

**Minutes of Meeting of Implementation Advisory Group to consider Directly Elected Mayor
with Executive Functions in Limerick City & County**

Monday 2 December 2019

Attendees

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| Mr Tim O'Connor, Chairman | Mayor of Limerick City and County, Councillor Michael Sheahan, |
| Minister of State John Paul Phelan, Minister for Local Government and Electoral Reform. | Councillor Michael Collins, Limerick City and County Council |
| Councillor Elena Secas, Limerick City and County Council | Councillor John Sheahan, Limerick City and County Council |
| Mr Pat Daly, Chief Executive, Limerick City and County Council | Councillor Brian Leddin, Limerick City and County Council |
| Dr Diarmuid Scully, Centre for European Studies, University of Limerick | Ms Caroline Curley, Director of Services, Limerick City and County Council |
| Ms Rose Anne White, Limerick Public Participation Network | Mr Jack Scanlan, Student President, University of Limerick |
| Mr Barry Quinlan, Asst Sec, DHPLG | Mr Diarmuid O'Leary, Principal Officer, DHPLG |

Apologies :

Ms Dee Ryan, CEO, Limerick Chamber of
Commerce

Secretariat:

Ms Áinle Ní Bhriain, DHPLG
Mr James Clune, Limerick City & County Council

Also present was Ms Aisling Glynn, Private Secretary to Minister of State Phelan.

1. Introductions and opening statements

- a. The Chair introduced the Group and carried out a tour de table. There was a general positive endorsement of the work to be carried out, which it was agreed should be

ambitious, as the first such post in the history of the State, while also acknowledging that the proposals should be realistic and achievable.

- b. The Minister reiterated his support and thanks to the Group.

2. Documents for consideration

- a. The draft conduct of business, and draft outline work plan for the next six months were agreed. The terms of reference were noted.
- b. It was noted that all agreed documents will be made available on the internet.

3. Open discussion on the scope of the role

An open discussion was held on the scope of the role of Mayor. The following action points were agreed.

- a. The work of the Group should be seen as a design exercise, which would have to combine identifying and defining the scope of the role with proposals covering governance, finance and other arrangements, all on a basis that could be converted into legislation. An early task will be getting the scope and nature of the role right, and in a way that would meet the above test of being both ambitious and realistic.
- b. A disconnect between local and central government was identified. A solution to the perceived disconnect between what local authorities are dealing with on the ground and what central government is doing in Dublin should be found. A strong directly elected Mayor with a statutory consultee role on all policy matters affecting Limerick could be one way to address the issue.
- c. The governance role and the nature of the interaction between the directly elected Mayor, the Chief Executive and the elected Council will need to be carefully considered. There is a view that the role of Cathaoirleach in the chamber should be separate from the directly elected Mayor especially when it comes to policy matters being brought to the council by the Mayor. Consideration is to be given to a separate Cathaoirleach role within the council chamber.
- d. Case studies will be examined to determine best practice in other jurisdictions. Some examples, in the US, UK and Denmark, including twinned local authorities, were referenced. It was also noted that John Bell, one the most senior Irish officials in the

EU Commission (a Director in DG Research) had offered to assist. Dr Scully has undertaken to produce some international case study examples for the next meeting.

- e. At the request of the PPN, a public consultation exercise will be carried out in January for a period of 4 to 6 weeks.

4. Draft Schedule of Meetings of Group

The schedule of fortnightly meetings was agreed in principle, including the recommendation that some meetings be held in Municipal District offices outside of Limerick City.

5. Date and purpose of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in Limerick City & County office, Merchants Quay on Thursday 19 December at 11.am. It was agreed that this would focus on an initial look at case studies for Directly Elected Mayors elsewhere and, as noted, Dr Scully agreed to prepare some material in that regard.

- 6. **AOB** – None.