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EDITOR'S COMMENT

When the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) extended an invitation to Paul Lemass, Assistant Secretary of the Local Government Division at the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, to address its conference, it's unlikely that either party could have foreseen what lay ahead!

Lemass outlined the new structures and new challenges now facing Ireland's locally elected representatives, in the wake of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

However, his presentation was met with overriding derision and disdain by the majority of city and county councillors, who had come from all corners of the country.

The main elements of the local government reform package, which they claim need to be systematically revised and addressed, include proper remuneration for councillors, the discrepancies between councils for funding of the LEADER Programme, their diminishing powers and responsibilities, not to mention equalisation of Local Property Tax.

Many councillors also highlighted the fact that they no longer felt the trust or confidence from central to local government, with claims that the Local Government Reform Act 2014 was a travesty of democracy by withholding power from councillors.

Perhaps one particular issue that rankled most with councillors from Cork and Galway concerned the proposed boundary extensions and the mergers of the city and county councils in both regions.

Based on the successful mergers of Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, the government is now investigating the likelihood of similar mergers for the city and county councils in Galway and Cork, as part of its latest cost-cutting measures.

All will be revealed in the review of the reports of the Independent Boundary Commission, due to be released in September.

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4 NEWS UPDATE

18 AILG CONFERENCE REPORT

Reviews on the boundary extensions of Cork and Galway and the proposed merger of these city and county councils will be announced in September, delegates at this year's AILG conference were told. However, an update on local government reform by Paul Lemass, the Department's Assistant Secretary of the Local Government Division, was met with hostility and derision during the ensuing Q&A session.



AILG Conference,
Paul Lemass
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33 POLLUTION REPORTING

The Environmental Protection Agency's new application to record and report pollution complements the 24-hour nationwide environmental complaints phonenumber already in place.

34 LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

The Economic Strategy for County Leitrim (2015-2021) is now ready for roll out, and its timing coincides with the county's latest tourism strategy for the same period. Frank Curran, Chief Executive at Leitrim County Council, said the aim is to double tourism numbers by 2021 and facilitate the creation of 1,500 jobs during that timeframe.



Frank Curran,
Leitrim CEO
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40 IRISH PLANNING INSTITUTE

The Irish Planning Institute has called on the Government to restructure local authority planning departments around the country and to ramp up recruitment as an immediate priority if the current planning delays are to be averted. IPI President Mary Hughes says that public confidence now needs to be urgently restored within the construction sector.



Irish Planning
Institute
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47 SOUTHERN WASTE REGION

Ten local authorities in the southern region have a number of key targets to achieve in relation to waste prevention activities under a new plan, such as a one per cent reduction per annum in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the six-year period of the plan.

49 WEEE IRELAND

Ireland is one of the top recyclers in Europe since the creation of WEEE Ireland in 2005. However, with continuous increasing EU targets designed to encourage more recycling the challenge remains for Ireland to hit a 65 per cent collection for recycling level by 2019.



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50 LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

April's announcement that Center Parcs had chosen Ballymahon, Co. Longford to establish its first Irish-based resort caused a massive stir in tourism and business circles. The UK leisure events company has now started a consultation process with local groups and interested parties, and is also currently in the pre-planning phase.



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Parcs
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52 COILLTE IRELAND

The development of a €200 million holiday village by Center Parcs on Coillte lands in Longford, subject to receiving satisfactory planning permission, is expected to open in 2019, and will generate one thousand permanent jobs in the county.

COUNCIL REVIEW

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54 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

There is now a structured and effective governance and foresight system in place under the Local Government Reform Programme, according to Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive of Westmeath County Council. He recently outlined the main principles of the 'Putting People First' strategy to fire chiefs at their annual conference in Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

58 WICKLOW ACTION PLAN

As Wicklow County Council ramps up its efforts to encourage economic development in the county, the Economic Think Tank Action Plan has now reached implementation stage, in its bid to drive and maintain economic activity and increase employment in the Garden County.

59 VIEWPOINT

The Poolbeg Incinerator is not welcome and is not a positive decision, but rather it represents contempt for local government and victory for the bureaucrats in the Custom House, according to Labour's Cllr Dermot Lacey, who outlines his response to an article entitled 'Positive News about Poolbeg', published in the previous issue of 'Council Review'..

60 ENERGY IMPROVEMENT

A remote control heating system has been installed in over 2,000 homes by Louth County Council in what is the largest social housing regeneration scheme in Europe. The project was operated by the council in conjunction with SEAI, Kingspan and Electric Ireland and has seen an additional 100 homes receive a full energy upgrade.

62 ARTHUR COX

Niav O'Higgins, Partner and Head of Construction & Engineering with Arthur Cox, takes a look at the changes coming down the track in relation to public works contracting, ahead of developments next year, with the new public procurement directives required to be in place by April 2016.

64 INTEL IRELAND

In order to foster technology innovation Intel has been engaging with people through Hardware Hackathons - creative events in which a cross-section of experts engage in a collaborative process that brings technology ideas to life over a short period of time.

68 CLÚID HOUSING

The Retrofitting Project of the Year Award went to Clúid Housing at this year's Irish Building & Design Awards, in recognition of its major achievements in refurbishing five properties in North County Dublin, in partnership with Fingal County Council.

69 RILTA ENVIRONMENTAL

RILTA Environmental has been working closely with local authorities throughout Ireland since the early 1970s on the management of oil/chemical spills, tank cleaning, asbestos, fuel laundering waste, laboratory chemicals, household hazardous waste and contaminated soil from the Irish market.

71 IPA PROGRAMMES

With just under 70 accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to choose from, now is the time for public servants to enrol with the Institute of Public Administration for their education courses, which start this autumn.



Pat Gallagher,
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Bryan Doyle,
Wicklow CEO
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