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EDITOR'S COMMENT

The worst torrential flooding and gale force winds since 2009, which has wrought havoc across the country, have left communities and the local authorities yet again counting the costs.

Thousands of businesses and households were severely affected, particularly in Limerick and Cork, and local communities are now justifiably looking for state aid from the Government. The emergency services are to be applauded for their tireless efforts in coming to the rescue of those people most in need.

However, it seems incredible that it took so long for the National Emergency Co-ordination Group to hold its first plenary meeting to address the crisis. The group's chairman Sean Hogan stated in an interview on 'Morning Ireland' that it was not considered a 'national emergency' up until now! That is despite red and orange alerts being in operation since the end of last year. So, what actually constitutes a national emergency? It was quite obvious that local authorities could only do so much and now need help from the top.

So, at long last the Government is to make funding available. For example up to €100 million has been pledged for flood protection work for Cork. It is expected the three-year project will start in 2015.

But local authorities have also been told that they may have to spend money intended for roads on bolstering and repairing flood defences, with such funding to be prioritised "to maximum effect".

There have been calls for a scheme covering properties at high-risk of flooding to be rolled out across the country. The former Lord Mayor of Cork, Senator Colm Burke, said such a scheme – similar to that in the UK – must be put in place to support homeowners in high risk flood areas who are unable to get insurance to protect their homes.

Action is needed and needed now to roll out adequate assistance schemes to help those most affected. But, have any lessons been learned before the next deluge hits this country?

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9 NEWS UPDATE

23 EURO FOCUS

27 ACCC CONFERENCE

The implications of the new Local Government Reform Bill for elected members will be analysed at this year's conference of the Association of County & City Councils on 6 & 7 March in Cavan.

30 ESB NETWORKS

ESB Networks and Dublin City Council have joined forces through an energetic new partnership which will see a standardised system for reporting put in place to address the growing problem of litter and graffiti incidents in the capital.

33 POOLBEG INCINERATOR

With no guarantees that the Poolbeg Incinerator will finally get the 'green light' after a decade in the pipeline, Dublin City Manager Owen Keegan has said that the €96 million spent on the project to date cannot be recouped if the plan doesn't go ahead and he is anxious to bring it to a resolution.

36 EU ACE PROJECT

The Irish preliminary rounds of the Ace Awards took place in conjunction with this year's LAMA Community and Council Awards. Irish Ace partners - Codema and Tipperary Energy Agency - each sponsored a category and the winners go on to the finale of the Ace Awards.

39 DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR

With proposals for a Directly Elected Mayor to be put before Dublin's electorate as a single plebiscite alongside the 2014 Local Elections in May, Dr Philip Byrne looks at some international models currently in place, and outlines the options that could be adapted here to a model for Dublin.

46 SEAI ENERGY SHOW

The 'Energy Show 2014' at Dublin's RDS on 12 and 13 March is SEAI's key showcase for Irish businesses who want to be up to speed on the latest energy-saving solutions.

49 LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Louth County Council has scooped the 'Council of the Year' accolade at the LAMA Community and Council Awards, and also picked up the award in the 'Best Economic Partnership/Unit' category for the Louth Economic Forum.

53 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY

SEAI's pioneering role in creating the country's first sustainable energy community has resulted in the pilot scheme becoming the template for the development of a diverse range of projects that are changing the dynamics of energy production and consumption in Ireland.

56 'WATERFORD 1100' CELEBRATIONS

This year marks a most significant landmark for Waterford, as it celebrates 1100 years since the city was founded by the Vikings in 914, and Waterford City Council has put in place a calendar of celebratory events for Ireland's oldest city under the banner of 'Waterford 1100'.



John Tierney, MD,
Irish Water
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Owen Keegan, Dublin
City Manager
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Directly Electd Mayor
Dr Philp Byrne, IPA
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Pat Rabbitte, SEAI
Energy Show
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63 WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) has received over €130 million in research funding since 2003, and currently ranks as number one in the sector.

65 IRELAND-WALES PROGRAMME

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the Ireland-Wales Programme continues to strengthen ties between the southern and eastern counties of Ireland and the north and southwest of Wales.

68 ENERGIA GROUP

Energia supplies unmetered electricity to many county councils and many local authorities throughout Ireland and is now offering great savings on electricity and gas to home owners.

73 ROSIE HACKETT BRIDGE

When the Rosie Hackett Bridge opens in May, it will provide a vital public transport connection between the north and south sides of Dublin city centre. It has been carefully designed to sit comfortably in the capital's important and historic setting.

79 GRANGEGORMAN CAMPUS

The Grangegorman Campus will accommodate 1,000 DIT students this September and a further 10,000 students by September 2017, while the project will be transformative for Dublin's inner city in terms of higher education, health, community and enterprise.

82 SOCIAL HOUSING

The major regeneration of a housing estate in Longford Town by Clúid Housing Association, overall winner at the Irish Community Social Housing (ICSH) Awards 2013, is described as an "exemplar" to many other housing associations and local authorities across the country.

87 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AWARDS

Energy savings of €750 million have been made by the 600 organisations that have participated in the Sustainable Energy Awards over the last decade of the scheme.

95 ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND

Ordnance Survey Ireland has always endeavoured to be at the forefront of mapping, topography and aerial imagery in Ireland. So, with this objective in mind OSi recently entered into a new partnership with DigitalGlobe.

101 ENGINEERS IRELAND AWARDS

The East West Interconnector (EWIC), which links the electricity transmission grids of Ireland and Great Britain, is voted Engineering Project of the Year.

104 BORD NA MONA

Bord na Móna's Clean Energy Hub in the Midlands will see power generated in the region directly exported into the British energy market and beyond. This follows on foot of a Memorandum of Understanding on wind energy between Ireland and the UK.



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Energia offers new energy savings
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Rosie Hackett Bridge on track
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Longford Mayor Cllr Paul Connell
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