departmental Ref: 15/4393/MF

24m
18 November 2015

Mr Christy O'Connor
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services and Change Management
Limerick City and County Council



Dear Mr O'Connor,

The Minister for Finance, Mr Michael Noonan TD, has asked me to reply to your recent correspondence dated 17th November 2015, in which you have brought to his attention that a motion at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick will call on him and the Minister for the Environment to introduce rent controls linking rent increases to inflation.

As regards to the principle of your correspondence, the Minister acknowledges that the property market is not currently meeting the needs of our citizens. Indeed, the challenge is particularly pronounced in urban areas where housing supply has not yet responded adequately to the increase in demand. This has had an adverse effect on many people's ability to buy or rent accommodation.

In respect to the proposal to link rents to inflation, the evidence is that this would not be a solution to rising rents and house prices which are symptoms of the under supply of housing. Economic research has shown that rent controls like the one proposed is likely to affect the viability of construction and discourage builders from building houses. For renting and house purchasing to become more affordable, more house building is required.

The Minister would like to assure you that the development of a fully functioning sustainable property market which can provide suitable and affordable quality accommodation is a key priority for this Government. The Minister wishes to draw your attention to the Government's Construction 2020 strategy, which sets out 75 time bound actions the Government is pursuing in order to tackle bottlenecks in the system to get the market moving, to increase building activity and to increase supply. The Government is also in the process of implementing the Social Housing Strategy.

Under the aforementioned strategies, action is being taken to support the private and social housing and rental sectors through a number of approaches including improvements in planning regulation and development systems and increasing financing options for development and mortgage provision.

Recently, the Government announced the Rent Certainty and Housing Supply package. This package contains a number of measures to improve the functioning of the private rental sector and includes a time bound measure which extends the minimum rent review period to two years. This initiative allows rents to continue to be set by the market but will also provide a degree of rent stability for tenants in the short term without deterring the necessary development and investment required to return the market to equilibrium.



It is the view of the Minister that the actions outlined above, which have been implemented by this Government will have a positive impact on the rental market in the near future.

Interaction between elected representatives and those outside the Government system is a vital component of a healthy democracy and the Minister would like to thank you for raising your concerns on the matter and once again assure you that the development of a sustainable property market that meets the need of the people is a key priority.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Alex Lalor
Private Secretary to Michael Noonan T.D.
Minister for Finance



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

Oifig an Aire
Office of the Minister

3rd September, 2015.

Mr. Christy O'Connor,
Meetings Administrator,
Limerick City & County Council,
Corporate Services & Change Management,
Merchants Quay,
Limerick.



RE: REP2391/AK/15

Dear Mr. O'Connor,

I have been asked by Mr Alan Kelly T.D Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to refer further to your letter concerning membership of the Local Government Advisory Group.

Local authorities are represented on the Advisory Group by the Association of Irish Local Government and by a small number of serving and retired chief executives. It is not proposed to make any further appointments to the Group.

Yours sincerely,

Larry Kelly,

Private Secretary





7 December 2015

Mr Christy O'Connor
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services and Change Management
Limerick City and County Council
Merchangs Quay
Limerick



Dear Mr O'Connor,

The Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar T.D., has asked me to thank you for your recent letter concerning the A&E units in St. John's, Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals.

It is acknowledged that there are ongoing pressures on the University of Limerick Hospital Emergency Department. However, an extensive capital project is underway to build a new ED which will open in 2016.

In readiness for the demands of the winter period, the University of Limerick Hospital Group has developed a comprehensive plan to manage the expected increase in ED presentations over the coming months. Key measures include:

- recruitment of 124 extra personnel to staff extra beds across all areas;
- opening of 24 new inpatient beds to coincide with the opening of the Leben building, the first phase of which will care for stroke/neurology and adult CF patients;
- re-opening of a 24 bed isolation ward following refurbishment;
- development of a five day specialty geriatric ward at St John's Hospital;
- reservation of 20 acute medical unit and medical assessment unit slots across the group daily for patients aged over 75;
- establishment of rapid access clinics;
- opening a second emergency theatre at weekends;

- appointment of a second community discharge nurse; and
- prioritising diagnostics for in-patients to facilitate earlier discharge.

It is worth noting that more than one in three emergency presentations in the Limerick region are now made at the local injury units (LIUs) in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's hospitals. This is a success which the ULH Group is keen to build on and the Group will be urging patients to continue to use the LIUs, where appropriate, this winter to help the ED at UHL cope with peaks in demand.

I trust that this clarifies the matter for you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leo Varadkar', written in a cursive style.

Leo Varadkar T.D.
Minister for Health