

**Meeting 9 of the Implementation Advisory Group for a Directly Elected Mayor
with executive functions for Limerick City and County Council**

11 a.m. 20 August 2020, by WebEx video link

Present: Tim O'Connor (Chair, IAG)
Mayor Michael Collins (Limerick City and County Council)
Cllr John Sheahan (Limerick City and County Council)
Saša Novak (Limerick City and County Council)
Kieran O'Hanlon (Limerick City and County Council)
Pat Daly (Limerick City and County Council)
Caroline Curley (Limerick City and County Council)
Dr Diarmuid Scully (Academic Advisor)
Jack Scanlan (Student representative)
Dee Ryan (Limerick Chamber)
Cillian Flynn (PPN)
Mary Hurley (D/HPLG)
Diarmuid O'Leary (D/HPLG)

Secretariat: James Clune (Limerick City and County Council)
Áinle Ní Bhriain (D/HPLG)
Grant Couper (D/HPLG)

Apologies: Cllr Elena Secas (Limerick City and County Council)

1. The draft outputs and actions document for meeting 8 was agreed.
2. There was no other business arising for discussion.
3. Consideration of Working Paper 4 (WP4) – opportunity and additionality:

The revised WP4 was discussed. The Group was advised that:

- WP4 has been updated from the version submitted to the last IAG meeting to take account of detailed engagement with Limerick City and County Council in recent days.
- In addition, a range of new policy proposals identified in the current Programme for Government were incorporated in the document where it was felt that a DEM could have a role

- Group members were requested to send any further feedback on WP4 via tracked changes in the document

In a general opening discussion on the working paper, the following points were made:

- All members welcomed the working paper as a strong early draft and its general policy direction.
- The key role of the DEM set out in the working paper as a statutory based “convenor general” and “advocate” for Limerick was acknowledged as ambitious, but also realistic and workable.
- Further functions, eg in the area of policing or health, can be devolved over time. In that regard, it was noted that the detailed proposals document included a proposal for the review of the DEM’s functions at the end of each mayoral cycle.
- While the importance of devolving substantial functions to a local authority with a DEM was recognised, this must come with the necessary funding and resources to deliver those functions
- The primacy of the elected Council in holding the DEM to account was acknowledged.
- Where the DEM has a role of statutory consultee or is negotiating with national government or other stakeholders on policy matters as they impact on Limerick, it was viewed as essential that the elected Council would be fully advised.
- Negotiating positions adopted by the DEM would have to be in accordance with policies adopted by the elected Council.
- The proposal to establish a statutory-based institutional structure facilitating regular dialogue between the DEM and national government was seen as a key development.
- The fact that the presence of a DEM should allow Limerick to speak with one authoritative voice was welcomed.
- It was also acknowledged that provision should be made in WP4 for formal, direct dialogue between the DEM and the PPN.

Each of the policy areas identified in WP4 were discussed in turn

- Planning and Development

In discussing this policy area, the following points were made:

- It was noted that the Limerick Metropolitan Area (as defined by the NPF) includes Shannon Airport and other parts of Co. Clare. The importance of ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place between Limerick and Clare, particularly in relation to the development and implementation of the Limerick Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and other regional strategies, was highlighted. The democratic mandates of

elected representatives in both jurisdictions should be reflected in any proposed new governance arrangements.

- It was suggested that, to ensure that full account is taken of the rural perspective, municipal districts should be represented on the proposed Limerick PI2040 Project Delivery Board
- The role proposed for the DEM in the development plan process should not involve unnecessary extra layers or unnecessarily lengthen the planning process.
- It was suggested that the links between the proposed Limerick PI2040 Project Delivery Board and proposed new institutional structure between the national government and the DEM – both of which were welcomed – should be strengthened.
- It was also proposed that the national PI2040 Project Delivery Board be required to meet in Limerick with the Limerick Board.
- Specific provision should be made for formal engagement between the DEM and Irish Water and the Land Development Agency, who have a particularly important role in the development of the city and county.
- The suggestion was made that the DEM (rather than the Chief Executive as under present arrangements) should make a development plan if the council fails to do so. It was noted that the OPR's oversight role of the development plan would remain, as under existing arrangements.
- It was agreed that the DEM will be a full voting member of the Southern Regional Assembly
- It was suggested that there should be an enhanced role for the DEM in the Shannon Estuary Plan, which would have significance for both Clare and Kerry County Councils.
- The range of regional strategies made jointly between Limerick City and County Council and other local authorities was noted; it was suggested that WP4 should make it clear that the DEM will have an input into these joint strategies

- Roads, Traffic and Transport

It was noted that the local authority's transport strategy will be put on statutory basis, led by the DEM working with the NTA

- Economic Development and Enterprise

It was suggested that this section requires further strengthening, particularly by proposing that agencies are required to work with DEM to achieve objectives in Project Ireland 2040.

It was suggested that the DEM should have the right to sit on the sectoral taskforces proposed in the Programme for Government (PfG), particularly those for manufacturing and tourism/hospitality/retail (as the largest sectoral employers in the area).

- **Education and Training**
The Chair reported on his strong engagement with the senior management of the Limerick Clare ETB, who have promised a formal submission. This paper may therefore be further strengthened in this regard.
 - **Environment, Energy and the Marine**
A concern was raised that Limerick would be used to trial new environment-related taxes; however, the point was made that it is important to be involved at key stages of any new policies or initiatives
 - **Policing and security**
The Chair briefed on his consultation with the Chief Superintendent for Limerick earlier in the week, who was supportive of the role proposed for the DEM in policing and security matters.
 - **Arts, Culture and Heritage**
The Group welcomed proposals in relation to further funding for the vibrant arts community in Limerick.
The Group also welcomed proposals to strengthen the role of the DEM in relation to the heritage buildings in the city and large towns, particularly where such sites are currently undermanaged. If the DEM has a strong convening role in this area, together with influence on the Living City Initiative, it would offer significant potential to develop the city and towns centres.
 - **Health**
It was suggested that health-related proposals should in the first instance stem from commitments in the Programme for Government, particularly those relating to Sláintecare.
 - **Financial autonomy**
The Group agreed that the proposals should aim for greater financial autonomy for Limerick for state spending in Limerick. The current bidding process for finance for capital projects should change and ring-fenced multiannual funding for Limerick allocated, with spend based on priorities decided locally. It was suggested that this would include, if feasible in the context of national borrowing limits, the ability to raise own resources.
4. **Final matters:**
- The Group was advised that the range other working papers circulated to the Group will be considered at the next meeting.

- The meeting was updated briefly on the public consultation process and work of Dr Adshead. It was suggested that Dr Adshead could speak with IAG about consultation work.
- An outline of the final report of the Group, into which the various working papers will be inserted, will be prepared for the next meeting of the IAG.
- The next meeting of the Group will take place on Thursday 3rd September at 3 p.m. The following meeting will take place on 15th September at 11 a.m.