

Local Government Arrangements in Cork

The Report of the Cork Local Government Committee

September 2015

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Chair's Foreword

Dear Minister,

It is with great pleasure I present to you the report of the Cork Local Government Committee.

I believe this report offers a unique, once in a lifetime opportunity for Cork and its citizens. A chance for a new beginning for local government in Cork. We have listened closely to everyone who has made a submission or expressed views about the best way forward. I strongly believe the solution we have come up with of one council to serve the whole of Cork, city and county, represents a 'win-win' situation for Cork.

At the heart of our proposal is a council with a strong city metropolitan division at its core that will be the powerhouse and driver of development for the Cork region. Pooling resources and operating as a single council promoting 'One Cork' and speaking with one voice will enable the new authority to bring together resources at regional level so as to put Cork in a much stronger position both nationally and internationally.

Our proposal sees a united and unified council that will be a model of excellence in delivering efficient, effective and innovative local government. It will enable Cork to develop centres of excellence in the delivery of services across the region in areas such as economic development, housing and planning. The council will have the capacity to meet the diverse needs of county and city residents in a way that is both dynamic and responsive to local concerns.

Of course not everyone will agree with our proposal. And indeed within the committee we had robust discussions and disagreements about the best way forward. But we are all agreed that maintaining the status quo is not an option. A larger metropolitan area is needed as is a local government system that strengthens the region. The proposal we have developed offers a way forward to address these challenges.

Under our new model, the existing anomalies in services between the city and the county will be eliminated. The different back office systems and processes will be streamlined

and a simplified approach for citizens throughout the region introduced. This consistent approach for all Cork citizens, combined with political governance structures that put the city and metropolitan area at the heart of the council, will strengthen local government and democracy in the region with Cork citizens being put first.

I would like to emphasise two important elements of our proposal. One is that there should be substantial devolution of powers from central government to the new Cork authority. We indicate how this is possible in our concluding chapter. The other is that municipal and metropolitan districts should be strengthened to give them a stronger role in local government. These are important parts of the proposal and support our vision for Cork local government.

I would also like to emphasise that the majority of members opted for unification both because we believe it is the best way forward for local government in Cork, but also because we believe that the evidence indicates that a boundary extension is, in effect, unworkable, for the following main reasons:

- Two separate authorities would lead to more divergent and potentially conflicting views on what is best for Cork. Planning for balanced economic and social development would become more difficult.
- There is a significant risk of major erosion of the greenbelt contrary to the agreed proposals of sustainable development set out in the CASP.
- In an enlarged city it will be more difficult to focus on the city centre, with the satellite towns likely taking more development.
- There are major financial complexities associated with boundary extension. These include ongoing payment of subventions from the city to the county, debt transfer from county to city, transfer of assets and liabilities, valuations, and associated legal complexity. Payments estimated at up to €36 million per annum from the city to the county arising from the extension of the city boundary are simply unsustainable.

- A boundary change of the scale envisaged is way beyond any previous boundary extension in the state, and is effectively a merger for the staff and structures affected. Just under 400 staff would be likely to need to transfer from the county to the city. There would be major challenges associated with this level of staff transfer.
- It is not clear how the area which would remain the responsibility of the county would work organisationally or structurally. This area would not be a cohesive unit, would have no clear focal point and would be far removed from the existing council headquarters.
- Historical evidence tells us that boundary extension has not and cannot work despite numerous failed and deeply acrimonious attempts over the last 50 years

After our extensive deliberations I am confident that the city will flourish as the centre of a strong united Cork. The position of Cork city as the centre of a dynamic city region and an effective counter balance to the growth of Dublin can be advanced more effectively in a unified structure than with two stand-alone structures. Much more can be achieved with a unitary authority and combined resources than with divided responsibility. The model that is being proposed for Cork is more than just a merger. There would be an irresistible case for major devolution of powers to what would be by far the largest unit of government within the state.

Our recommendation comes after eight months of a very serious and thorough review. There has been a huge level of engagement, and thanks are due to many people. I would particularly like to thank the mayors of the city and county councils, elected members, the chief executives and their management teams and the staff of the city and county councils for their support throughout the process. And to thank the national politicians and MEPs and many people and organisations that took the time to make submissions. Finally I would like to recognise the hard work and dedication of my fellow Committee members throughout the process.

I believe that as people get a chance to examine and reflect on the details of our proposal, it will be well received in the city and the county. Unification can galvanise and mobilise citizens around a new and exciting future for Cork. Now is not the time to look back but to look forward. Our proposal provides the opportunity to break the logjam after 50 years of failed attempts to revise local government boundaries in Cork. One council for Cork will hugely strengthen the positioning, status and image of the Cork region globally, creating a new drive, energy and focus to attract foreign direct investment, substantially accelerate job creation and promote local development for the benefit of all citizens.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alf Smiddy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Alf Smiddy, BComm, FCA, FMII, MSc

Chairman

Cork Local Government Review Committee

September 2015

Executive Summary

On the 15th January 2015 the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr Alan Kelly TD, appointed a statutory committee to review the Cork city boundary and other local government arrangements in Cork. The Committee was asked to carry out an objective review of local government arrangements in Cork city and county and to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to:

- a) whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or
- b) whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified

The full terms of reference for the Committee are set out in Appendix 1.

