

**Meeting 8 of the Implementation Advisory Group for a Directly Elected Mayor
with executive functions for Limerick City and County Council**

11 a.m. 30 July 2020, by WebEx video link

In attendance: Tim O'Connor (Chair, IAG)
Mayor Michael Collins (Limerick City and County Council)
Cllr Saša Novak (Limerick City and County Council)
Cllr John Sheahan (Limerick City and County Council)
Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon (Limerick City and County Council)
Cllr Elena Secas (Limerick City and County Council)
Caroline Curley (Limerick City and County Council)
Dee Ryan (Limerick Chamber)
Jack Scanlan (University of Limerick)
Dr Diarmuid Scully (Academic Advisor)
Mary Hurley (D/HPLG)
Diarmuid O'Leary (D/HPLG)

Secretariat: Áinle Ní Bhriain (D/HPLG)
Grant Couper (D/HPLG)

Apologies from: Cillian Flynn (PPN), Pat Daly (Limerick City and County Council),
James Clune (Limerick City & County Council)

- The agenda was agreed.
- The outputs and actions document from the last meeting of the Group was agreed.
- The Chair notified the meeting of the workshops that were held on Monday 27 July with elected members of Limerick City and County Council, to brief the elected members and engage with them on the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) with executive functions for Limerick City and County.
- Working paper 4 (WP4) – opportunity and additionality:
 - WP4 was introduced to the Group for the first time.

- The paper was welcomed. Given the importance of the range of potential new functions, it was agreed that members should have more time to consider the proposals and that further discussion on WP4 would take place at the next meeting of the Group.
 - In the interim, further feedback and engagement will be welcomed, including on any matters members would like to see included in WP4.
- Working paper 3a (WP3a) – roles and responsibilities of the elected council:

The revised WP3a was considered and agreed.

- Working paper 3b (WP3b) – roles and responsibilities of the DEM:
 - The revised WP3b was considered
 - It was agreed, following some discussion, that it is appropriate that the DEM would chair the CPG, particularly as council meeting agendas are agreed by consensus within the CPG.
 - There was a comprehensive discussion also on the issue of the approval of the annual budget. It was noted that the original policy proposals provide that the annual budget proposed by the DEM should be approved by Council unless there is a two-thirds of council majority against it. This proposal was to try to ensure that deadlock between the elected Council and DEM on the issue of the annual budget would be avoided, and that the budget proposed by the mayor would be passed. The proposal was modelled on the situation in local authorities in England and recognised the democratic mandate of the DEM. However it was also strongly argued that the current system of passing a budget by a majority of the elected Council should continue. This would reflect the primary role of the elected Council, but also that Limerick has a strong record in passing its budgets.
 - It was also noted that the international norm is for budget's to be approved by majority (50% + 1) vote. It was also suggested that adding further stages to the budgetary approval process could be considered; that the one-third minority could approve the annual budget only as a last resort.
 - The Chair noted that the broad view of IAG seemed to be in favour of passing budget by a majority (i.e. 50% plus 1) and that ultimate primacy

should rest with the elected council. He also reported that this reflected the prevailing view on the issue as well when it came up at the Workshop with Councillors on 27 July. It was agreed that a separate paper on the budget approval process would be drafted, taking into account the discussion on the issue, for consideration by the Group.

- Subject to the removal of references to the budget process, which will be brought to the Group in a separate working paper, WP3b was agreed.
- Case study on statutory consultation:
 - Dr Scully delivered a presentation on the statutory consultation case study
 - Inter alia, Dr Scully noted that European Charter of Local Government has been agreed by Ireland, but no formal statutory consultation framework has been put in place. Ireland's anomalous position in this respect was noted.
 - Dr Scully noted the proposal put forward in WP4 for consultation via Project Ireland 2040, and suggested that it could offer a practical way forward. He suggested that a Cabinet sub-committee could be considered also, in order to allow formal engagement at high political level

The Chair noted the importance of the basis given by the principles set out in the Charter and the 2018 guidelines, and of coming up with the best tailored solution for Limerick City and County.

- Public consultation and stakeholder engagement:
 - The Chair delivered an update on Monday's workshop with elected members, thanking Mayor Collins for chairing the workshop and councillors for their engagement
 - The Chair agreed to come back to councillors in Limerick City and County in September when a draft paper is ready. At Monday's meeting, the councillors expressed the view that there is a lack of public information; the Chair noted the particular importance of a major public information campaign in the run-up to the first mayoral election and that this should be included as a Recommendation in the IAG Report.
 - An update was also given on the Chair's meeting with Minister of State Burke, who is very committed to the DEM project
 - The Chair gave an update from stakeholder meetings with:

- the Limerick University Hospital Group
- The AILG
- The CCMA, which will make a written submission on the respective roles and responsibilities of the DEM, council and chief executive
- The Limerick LCDC
- The Chair will meet with representatives of the Limerick-Clare ETB on 17 August; Minister Burke will be meeting with TDs from Limerick this afternoon (30 July); Jack Scanlan will be gleaning opinions of students in the near future
- An update was also given on the public consultation exercise. Consultation meetings are in progress and more are planned. The deadline for finishing meetings is 31 July, but this will be extended in order to complete the programme of meetings; the deadline for the report on the public consultation remains mid-August
- It was suggested that space should be given for responses to the IAG's draft report before it is finalised. The Chair agreed with the suggestion but noted that consideration of any such exercise must be realistic in view of the tight timeline for completing the Group's report
- Dates for meetings:
 - 20 August and 2 September were agreed
 - A physical meeting in Council Chamber in Dooradoyle was agreed for 20 August. The meeting will be held in accordance with social distancing requirements, and will be subject to public health guidelines in effect at the time