



EDITOR'S COMMENT

When it was recently announced that Galway's city and county councils were set to merge, it came as no surprise really that the news was not welcomed by the locally elected public representatives.

It's certainly no secret that the proposed merger has long been strongly resisted and opposed by Galway's city councillors and their colleagues in the county councils, who believe that both authorities are completely different and that one body cannot rule for both.

And a former mayor of the city reckons that Galway will lose out on major tourism and infrastructural funding due to the decision to amalgamate the city and county councils. Cllr Padraig Conneely has also said that the city will lose out on arts and literary benefits which would now have to be shared with the county.

The Fine Gael councillor, who was Mayor of Galway from 2008 to 2009, where he was known as 'the Maverick Mayor', voiced his anger in a recent interview with 'The City Tribune' after it was confirmed that Galway's city and county councils would amalgamate no later than 2021. Local elections scheduled for next year will still go ahead as planned.

The merger has been mooted for the past three years with several reports and committees recommending the move.

Galway's former mayor said that the funding that the city receives will be 'slashed' as it will have to be shared out with the county. The merger of the two local authorities means that the body will now have 57 elected members – 39 in the county and 18 in the city.

However, in looking at the mergers of the city and councils in Limerick and Waterford, in addition to the union of South and North Tipperary County Councils, for all intents and purposes, all it would appear have been successful without any hitches.

And even environmental watchdog An Taisce has rowed in behind the Galway Expert Advisory Group (who had recommended the merger), noting that the decline of rural Galway would be halted with the amalgamation of the city and county councils.

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COUNCILREVIEW
JOURNAL FOR CITY AND COUNTY COUNCILS

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21 Ombudsman's Report 2017

There was a significant increase in the number of complaints about local authorities made to Ireland's Ombudsman Peter Tyndall, according to the findings of his annual report for 2017.



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25 Climate Change

Ireland is the second worst performing country after Poland in relation to climate change, in terms of national action and support for greater ambition at EU level, according to a recent report by Climate Action Network Europe.

29 Clare County Council

Clare County Council has become the first local authority in Ireland to achieve gold certification to the National Standards Authority of Ireland's Excellence Through People standard.

30 Innovation in Politics Awards

The Innovation in Politics Awards 2018 will again be an opportunity for local authorities to showcase their work and gain national and international recognition.



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40 Sport Ireland

With Sport Ireland investing in excess of €6m in local sports partnerships nationwide, its chief executive John Treacy says local authorities have a key role to play in developing more sports clubs and training programmes, particularly in disadvantaged communities.



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45 AILG Conference Report

Supports for councillors will be reviewed to ensure that they're sustainable and appropriate into the future, John Paul Phelan TD, Minister for State for Local Government and Electoral Reform, told delegates at this year's AILG Conference.

54 Women in Politics

With fewer female councillors than their male counterparts elected to city and county councils, will the local elections in 2019 bridge this gender gap?



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63 Maternity Leave

Female councillors are not entitled to take official paid maternity leave and despite moves in the Dáil to change the rules in order to provide 26 weeks' paid maternity leave, nothing has been secured as yet.

67 Personal Injury Claims

With a 50 per cent increase in personal injury cases lodged in the High Court and Circuit Court (2007 to 2016), €387m paid by local authorities in compensation claims from 2012-2017.

68 Community Engagement

Participatory Budgeting has been rolled out for the second year running by South Dublin County Council, with €300,000 earmarked for the Clondalkin Electoral Area during 2018.

072 Early Intervention

Could city councils here develop a model of prevention and early intervention to steer disadvantaged young people on the right path, similar to Nottingham City Council.

77 Kerry County Council

As tourism continues to play a major role in Kerry, the local authority is currently working with Fáilte Ireland on the 'Skelligs Experience' to further promote the Skellig area, the amenities and services.



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82 Social Media

Local authorities lit up Twitter during a recent 24-hour 'tweet-a-thon', in a bid to showcase the diverse range of projects across the country.

COUNCIL REVIEW

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'Council Review' is also online at
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87 Mayo County Council

Mayo scored an awards treble in Croke Park earlier this year when it scooped the coveted 'Council of the Year' title and two category wins at the 12th All Ireland Community and Council Awards.

89 Wi-Fi Networking

Seven town centres are set to become free public Wi-Fi zones under a new scheme, which will see free high-speed broadband installed in Sligo, Westport, Monaghan, Knock and Carrick-On-Shannon, with two further locations due to be announced in Kerry and Donegal.

91 Dublin Simon Community

Funding for an out-of-hours counselling service for the homeless was announced at the recent launch of Dublin Simon Community's interim report.

93 Respond Housing

Respond has ramped up delivery of social housing units, and its Board has set a target of 2,500 additional homes under its new strategy, according to CEO Declan Dunne.

97 Housing Agency

Having spent most of his working career in the food industry, the Housing Agency's newly-appointed chairman Michael Carey believes his outsider's perspective will be an advantage in making a meaningful contribution to the challenges facing the Agency, and the people it serves.

101 Circle VHA

Circle has assembled a multi-disciplinary team of housing and property professionals who will assist with the delivery of an additional 1,100 homes by the end of 2020.

103 Clúid Housing

Clúid Housing is working closely with Kerry County Council to deliver 120 new social housing units in Killarney, which will see the development of new houses and the completion of an unfinished apartment complex in the town.

105 Fold Ireland

Fold Ireland has turned the sod on a new 43-unit purpose-built development for older people in Dublin 8. Scheduled to be ready for occupation in early 2019, the New Dolphin's Park site is being delivered in partnership with DCC and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

107 ABM Design & Build

ABM Design and Build Ltd has completed Rapid Build Social Housing projects for Dublin City Council using off-site construction techniques at sites in Finglas and Drimnagh.

110 Wastewater Treatment

The EU is set to take action against Ireland, citing parts of the country as non-compliant in relation to the quality of sewer/wastewater discharges to our waterways, according to Patrick Moran, Executive Area Engineer with Tipperary County Council.

116 Whirlpool Research

Whirlpool research at IT Sligo is set to change the way rail, flood and sewerage systems are built in the future, following the findings of a study by researchers from IT Sligo and one of Switzerland's leading universities, shedding new light on the flow patterns of whirlpools.

118 Cork City Council

More than €700 million is currently being invested in Cork's city centre, through a number of private and public developments, which include multi-functional sites encompassing retail, office, education, culture and tourism.

120 IPA Training & Education

The Whitaker School of Government and Management at the Institute of Public Administration will provide almost 70 part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes this autumn, all designed for adult students.



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