The Cork Local Government Committee was chaired by Mr Alf Smiddy and its membership included Mr Tom Curran; Professor Dermot Keogh; Mr John Lucey, S.C.; and Dr Theresa Reidy. The Committee was independent in the performance of its functions.

The Committee consulted extensively during the course of its work. An invitation for submissions was made in the local and national press, which produced 96 written responses. The Committee also met with the mayors of Cork City and County Councils, executive and elected members of the councils, national politicians, MEPs, and with individuals and groups from business, the community and academia, and reviewed a number of relevant reports and publications, both national and international. A list of those who provided submissions in response to the consultation is included in Appendix 2. Details of the consultation process are outlined in Appendix 3. International experience is summarised in Appendix 5.

The Committee is in agreement that retaining the status quo is not a realistic option. The no change option would continue to see the city and county work independently, albeit

collaboratively, to secure the best interests of their respective areas and the region as a whole. However, Cork would continue to operate at a sub-optimal level.

The Committee identified a number of criteria against which the options of boundary extension and unitary council were assessed. After extensive deliberations, a majority of three Committee members (Tom Curran, John Lucey and Alf Smiddy) favour amalgamation of Cork city and county councils into a unitary council and the report and recommendations are presented to reflect the majority position. Two Committee members (Dermot Keogh and Theresa Reidy) favour a boundary extension for Cork city and the retention of two separate city and county councils, and their position is reflected in Appendix 6.

Recommendations and next steps

Recommendations

The Committee's vision is to create a model of local government for Cork that can support and promote the success of the Cork region in social, economic and environmental terms. A renewed Cork local government, with a strong city as its core, of sufficient scale, resources and vigour, can have a transformational effect. This would enable Cork to act as an effective counter-weight at a national scale to the current economic predominance of Dublin and the eastern part of the country. It would help give Cork greater capacity to compete internationally and to act as an engine of growth not only for the entirety of Cork but the wider Munster/southern area of the country.

The majority view of the Committee is that this vision is best achieved through amalgamation and the creation of a single council. It is in this context that the following recommendations are made:

1. A unitary authority of Cork City and County Council should be established as the statutory local authority for Cork as a whole, encompassing the combined areas of the current city and county.
2. An appropriate Cork metropolitan area should be designated encompassing the city and suburbs but incorporating also a further surrounding area that would be

consistent with the sustainable physical, economic and social development of the city in the medium to long-term. This would be the existing Metropolitan Cork area as set out in CASP and used by both the city and county council already for planning purposes. Metropolitan Cork had a population of 289,739 in 2011 and it covers an area of 834 square kilometres (see Figure 2.1 and Appendix 4). The city within the metropolitan area should be redefined to reflect the current reality on the ground, a task to be undertaken by the implementation group.

3. The representational body for the new Cork metropolitan area should constitute one of three divisions which would form a central element of the new Cork City and County Council. In recognition of the existing divisional structures these could be titled as follows:
 - a. Cork Metropolitan Division
 - b. Cork North and East Municipal Division
 - c. Cork West and South Municipal Division
4. Municipal districts, with a metropolitan district for Cork city, should be established in conjunction with electoral area re-definition. The local electoral areas should be reconfigured to produce a greater number of more territorially compact areas which would be more closely identified with local communities and traditional local loyalties and would be more manageable for councillors.
5. Meetings of the City and County Council should focus on a limited number of key strategic issues for the authority. The structure of the unitary council should be addressed by the implementation group. A possible alternative to full unitary council meetings of 86 members would be for a smaller number of members to be appointed to meet at full unitary council level from the three divisions.
6. In tandem with the location of more strategic functions at the level of the unitary council, the role and status of the metropolitan/municipal divisions and metropolitan and municipal districts should be enhanced beyond that of current

municipal districts by assigning appropriate functions that are currently confined to city/county councils to divisional and district level in Cork. These functions should be provided directly by statute. Particular attention should be given to ensuring members can perform an adequate budgetary role at metropolitan/municipal division level. In addition the potential to assign roles to the metropolitan/municipal division members in relation to functions devolved from central government should be fully exploited.

