

**Directly Elected Mayor with Executive Functions for Limerick  
Draft Work Plan for the Implementation Advisory Group**

**1 Overall Aims:**

1. To advise the Minister on the implementation of the mandate given by the people of Limerick City and County for the establishment of an office of directly elected Mayor with executive functions for the Council, ensuring that the requirements of the Local Government Act 2019 are met in a way that is:-
  - a) Based on the Government's policy document, "Directly Elected Mayors with Executive Functions: Detailed Policy Proposals", and
  - b) Effective, efficient and adds value for stakeholders including citizens, elected members, the executive, rate payers and constituents of Limerick City and County Council administrative area.
2. Building on Aim 1 above, to advise the Minister and Government on the scope of the role of Directly Elected Mayor and, in that context, on what further functions that could be assigned to local authorities.
3. To ensure the ongoing engagement with all of the main stakeholders in Limerick City and County, and to maintain their support and buy-in for this significant reform process.

**2 Specific Objectives:**

Drawing from Government's policy document, the Implementation Advisory Group will:

1. advise the Minister on the implementation of the Government's policy proposal document, "Directly Elected Mayors with Executive Functions: Detailed Policy Proposals", which was accepted by the people of Limerick City and County in a plebiscite held on 24 May 2019;
2. advise on the detailed executive functions and operations to be assigned to the Directly Elected Mayor;
3. advise on the executive functions and operations that would remain with the Chief Executive;

4. consider its analysis of the division of responsibility, functions and relationship between Mayor, Chief Executive and Elected Council under four main headings:
  - Scope, future proofing/devolution/new functions for Limerick;
  - Strategic oversight/Governance/Decision making;
  - Operational control/Service delivery;
  - Resource allocation/Financial control/Accountability;

### **3 Means of Working:**

It is proposed that the work of the Group be divided into 4 main areas of work, as follows:

- Scope of role and additional functions
- Governance/strategic oversight/decision making
- Service delivery/operations
- Resources/financing

This approach would allow for focussed examination of the different strands of the work programme.

#### **3.1 Scope, Additional Functions/Future proofing**

As it is important to be ambitious for the role of Directly Elected Mayor, and as this is recognised by stakeholders in Limerick, the Group will be required to identify a new scope, including executive functions, for the office of Mayor. This will require engagement with other State Bodies and other stakeholders in Limerick City and County. This level of ambition should be broad and should encompass the next phase of the development of Limerick City and County (ie the Next Limerick), economically, socially and culturally, on a basis that is sustainable and that builds on the progress of recent years under the Limerick 2030 Plan. To be realised, this will involve buy-in at all levels including central Government as a whole. A key point here is that this is a national project, not just a local project restricted to Limerick. It is recognised, therefore, that any such discussions/outputs should be of benefit, not just to the directly elected mayor programme, but also to work being undertaken elsewhere in the

Department to strengthen municipal districts and devolution of functions to local authorities generally. The Directly Elected Mayor of Limerick project could strengthen local government reform generally and be an exemplar for local government reform across all 31 local authorities. At the same time, it will be important that the goals set for the Office of Directly Elected Mayor are deliverable and a key task of the Group will be on advising on how best to achieve that balance between ambition and realism.

### **3.2 Governance/Strategic oversight/Decision-making**

Under this heading the Group would examine how a reformed local authority structure incorporating the Directly Elected Mayor might be created and governed. Particular focus will be on the relationships between the Mayor, Chief Executive and Elected Council. The Group will also examine the role of the mayor, both the internal role of the office of Directly Elected Mayor and the outward facing role of the mayor, and its impact on the role of the elected council.

### **3.3 Service Delivery/Operational control**

The Group will examine current executive functions to determine how they might transfer to a Directly Elected Mayor. Consideration will need to be given to potential impacts on current reserved functions. For example, this might be an opportunity to establish *inter alia* if there is room for improvement in some areas, or if some functions should move to metropolitan/municipal district level. Key performance indicators which are meaningful and measurable will also need to be defined. This task will require extensive consideration of the full range of primary legislation governing the functions of local authorities, across the full range of Government Departments. Input from and engagement with other Government Departments will also be necessary.

