

Terms of Reference for Expert Advisory Group

on

Local Government arrangements in Cork

6 October, 2016

The Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government hereby establishes an Expert Advisory Group to advise the Minister regarding relevant options in relation to future local government arrangements for Cork, having regard particularly to the review carried out by the Cork Local Government Review Committee and its report which was submitted in September 2015.

1. The main functions of the Group are to: -

- a. undertake further comprehensive and rigorous examination and analysis in relation to the issues dealt with in the review of local government arrangements for Cork and in the report (including the minority report) in that regard by the Cork Local Government Review Committee;
- b. provide relevant views, assessments, and advice arising from the matters at (a) and having regard to the work carried out by the Cork Local Government Review Committee, in relation to relevant aspects of local government arrangements for Cork and the implications of these, including assessment of the implications of recommendations in the report of the Cork Local Government Review Committee;
- c. provide advice to the Minister as to how best to address the issues on which the Cork Local Government Review Committee was unable to provide agreed recommendations, including the consideration of any relevant options in addition to those considered in that committee's review;
- d. report to the Minister in relation to the foregoing matters as required by the Minister, or as the Group considers appropriate.

- 2 Without restricting the scope or flexibility available to the Group pursuant to paragraph 1, and subject to any additional matters that the Minister may require, the Group shall, in particular, address the following matters regarding future local government arrangements for Cork :
- a. Leadership of local government, at both political and executive levels, including the possible establishment of an office of directly mayor and associated authority to perform substantial local government functions;
 - b. Governance and representational structures, including the approach to configuration of plenary councils, municipal districts and electoral areas;
 - c. Local government powers and functions, including potential for devolution of functions to local authorities from central government departments or agencies, and the allocation of powers and functions as between plenary councils and municipal district members;
 - d. Resource implications of alternative options having regard to the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, functions and services of the local authorities in Cork and to anticipated future trends and requirements in this regard, and to the requirements of addressing such implications;
 - e. Metropolitan interests in respect of the city of Cork, and any specific measures or arrangements, including configuration and governance, required to safeguard or enhance such interests, and to maintain the civic status, identity, character and heritage of the city;
 - f. The potential of local government to further the economic and social well-being and sustainable development of Cork City and County, including the strategic role and impact of the city in particular as a regional and national growth centre, and the need to have regard to the respective characteristics and needs both of urban and rural areas;

- g. Cohesiveness, co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration in the context of future local government arrangements, particularly with regard to strategic policy in areas such as housing, spatial planning, economic development, infrastructure, transport, and environment;
- h. The strength and effectiveness generally of local government in Cork, including in the use of resources, the organisation of functions and operations, and the provision of services; and
- i. Implications of the Group's proposals or recommendations including anticipated costs and benefits (including potential savings and efficiency improvements).

3 To facilitate the effective performance of the functions of the Group:

- a. The Group shall have regard to –
 - i. relevant provisions of the Terms of Reference of the Cork Local Government Committee;
 - ii. consultations, analysis, deliberations and recommendations of the Cork Local Government Committee (without prejudice to any further study, examination or analysis which the Group considers necessary) and, for that purpose all available relevant information, documents, records or other relevant material of the Cork Local Government Committee shall be made available to the Group on a confidential basis at the commencement of its work;
- b. The chief executives and staff of the local authorities in Cork City and Cork County are required to co-operate fully with the Group, including through the provision of any available information, and attendance at meetings, as required by the Group.
- c. The Group shall engage with other bodies, as necessary, and where the Group considers that it is necessary for the purpose of particular research,

examination or analysis, the Minister may arrange for the provision of specialist services to the Group for that purpose.

Membership of the Expert Advisory Group

The members of the Group are -

Mr Jim MacKinnon, CBE, former Chief Planner at the Scottish Government

Mr John O'Connor, former Chairman of An Bórd Pleanála and current Chairman of Eirgrid

Ms Gillian Keating, former President and Board Member of Cork Chamber of Commerce

Mr Paul Martin, Chief Executive, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils (External Adviser)

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