7. Special provisions should be enacted to preserve the historic civic status of Cork city, including retaining the role of Lord Mayor for the chair of the metropolitan division and associated status and customs. The option of a directly elected Lord Mayor should be considered.
8. The unified City and County Council should have responsibility for the main strategic functions of local government such as adoption of the annual budget, the corporate plan, the development plan and the local economic and community plan. An economic development unit should be established to promote and coordinate an integrated approach to development.
9. In addition to these strategic functions, significant powers and functions should be identified for devolution from central government and state agencies to the unitary authority. This would represent a radical new departure for local government in Cork, bringing it into closer alignment with its counterparts in most European states. It would also provide a model for other parts of the country.
10. All the executive and corporate functions and resources of local government in Cork should be consolidated in the unitary authority as the statutory local authority under the management of a chief executive for Cork City and County Council. This will reduce duplication and maximise efficiency.
11. The appointment of a chief executive for the new authority is a priority issue and should be progressed as soon as possible. The appointment should be advanced through an open competition process.

12. A deputy chief executive position should be created. The deputy chief executive should have designated responsibility for Metropolitan Cork, and also for economic development for the entire council.
13. The next local elections are due to be held in mid-2019. Given the importance of the changes in governance arrangements being recommended, the Committee considers that measures should be taken to develop and implement substantial elements of the new system on a transitional basis ahead of the 2019 elections.

Next steps

If the government accept the Committee's recommendations, it would be desirable to begin the planning and implementation process at the earliest possible time. The Committee recommends that:

- An implementation group be established immediately following the government decision. The implementation group should draw up and oversee an implementation plan to ensure the new arrangements are in place by the local elections in 2019.
- Cork city and county councils appoint a dedicated project team from existing staff to assist in the preparation of the implementation plan. A local co-ordinator should be appointed to drive the implementation process at local level. This should be a senior position, at least at director of service level, and someone with proven experience in large-scale change management.

1. Introduction

1.1 Establishment of the Committee

On the 15th January 2015 the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr Alan Kelly TD, appointed a statutory committee to review the Cork city boundary and other local government arrangements in Cork. The Committee was asked to carry out an objective review of local government arrangements in Cork city and county, including the boundary of Cork city, the local government areas and the local authorities for such areas, and to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to:

- c) whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or
- d) whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified; and
- e) any further related matters on which the Minister may request the Committee to make recommendations during the course of its review.

The full terms of reference for the Committee are set out in Appendix 1.

The Cork Local Government Committee was chaired by Mr Alf Smiddy and its membership included Mr Tom Curran; Professor Dermot Keogh; Mr John Lucey, S.C.; and Dr Theresa Reidy. The Committee was independent in the performance of its functions.

The general background to the reasons for the establishment of the Committee is set out in *Putting People First: An Action Plan for Effective Local Government* (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012a). Specifically in relation to Cork, the plan states that with regard to defining metropolitan areas:

The need to recognise and define an appropriate metropolitan area is also clearly evident in the case of Cork, having regard to the very significant spill over of suburban development and population in the environs of Cork City located in the

administrative area of Cork County Council and adjacent towns. For practical purposes, these areas of development form part of the de facto city, with obvious close linkage for a range of purposes – social, commercial, employment, transport and indeed, in terms of identity - with the urban centre that constitutes the administrative area of Cork City Council. More significantly perhaps, the fact that the administration of what is, in real terms, a largely continuous, or closely connected, urban area is divided between two entirely separate local authorities carries potential future risks, for example, with regard to development, spatial planning, and economic and social evolution, of the type which were identified in the reports of the local government committees in Limerick and Waterford. Such risks can be mitigated by close co-operation between the relevant authorities, which has been a feature of administration in Cork, but a more prudent long-term approach would be to bring the administrative configuration into line with the demographic and developmental reality (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012a: 86).

1.2 Work of the Committee

During the course of its work the Committee met formally on 25 occasions (including meetings with deputations).

The Committee has consulted extensively, a process which helped the Committee identify the objectives and challenges which its recommendations address. A general invitation for submissions was made in the local and national press, which elicited a wide-spread response. The Committee's consultative efforts included meetings with the executive and elected members of Cork City Council and Cork County Council, national politicians and MEPs. The Committee has considered all submissions received, in addition to reviewing a number of relevant reports and publications. A list of those who provided submissions in response to the consultation is included in Appendix 2. Details of the consultation process are outlined in Appendix 3.

The Committee would like to thank the elected members, the chief executives and their management teams and the staff of the city and county councils for their support. In