### **3.4 Finance/Resource allocation/Accountability**

Finance and staff resources, and the control over those matters, are always central to discussions so the Group will be required to consider the implications

of the new structures for on these matters. For example, consideration should be given to:

- a) the role of the Directly Elected Mayor in the budgetary process and the impacts this may have on governance and decision making functions of the elected members;
- b) the role of the chief executive as the accounting officer on a day to day basis;
- c) a potential discretionary fund for the Directly Elected Mayor.

### **3.5 Method of working**

The broad range of interests and expertise proposed for the membership of the advisory group brings specific strengths/focus in particular areas. This will allow the chair, where required, to appoint smaller subgroups to focus on a specific area or topic, and report back to the larger group.

Dividing the work in this way could allow for different strands of work to be undertaken concurrently, which is likely to be necessary if the ambitious timescale is to be met. The IAG may also decide to invite external stakeholders with specific expertise to contribute to specific work areas, thus broadening the expertise available.

## **4 Outputs**

The principal output will be a report for the Minister, specifying proposals for the enactment of a law providing for a Directly Elected Mayor, which will be submitted to Government and to the Oireachtas in accordance with section 44 of the Local Government Act 2019. This report will reflect the work done by the group in each of the areas outlined above and may be informed by *inter alia* progress reports, case studies and the proceedings of a major public event.

### **4.1 Progress reports**

A mechanism to ensure that wider stakeholders – the elected Council, business, community or civil society groups – are briefed on progress is vital. It is intended that all agreed discussion papers and minutes of meetings will be available online.

Progress reports at key intervals will be prepared and circulated to the wider plenary council and the Minister.

#### **4.2 Case Studies**

As part of the consideration of the potential scope of the role of Directly Elected Mayor, some case studies may be commissioned in towns and cities with a mayoral system that appropriately matches some of the key policy proposals outlined in the Government policy document. This will allow the group to look at examples of best practice from several sources and tailor them accordingly.

#### **4.3 Public Event**

It is intended to organise a major public event in the spring, bring together all relevant stakeholders and interested parties. Key note speakers with academic, administrative and/or practical expertise relating to directly elected Mayors will be invited to present on their experiences in the role of Directly Elected Mayor. Other public information events may also be considered.

#### **Timetable.**

The IAG will be formally launched by Minister Of State Phelan on Monday 2 December 2019, and the first meeting of the group will take place immediately afterwards. This meeting will focus on the initial setup of the group, including the adoption of the terms of reference, the Work Plan, the establishment of sub groups as appropriate and any other matters as appropriate. Given the complexity of the programme and the ambitious timetable, it is proposed to hold a second meeting before Christmas, and then to schedule meetings on a fortnightly basis from January to June. A draft timetable is set out below. This is for the purpose of illustration, and will be subject to amendment as the IAG sees fit.

#### **Schedule of meetings**

A draft schedule of meetings is outlined below. The initial launch and first meetings will be held in Limerick City & County council offices in Merchants Quay. Subsequent meeting times and venues will be confirmed in advance of each meeting. It is possible

that meetings may take place outside of the city, for example in municipal district offices.

date	time	venue
Mon 2 Dec 2019	11:00 am	Limerick City & County Council Office, Merchants Quay, Limerick.
Thurs 19 Dec 2019	11:00 am	Limerick City & County Council Office, Merchants Quay, Limerick
Tues 07 Jan 2020	tbc	tbc
Tues 21 Jan 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 05 Feb 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 19 Feb 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 11 Mar 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 18 Mar 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 01 Apr 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 15 Apr 2020	tbc	tbc
Mon 27 Apr 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 13 May 2020	tbc	tbc
Tues 26 May 2020	tbc	tbc
Wed 10 Jun 2020	tbc	tbc