

Meeting 7 of the Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) for a Directly Elected Mayor with executive functions for Limerick City and County Council

11am 14 July 2020, By WebEx video link

Attendance: Tim O'Connor (Chair), Mayor Michael Collins, Cllr John Sheahan, , Cllr Sasa Novak, Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon, Pat Daly (LC&C), Caroline Curley (LC&C), Dee Ryan (Limerick Chamber of Commerce), Dr Diarmuid Scully (Academic expert), Cillian Flynn (Limerick PPN), Jack Scanlan (Students' Representative) Mary Hurley (D/HPLG), Diarmuid O'Leary (D/HPLG).

Secretariat: Áinle Ní Bhriain (D/HPLG), Grant Couper (D/HPLG), James Clune (LC&C).

Apologies: Cllr Elena Secas

1. Opening by the Chair

- The Chair began by congratulating Cllr Michael Collins on his recent Election as Mayor of the City and County of Limerick. He also welcomed Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon to the group.

2. Further consideration of case studies paper:

- Dr Scully presented the findings of the case study in Auckland. The presentation focused specifically on the rural area within the Auckland authority boundary. It was noted that, while the rural area has a much smaller percentage of the population than in Limerick, the lessons to be learnt are very relevant.
- Auckland is New Zealand's first Unitary Authority with the power to exercise all local functions. It is subdivided into local boards. The presentation focussed on one local board, representing the area of Rodney.
- The post of Directly Elected Mayor is not an executive role, rather the Mayor is chair of the council and sits on all committees. The role of chief executive has only existed since 1987, so the power relationship in Auckland is different and will be different to the model proposed for Limerick City & County.
- The key learning from the case study is the vital role local boards play within the Auckland authority. The emerging principle is that local decisions are made at local level.

- If this is replicated in Limerick City & County it will mean a strengthening of MDs.

3. Outputs and actions from the last meeting, and matters arising:

- The draft Outputs and Actions document for IAG meeting 6 of 29 June 2020, held by WebEx video link was agreed.

4. Consideration of working papers

a. WP3a Roles and responsibilities of the elected council.

The following points were discussed and agreed.

- i. The elected council will be led by a príomh comhairleoir¹ who will act as speaker of the council within the council chamber. The príomh comhairleoir will have a casting vote in council meetings.
- ii. The príomh comhairleoir will be a member of the corporate policy group.
- iii. The mechanisms for oversight currently exercised by the elected council in relation to the chief executive, such as the monthly chief executive's report, will apply to the mayor.
- iv. The chief executive will continue to report in relation to his/her functions.
- v. The directly elected mayor will participate in formal question and answer sessions at set intervals at plenary Council meetings. The timing of these sessions will be determined by standing orders to be developed by the elected council
- vi. The questions must be submitted via the CPG, who will determine if the question is in order.
- vii. The current protocol of councillors submitting written questions will continue.
- viii. The elected council will be responsible for initiating the recall or the removal of the DEM via a resolution of the members.
- ix. The elected council will continue to be responsible for the hiring, suspension and removal of the chief executive.

¹ Ref WP1

b. WP3b Roles and responsibilities of the Directly Elected Mayor

- The following points were considered:
 - i. The DEM will as a member of the elected council have the right to attend and speak at meetings of the local authority and vote on motions. The question of whether the Mayor's attendance should be mandatory will be further considered.
 - ii. As a minimum, the DEM must attend the Annual General Meeting and the Budget meeting each year.
 - iii. The DEM will chair the corporate policy group. If the Directly Elected Mayor is unavailable, the príomh comhairleoir will chair the group
 - iv. The DEM will chair the Joint Policing Committee.
 - v. The DEM will have speaking rights at MD meetings but will not have a vote.
 - vi. The DEM will develop a programme for local government in Limerick which must be agreed jointly with the elected council.
 - vii. The first Mayor's programme for local government will complement the council's existing corporate plan. Future Mayors will produce their programme of office first, and the corporate plan will flow from it.
 - viii. The DEM will produce an annual update statement of progress on the programme, to be presented at the AGM. Though agreed in principle, it was also agreed to examine all of the statutory reporting requirements to ensure there is no duplication or unnecessary reporting.
 - ix. The DEM will remain responsible for the performance of his/her functions but will assign responsibility for the performance of such functions to the chief executive.
 - x. This delegation will be done by way of "Mayoral Order".
 - xi. The Directly Elected Mayor will have a seat on the Southern Regional Assembly. This should be as an ex officio member and in addition to the membership quota that applies to Limerick City & County.
 - xii. The DEM will have an administrative and research support staff of up to 5, including a special advisor and a programme manager. It is also considered appropriate that the Directly Elected Mayor should have a driver.

- xiii. All support staff with the exception of an advisor will be drawn from the Local Authority. Any staff appointed by the Directly Elected Mayor will be subject to ethics in public office etc. just like all other local authority employees.
- xiv. The cost of the proposed mayoral office will be included in the final report.
- xv. The DEM will be legally responsible for the performance of the executive functions of the local authority which are assigned to him or her.
- xvi. The executive functions assigned to the DEM will comprise some or all of the executive functions currently carried out by the chief executive.
- xvii. The role of the Directly Elected Mayor in relation to SPCs will be explored further.

5. Public consultation exercise:

- The Secretariat updated the group on progress on the revised public consultation exercise being undertaken by the University of Limerick (UL). This website has gone live and a press release issued on Friday. The initiative will run until Friday 31 July. Dee Ryan updated the meeting on the inclusion of the consultation programme in newsletters being sent to all members. Jack Scanlan confirmed that the details were being sent to all student liaison officers in the 3 3rd level colleges. Cillian Flynn updated the group on the inclusion of the PPN network in the programme.
- It is anticipated that a final report will be ready outlining the public consultation findings by 21 August. Consideration will be given to how the outputs of this exercise can be incorporated into the final report.

1. Next meeting of IAG:

- The following dates were agreed for future meetings.
 - i. Thursday 30 July at 11am, by WebEx
 - ii. Thursday 20 August at 11am, venue tbd

Based on public health advice it was agreed that meetings should continue to be held virtually for the moment. Consideration will however be given to holding the

meeting of 20 August in a physical location, subject to public health advice at the time.

2. Any other business.

- The chair updated the group on his recent meeting with Limerick Chamber of commerce. Cllr O'Hanlon invited the Chair to meet with Limerick /Clare ETB. Meetings will also be arranged with LAMA, the AILG and the CCMA.
- Mary Hurley updated the group on a recent meeting with Minister Darragh O'Brien and Minister of State for Local Government and Planning Peter Burke, who reaffirmed the Programme for Government commitment to have a Mayoral election in 2021. With that timeline in mind, it will be important to see a draft report taking shape by the meeting of 20 August.