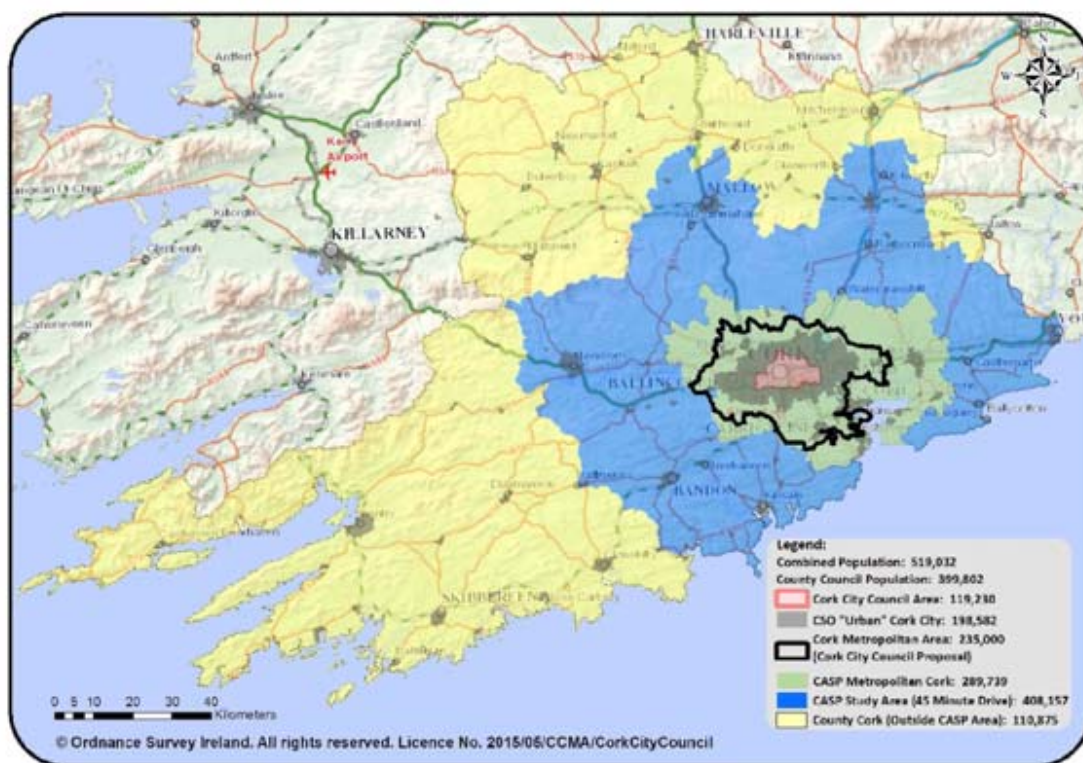
particular the Committee wish to acknowledge the administrative and technical support provided by Paul Moynihan, Niall Healy, Linda Skillington and Nicky Carroll. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the assistance received from officials of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The Committee would also like to thank the individuals and organisations that chose to make a submission, and Richard Boyle of the Institute of Public Administration, who provided research support for the Committee.

2. Setting the Context

2.1 A word on areas and their definitions

Reference is made throughout this report to various configurations of areas encompassing part or all of Cork city and county. For the purposes of clarity the main areas referenced in the report are outlined below in Figure 2.1 and the accompanying text.

Figure 2.1 Area boundaries



Cork city. This refers to the current configuration of Cork City Council with the existing city boundary. The population of the city in 2011 was 119,230 with an area of 40 square kilometres (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map).

Cork city and suburbs. This refers to the Central Statistics Office's description of what it regards as the 'city and suburbs'. The 2011 population was 198,582 and it has an area of 165 square kilometres (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map).

Cork Metropolitan Area. This area refers to the proposal for a boundary extension put forward by Cork City Council in their submission. It includes the satellite towns of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Carrigtohill and Glanmire (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map). It contains a population of approximately 235,000.

Metropolitan Cork. The first Land Use and Transport Study (LUTS) in 1978 identified an area with a defined boundary that has been used consistently as a spatial planning unit by both local authorities. This metropolitan definition was confirmed in the CASP strategy (see below) as the basis for development and growth in the city-region, when the area was termed Metropolitan Cork. As Brady and O’Neill (2013: 126) note ‘... it has emerged as a widely used unit of analysis and policy both within a CASP context and also as a basis for the jointly-commissioned metropolitan projects. As well as the two local authorities developing a Joint Housing Strategy and a Joint Retail Strategy, the Metropolitan Area is used as one of Cork County Council’s Strategic Planning Areas for the County. In addition, this unit has formed the basis for metropolitan statistical analysis since 1976, providing a very useful resource for measuring and assessing performance and change in social, economic and spatial trends’. Metropolitan Cork had a population of 289,739 in 2011 and it covers an area of 834 square kilometres (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map).

CASP study area. The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) is an initiative jointly sponsored by Cork City Council and Cork County Council which provides a vision and strategy for the development of the Cork city-region up to 2020. It was first published in 2001 and updated in 2008. The CASP study area covers an area determined by a journey time of about 45 minutes from Cork city. This area has been defined as the Cork city-region and includes Cork city, the satellite towns of Midleton, Carrigtohill, Carrigaline, Ballincollig and Blarney, and the ring towns and rural hinterlands of Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, Fermoy, Youghal and Kinsale. The population of the CASP area in 2011 was 408,157 and it covers an area of 4,102 square kilometres (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map).

