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EDITOR'S COMMENT

With many annual conferences, exhibitions and events taking place over the coming weeks, here are a few important dates to jot into your diary for April in particular.

This year's annual conference of the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) takes place on 6 and 7 April at Tracey's West County Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare. Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government, will be the guest speaker at the AILG Annual Conference Dinner on 7 April.

Taking place on the same dates, the Irish Planning Institute's conference for 2017 heads for Westport, Co. Mayo, which is celebrating its landmark 250th anniversary.

The ongoing issue of homelessness and the housing crisis, the retail future of towns, sustainable transport in the regions, and factors influencing developers' decisions and issues of access to development finance, will be high on the agenda at this year's IPI conference.

The IPI will also outline its priorities for planning reform and necessary changes for an effective and functioning planning system. 'Is the Irish planning system fit-for-purpose?' will be the central question addressed on 6-7 April at the Castlecourt Hotel in Westport.

In other news, the newly-elected President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce has recently called for a debate into possible unification of the four local authorities, which he says could act as "service providers to a new Dublin Regional Authority". Brendan Foster questions whether the division of Dublin into four separate local authorities remains the best structure for the future of the capital.

Meanwhile, Longford is set to receive a major boost over the coming years, with the creation of a €233 million holiday resort in Ballymahon, Co. Longford. The Center Parcs leisure resort, which will be the biggest tourism infrastructure development in the history of the State, will transform the tourism potential of the region, according to the chief executive of Longford County Council. Paddy Mahon gives 'Council Review' the lowdown on this and other projects underway in Longford.

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COUNCILREVIEW
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5 NEWS UPDATE

- Irish Planning Institute Conference (6&7 April)
- SEAI Energy Show 2017 (5&6 April)
- Action Plan for Rural Ireland
- Dublin Leads €11m District Network Project
- Donegal's Pro-Social Drivers Programme



Minister Simon Coveney
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15 AILG ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government, will be the guest speaker at the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) Annual Conference Dinner on 7 April at Tracey's West County Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare.

16 LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

The biggest tourism infrastructure development in the history of the State – the €233m Center Parcs holiday resort in Ballymahon, Co. Longford – will transform the tourism potential of the region, according to Paddy Mahon, chief executive of Longford County Council.



Paddy Mahon,
Longford CE
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22 DUBLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

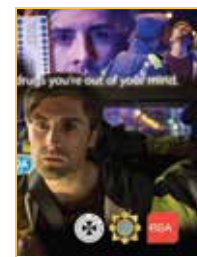
The newly-elected President of Dublin Chamber of Commerce is now calling for a debate into possible unification of the four local authorities as service providers to a new Dublin Regional Authority. Brendan Foster questions whether the division of Dublin into four separate local authorities remains the best structure for the future of the capital.



Brendan Foster
Dublin Chamber
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26 ROAD SAFETY LEGISLATION

New legislation under the Road Traffic Act 2016, due to come into force in mid-April, will give the Gardai the authority to subject motorists to random drug testing checks using a portable device for cannabis, cocaine and heroin.



Road Safety
Legislation
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31 ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

A team of researchers from NUI Galway is keen to hear from local authority directors of services for environment, waste and transport in addition to current or retired city and county managers to participate in an environmental impact study.

34 OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

Offaly County Council's My Open Library Service was overall winner in the 'Best Library Service' category at the 2016 Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards in Dublin.

37 CORK CITY COUNCIL

A comprehensive programme, which has seen Cork City Council fast-track solutions to social housing needs, is having the most significant impact on housing provision for over ten years. It will see over 400 new units under construction on 18 sites throughout the city by May.



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Social Housing
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39 AVIATION REGULATION

Ireland's Commission for Aviation Regulation is responsible for enforcing two specific European 'air passenger rights' laws in Ireland; to help passengers affected by flight cancellations, long delays or are denied boarding, and to provide assistance to disabled persons and those with reduced mobility.

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40 EMERGENCY NETWORKS

With an estimated 800,000 lifesaving devices in Ireland, including first aid kits, fire hydrants, extinguishers, AEDs and life rings, two local authorities (Dublin City Council and Wexford County Council) have so far supplied data to keep track of such devices in their own regions.



Emergency Networks
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43 EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

The German city of Essen has officially become the European Green Capital for 2017, following a ceremony in January in which the EU Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, handed over the title from Slovenia's Ljubljana to Essen.



Dundalk IT
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44 MUSIC GENERATION

With funding to the tune of €3m now available for its next phase of expansion, Music Generation is calling for applications from local authorities or Education & Training Boards to participate in its latest programme, to be rolled out across other areas of the country over the next five years.

45 DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Dundalk Institute of Technology's Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies (CFES) will spearhead a new €3.1m EU project to train 12 researchers to study the effects of storms and other climatic extremes on water quality in lakes and reservoirs.



IPA Training
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47 IPA TRAINING COURSES

Enrolments are now taking place for 70 part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes scheduled to start this autumn at the Whitaker School of Government and Management at the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

48 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is to invest more than €28m in towns, villages and rural recreation projects this year. It will work closely with local authorities nationwide to roll out a number of community schemes under the Action Plan for Rural Development.



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