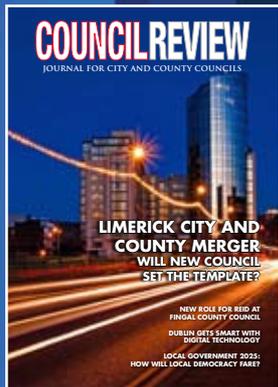


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EDITOR'S COMMENT

1 June 2014 marked the most far-reaching change in structures, functions, operational arrangements and governance in the Irish local government system since the current system came into being 115 years ago in 1899.

Minister Phil Hogan has said these changes are radical, but added that they are necessary to bring our local government system up to date and to provide the kind of service our citizens and communities deserve.

However, not everyone is convinced that such radical change, especially structural change, will work. UCC lecturer in local government Dr Aodh Quinlivan says that only time will tell if such change will lead to an improved system to justify the term 'reform'.

In this issue of 'Council Review', Dr Quinlivan claims that local government and local democracy is sadly lacking from the publication of the 'Putting People First' proposals (October 2012) and the Local Government Reform Act 2014. He remains unconvinced that the word 'reform' is warranted.

The number of local authorities will reduce from 114 to 31, involving the merger of the city and county councils in Limerick and Waterford, and North and South Tipperary County Councils, as well as the dissolution of the 80 town councils and other subsidiary bodies. It has also seen 949 councillors elected across the country to the new structures, down from 1,627 outgoing councillors.

UL's Dr Bríd Quinn, who attended the inaugural meeting of the new Limerick City and County Council on 6 June, says the three new council mergers were touted as flagship projects. Writing in this issue, Dr Quinn who lectures in Public Administration at UL, says Limerick was the beacon and serves as "a laboratory for comprehensive reform".

However, she claims that challenges remain; one particular challenge for Limerick's new council will be, she comments, the handling of specific urban and rural issues, "since the cultures and concerns of the two parent organisations were quite diverse, the metropolitan and municipal structure may create tensions".

It's early days, but with further reforms due over the course of this year, will such radical measures be a step too far in such a short space of time? Only time will tell!

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5 NEWS UPDATE

11 EURO FOCUS

14 COMMUNITY TOURISM

Seeking to build on the legacy of The Gathering 2013, a new community tourism initiative for the Diaspora will provide an annual fund of €1 million over the next three years to support up to 700 local community-based events and festivals each year.

18 SOCIAL HOUSING

A new approach to social housing provision for older people, which combines private finance and local authority support for a project in Glasnevin, Dublin, could be replicated with other local authorities.

21 EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

The search is now on for the 2017 European Green Capital that demonstrates a well-established record of achieving high environmental standards and is committed to ambitious goals for future sustainable development.

23 E-PAYMENTS PLANNING

A change to how local authorities make and accept payments will take place on Friday 19 September; the e-Day when the public sector stops issuing and accepting business cheques.

24 FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Paul Reid, new chief executive of Fingal County Council, has lived and worked in Fingal for many years so he knows the county well. As someone who comes from outside the local government sector he brings a new perspective to the work done by Fingal.

31 LIMERICK MERGER

The new Limerick City and County Council involves a change of identity and focus in order to marry urban and rural concerns, says UL's Dr Bríd Quinn. She outlines the background to this first merger of city and county councils under new local government reforms.

38 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Local government and local democracy is sadly lacking from the publication of the 'Putting People First' proposals in October 2012 to the Local Government Reform Act 2014, says UCC's Dr Aodh Quinlivan. He remains unconvinced that the word 'reform' is warranted.

45 SCOTTISH SERVICE DELIVERY

As local authorities in Ireland assume new responsibilities to deliver economic development, Richard Sweetnam outlines the Scottish perspective on local authority regeneration and the importance of effective collaboration to delivering sustainable economic impact.

51 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

As Dublin continues to attract globally mobile talent to live and work here with digital technologies now simply new tools for innovation, DCC is working with stakeholders to expand and develop that global reputation for innovation and technology.

62 IDA IRELAND

Two new IDA advanced technology facilities in Athlone and Waterford, scheduled for completion in November, aim to meet the needs of client companies in the manufacturing and technology sectors.



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64 WEEE IRELAND

Under new EU rules, Ireland needs to increase its portable battery take-back rate in this country from 35 to 45 per cent by the end of 2015.

60 BARRINGTONS HOSPITAL

Barringtons Hospital continues to work closely with Limerick Council on its masterplan to establish Ireland's first medical village on King's Island in the heart of Limerick city, and recently opened nine new suites in Barringtons Hospital as part of that plan.

69 NATIONAL ROADS NETWORK

The new €550 million N17-N18 Gort to Tuam Public Private Partnership (PPP) Scheme, the largest project in the current tranche of transportation PPP projects, forms an important part of the Atlantic Road Corridor in Galway.

72 MUSIC GENERATION

The Department of Education and Skills will start to co-fund the Music Generation programme with Local Music Education Partnerships in July, as part of its long-term development of the initiative.

78 WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Local authorities can play a key role with interagency groups in the development of better land management practice to reduce the risk of wildfires, writes Ciaran Nugent, Fire Management Specialist with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

81 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Key points on the UK's economic restructuring and industrial and regional policy are summarised by Chris van Egeraat and Justin Doran, Regional Studies Association Irish Branch, and they also briefly reflect on regional development in Ireland.

83 IPA PROGRAMMES

More than 70 accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes geared towards public service employees will be rolled out this autumn at the Institute of Public Administration.

85 CYCLING ROAD SAFETY

Following the development of Ireland's first ever cycle network by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, an additional series of cycle routes are being rolled out across this region.

81 CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Faced with an ongoing battle for funding for hospital facilities to help with research, equipment and assisted living, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland is calling for the public's assistance on its vital life support campaign, through fundraising events and other initiatives.

82 PUBLIC BIKE SCHEMES

Three new public bike-sharing schemes are due to be rolled out in Cork, Limerick and Galway cities this autumn. Depending on their success, the bikes branded as the 'Coke Zero Bikes' could also be hitting the streets of other cities such as Waterford.



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