Cork county. Cork county refers to the area covered by the current county boundary (and excludes the city). The population of the county in 2011 was 399,802 and it covers an area of 7,465 square kilometres (see Appendix 4 for more detailed map).

2.2 The historical context

A document held in the City and County Archives (Collins, 1961) sets out the history of Cork city with reference to its boundaries. Cork obtained its first charter as a municipal city in 1189. In 1608-9 a subsequent charter stated that the boundaries of the city should be fixed according to a circuit of three miles radiating from the existing external walls. The Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act 1840 set the boundary that by and large lasted until 1955. It was unpopular even at the time, and requests for boundary extensions were lodged in 1848, 1881, 1903 and 1912, though they all failed for various reasons.

During the early 1950s negotiations took place between Cork Corporation and Cork County Council regarding areas on the north and south sides of the city on which the Corporation had built or was planning to build local authority housing. An extension of the boundary of 857 acres was agreed and took effect on 1st April 1955.

In 1960 the Corporation petitioned the Minister for a further extension of the city boundary. This was opposed by Cork County Council. An inquiry took place in 1961 and 1962, and subsequently a boundary extension covering 6,250 acres was agreed in 1965 (at a cost to the city of £1.55 million following arbitration proceedings). See Appendix 4 for a map of the area.

In September 1970 in a letter to both councils the Minister for Local Government proposed one manager for two councils. Whilst this was considered at joint committee meetings between the two councils, no action was taken.

In 1971, the Government produced a white paper entitled *Local Government Reorganisation*. With regard to Cork it stated:

Cork city, with a total population of more than 125,000, presents particular difficulties, for substantial development is certain to take place in the general area,

much of it outside, but adjacent to, the present county borough boundary. The proper planning of the area could require that the existing city and its suburbs, together with the adjacent areas in which development is likely to take place over a period of up to twenty years ahead, should be the responsibility of one authority. Indeed an enlarged area, covering both sides of the lower harbour might well be necessary. The Government have carefully considered the question of whether even more radical alterations in present arrangements should be made. They have come to the conclusion that neither the establishment of a unified authority for Cork city and county nor the establishment of a special agency (on the lines recommended in the Buchanan report) to take over some of the functions of the local authorities would be the right solution. It is, however, accepted that special steps will be essential so as to ensure that the work of the city and county authorities is co-ordinated and that their plans and activities harmonise; the Minister for Local Government will give further consideration to this aspect.

However, no changes were made on foot of this report.

In 1985 the Minister for the Environment established a commission to advise on the re-drawing of electoral boundaries in counties and county boroughs outside of Dublin. This included advice on whether the boundary of the county borough of Cork should be extended. Again, no action was taken.

In 2006 the city council requested the then city manager to prepare a report and map setting out the case for a boundary extension (see Appendix 4 for map of the proposed area). The proposed boundary extension represented the urban area immediately contiguous to the existing city boundary. This was proposed as the most practical and ‘best fit’ solution between a large Metropolitan Cork area (including the satellite towns) and a minimalist extension which might result in the need for a further extension at some time in the future. The extension was justified using criteria based on the four goals of the city’s corporate plan: civic leadership; developing the city; quality service; and building synergies. The proposal was put forward from the perspective of the city and the implications for the county were not assessed. It did not proceed.

The foregoing brief summary illustrates that the delineation of the boundary between Cork city and county has been a source of some contention for many years. All options, from boundary extension to merger, have been considered in the past, but no change has been made since 1965.

2.3 The international context

A detailed summary of international experience with regard to selected local government re-organisation is included at Appendix 5. In summary, there is a general trend towards a smaller number of larger local authorities in several OECD countries at both the municipal and regional levels (Chatry, 2015). Savings, economies of scale, or performance improvement tend not to be a major feature of such mergers and amalgamations. The justification is more in terms of harder to quantify issues such as improvements in strategic capacity of organisations, the limitations of benefits of shared services and cooperation, and the opportunity to enhance the skill base of a smaller number of local authorities.

In the case of Cork, the particular role of second cities and city regions in national development was considered in an international context. Greg Clark, Global Advisor to Cities, was commissioned by the Wellington Local Government Commission to provide advice on city regions and their development. Clark identifies important leadership success factors for city regions:

- the ability to cross national and global boundaries to establish a confident and inclusive position towards the outside world that is attractive to both investors and skilled workers
- the ability to achieve cut through in a crowded market about what the city-region does and its vision for the future
- far-sightedness, and the ability to engage people and partners (and especially with central government) in supporting the vision for what the city-region can become

- commitment to a single purposeful plan that integrates the different strategies and plans into one framework designed to achieve the city-region's vision for the future
- the ability to advocate for one plan for the city-region with one voice and one identity, ensuring alignment, coherence and cut through and impact. (Local Government Commission, 2014: 164)

Brady and O'Neill (2013: 108-109) suggest that:

the city-region represents a more appropriate scale in which to address the environmental and ecological challenges that emerge in the context of dispersed settlement patterns, complex commuting and the suburbanisation of housing, employment and commercial activity. These changes suggest a need for a reconsideration of the way in which cities are managed to reflect the new governance space urbanisation demands. This idea of metropolitan governance is based on the legitimate social, economic, environmental and political imperatives which demand an urban management policy that is spatially and functionally more sophisticated than traditional city government mechanisms which have discouraged territorial and sectoral integration.

More specifically with regard to second cities such as Cork, *Second Tier Cities* by the European Spatial Observatory Network (ESPON, 2013) concludes that urban policy at national and EU level needs to recognise the potential of second-tier cities as part of national economic development and to pursue stronger, more explicit and economic place-based urban policies that support city-regions at all levels of the urban hierarchy. The report recommends more devolution of powers and more integration of functions at the city level with an emphasis on local leadership.

2.4 The national context

Local government reform

The main traditional functions of local government include the areas of housing; planning; roads; water supply; sewage collection and treatment; environmental protection; and recreation facilities and amenities.

A number of significant national policy developments in recent years have influenced local government arrangements, and provide a context for deliberations of the Committee on the best local government arrangements for Cork. These include *The Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group (2010)*, which identified areas for expenditure savings including through the sharing and in some cases full merging of staff complements between local authorities, and the *Report of the Steering Group for the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development* (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government 2012b 2012) which recommended an enhanced role for local authorities in local and community development.

The most influential and relevant policy development occurred in October 2012, when the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government published *Putting People First: An Action Plan for Effective Local Government*. The action plan covers functions, structures, funding, operational arrangements, governance, the role of the executive and the elected council, and engagement with local communities. Some of the highlights include:

- The structural reform of local authorities, including the abolition of all 80 town councils and the merger of Waterford City and County Councils, Tipperary North and South County Councils, and Limerick City and County Councils. The total number of elected local councillors was consequently reduced from 1627 to 949. A new model of municipal governance based on municipal districts within counties was introduced. The eight regional authorities and two regional assemblies were replaced by three regional assemblies

- New funding, accountability and governance arrangements including the introduction of a local property tax to fund local services, which could be varied by local authorities. More robust performance monitoring of local authorities by the establishment of a new National Oversight and Audit Commission. Reserved functions of elected members strengthened and local authority managers re-designated as chief executives.
- An expanded role for local authorities in economic development and job creation, and closer alignment of local and community development supports with local government. A local community development committee (LCDC) created in each city and county for planning and oversight of all local and community development programmes. New local enterprise offices (LEOs), integrated with local authority business support units, to create a one stop shop for business support.
- New service efficiency arrangements including workforce planning, more use of performance information, and the development of service level agreements between government departments and local authorities.

It should be noted that the impact of the abolition of town councils has been particularly significant in Cork county which previously had 12 town councils in place, nine of which were former urban district councils with largely independent status and powers.

Apart from these reports and programmes for reform, local government has been affected by a number of public service wide developments including the general moratorium on recruitment and promotion, and the implementation of incentivised early retirement and career break schemes. The *Public Service Agreement 2010-14* (Croke Park Agreement) and the *Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016* (Haddington Road Agreement) (Labour Relations Commission, 2013) introduced changes to the terms and conditions of staff, including pay reductions and additional working hours.

In general terms, the effect of these changes has meant that the functions and role of local authorities have changed significantly. Shared services have become more prominent. Specific areas where a lead authority approach is in operation include:

- Laois County Council is providing shared payroll and superannuation services for all local authorities
- Kerry County Council is the lead authority for the Local Authority National Procurement Office.
- The consolidation of controls for the internal movement of hazardous waste is managed by Dublin City Council on a national basis.
- Offaly County Council is the designated lead authority in charge of waste collection permitting for local authorities.

Some of the service provision elements traditionally carried out by local government have gone elsewhere. In Cork, waste collection in both the city and county has been outsourced. In the 1990s, the National Roads Authority took over the provision of the national roads network (with local authorities undertaking maintenance work on their behalf), the Environmental Protection Agency assumed some responsibilities for waste management, and waste management planning undertaken under a regional structure incorporating groups of local authorities. Irish Water has taken on responsibility for water (with services provided by local authorities under service level agreements reached with Irish Water). Student grant applications have been transferred to Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI), and driver license issue and renewal to the National Driver License Service. When combined with a growing use of outsourcing and shared services, local authorities are seen as less engaged in direct service delivery to local citizens.

In this changed environment it is recognised that local authorities need to evolve and take on more of a local leadership and coordination role. A vision for local government is set out in *Putting People First*:

Local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012a: iii)

In fulfilling these functions there is an increasing recognition that local authorities must work with the community and other organisations to address issues and problems. In this respect they act as leaders and facilitators of change. Local authorities need to further develop their community and economic development leadership role. This role is broader than the direct service provision role, recognising the need to act in partnership with others for the development of the county or city. In many respects, under this guise the local authority can be seen as the catalyst for change and development, bringing together local and national interests and making things happen. Economic development, sustainable transport, ‘smart cities’ and environmental management are examples where local authorities have a leadership role to play.

Very much linked to the leadership issue is that of the local authority as coordinator of the various agencies and organisations (public, voluntary and private) at the local level. Many of the issues faced by local government, as with all public services, are complex, multi-faceted problems (economic development, environment, housing etc.) that cannot be solved by straight-forward, traditional solutions. They often require a capacity for leadership and innovation, focused on cooperation and coordination at local, regional, national and international levels. Local government must establish effective working relationships at all these levels and identify and facilitate new ways of working to ensure effective coordination between the key players. Much of this work is about trying to build capacity to enable local authorities to get people out of their silos and working together on projects at the local level.

There is also recognition that many of the existing local authority functions require them to take an increasingly regional or sub-regional perspective on issues. For example with

regard to economic development, waste management and environmental protection, there is a move to greater regional coordination and arrangements.

Local government reform in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford

The Committee's terms of reference refer to the need to take account of experience to date of local authority merger in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. Plans to merge Limerick City and County, Waterford City and County, and Tipperary North and South County Councils became reality following the local elections in 2014. Consequently the Committee met with senior management representatives from these three authorities to examine and assess the mergers and their progress. (A representatives from the Committee also consulted with John Fitzgerald, former Dublin City manager, to discuss the 1994 abolition of Dublin County Council and its replacement with three separate administrative county councils: Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin). There was a strong sense that economic development is a key driver of change with regard to the mergers. Also, in the cases of Limerick and Waterford, the key role of the city as the driver of development for the city and county was noted, with the importance of resources being maintained for the metropolitan district and the majority of council members and the population being in the metropolitan district.

The general view of the executives in the Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford authorities appears to be that unification has been beneficial, despite some initial reservations in all cases. This is not to say that there are no challenges or difficulties, particularly in terms of industrial relations and cultural changes, but the general view is a very positive one. In the cases of Limerick and Waterford, there is no evidence that the city has been disadvantaged in terms of priority or status as a result of the merger.

The extent of savings in Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary has not been documented to any significant extent, so it is not possible to verify savings and efficiency gains, but in all cases they claim that savings are being made in line with initial estimates. In Tipperary, for example, by February 2015, payroll savings in excess of €3 million have been noted. This figure is based on departures since the merger was announced, less those posts refilled with the approval of the Department of Environment, Community and

Local Government. The costs of the merger included one off expenditure on IT harmonisation, office improvements and corporate branding and are estimated at €1.7 million, somewhat lower than the anticipated figure. There have also been efficiencies and staff time freed for other priorities associated with the elimination of duplication of some activities, such as the need now for only one development plan, one annual report, one set of accounts, one audit etc.

Other national policy developments

The National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) (Government of Ireland, 2002) remains the primary national policy document in relation to sustainable development in Ireland in that it addresses the balance, at national level, between social, economic, physical development and, in particular, population growth. With regard to Cork, the NSS states that the wider Cork city area is an engine of growth or Gateway. Cork is also identified as one of a number of possible urban ‘counterweights to the pull eastwards on the island’.

The *Implementing the National Spatial Strategy* (INSS) report (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2010b) notes that cities are increasingly emerging as the principal drivers of national and economic development, and as centres for innovation, entrepreneurship and investment. The report recognises that successful countries and regions need successful cities at their core. In Cork, it notes that implementation of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) is laying the foundation for more sustainable urban development.

The NSS will be replaced by a National Planning Framework (NPF), and work is underway on the development of the NPF.

Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) (South West Regional Authority, 2010) identifies the Metropolitan Cork area as the location of greatest population concentration with a concern expressed regarding the possibility of continued population growth

outside of the urban areas. High rates of development are identified in the villages and rural areas in the CASP ring area which the report notes has contributed to unnecessarily low growth rates for the Gateway (mainly the city), thereby resulting in excessive car-based commuting in order to access employment, shops and other services. The report goes on to state that: ‘This trend, if allowed to continue, represents a significant weakening of the urban structure of the Cork Gateway, itself the urban-core on which the South West Region depends. If not corrected, this trend may cause a weakening in the attractiveness of the Gateway to inward investment in future jobs and services’ (South West Regional Authority, 2010: 17).

RPGs will be replaced by Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) prepared by the regional assemblies, as outlined in *Putting People First*. These RSESs are being prepared in tandem with the National Planning Framework. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2014: 10) note that the RSESs together with investment in place-making are crucial in supporting Ireland’s attraction of FDI. They see place-making as creating competitive, dynamic and globally connected city regions as attractors of investment, putting particular emphasis on the role of city regions of scale as the focal points for mobile international investment (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 2014: 16).

Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness

The *Our Cities* report (Forfás / National Competitiveness Council, 2009) focused on the global competition between cities and the fact that cities are increasingly seen as the drivers of national competitiveness and economic and social development. With regard to city governance, the report notes (Forfás / National Competitiveness Council, 2009: 9): ‘Innovative means of encouraging cooperation between local authorities should be explored ... Where cooperation is not attainable, it will be important to ensure that the competitiveness of a city is not hindered. This may involve assessing the merits of alternative mechanisms for coherent governance, including the possibility of altering boundary lines or the merging of local authorities’.

2.5 The local context

Following the tensions between Cork City and Cork County Councils with regard to the boundary extension issue in the 1960s, considerable effort was put into facilitating greater cooperation and collaboration between the councils. This has been seen as largely effective, to the extent that Cork is now often cited as a model for cooperation between local authorities.

An early product of this cooperation was the production of the first Land-Use and Transportation Study, LUTS1, published in 1978 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1978) and updated as LUTS2 in 1992 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1992). The LUTS strategy identified a study area which subsequently became known as Metropolitan Cork (Figure 2.1). The LUTS plan was replaced in 2001 by the Cork Area Strategic Plan (Atkins, 2002) and its update (Indecon International/RPS, 2008). Jointly commissioned by Cork City and County Councils, the CASP is intended as a framework to enable Cork to become a leading European city region - globally competitive, socially inclusive and culturally enriched.

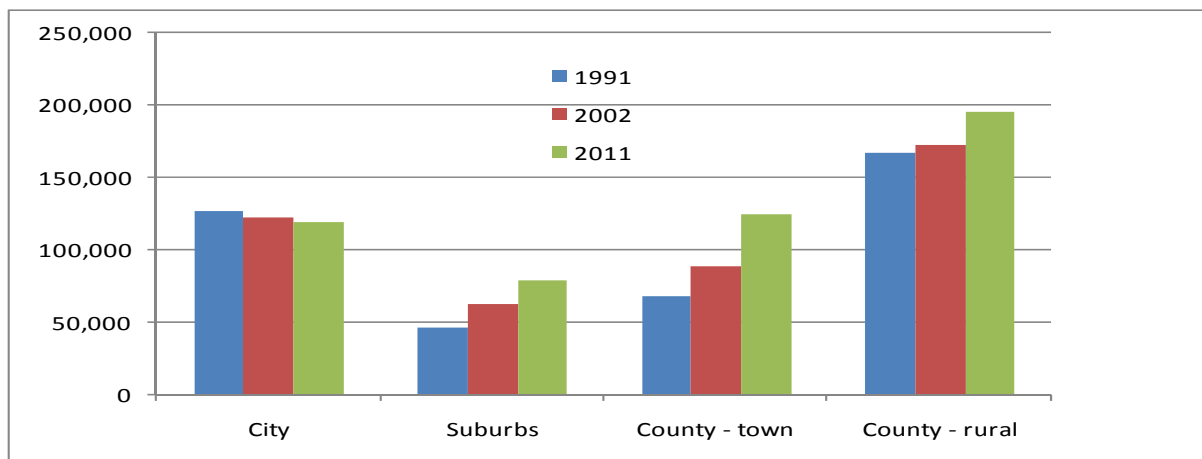
Other examples of cooperation and collaboration include major emergency planning, joint housing and retail strategies, and homeless services. There are also examples of shared services between the councils. For example veterinary services are now provided solely by Cork County Council. The Cork County Council laboratory service has reached the required ISO quality standards and has the potential to provide services on behalf of both local authorities to Irish Water. A joint ICT strategy has been developed. And as the city submission to the Committee states:

Both authorities have been to the forefront in local initiatives to promote Cork through participation in joint initiatives such as regional marketing, economic fora and events support. The Irish Open Golf Championship was a major success in Cork in 2014 which brought over 100,000 people to Fota Island. It was the second largest event in attendance terms on the European Tour in 2014. ‘MTV crashes Cork’ provided a similar opportunity to send Cork's message to the world. Both

events were heavily financed by the two authorities and demonstrate the value of close cooperation.

However, despite this high level of cooperation, the Committee is aware of a number of reports and studies undertaken in recent years that suggest that institutional arrangements as they currently exist in Cork city and county are not working as efficiently and effectively for the region as they might. For example, with regard to population changes, as Figure 2.2 shows, population has declined in the existing city boundary, and is below expectations set out in CASP (though the population of the city and suburbs has increased due to rapid increase in the suburbs). The Cork Gateway report produced as part of the Gateways and Hubs Development Index 2012 notes that a challenge exists within the urban core to attract and accommodate population growth and that one of the significant contributory factors is the shortage of suitable land within the urban core which can accommodate development on the scale required to encourage substantial population growth (Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly/Border, Midland & Western Regional Assembly, 2013: 19).

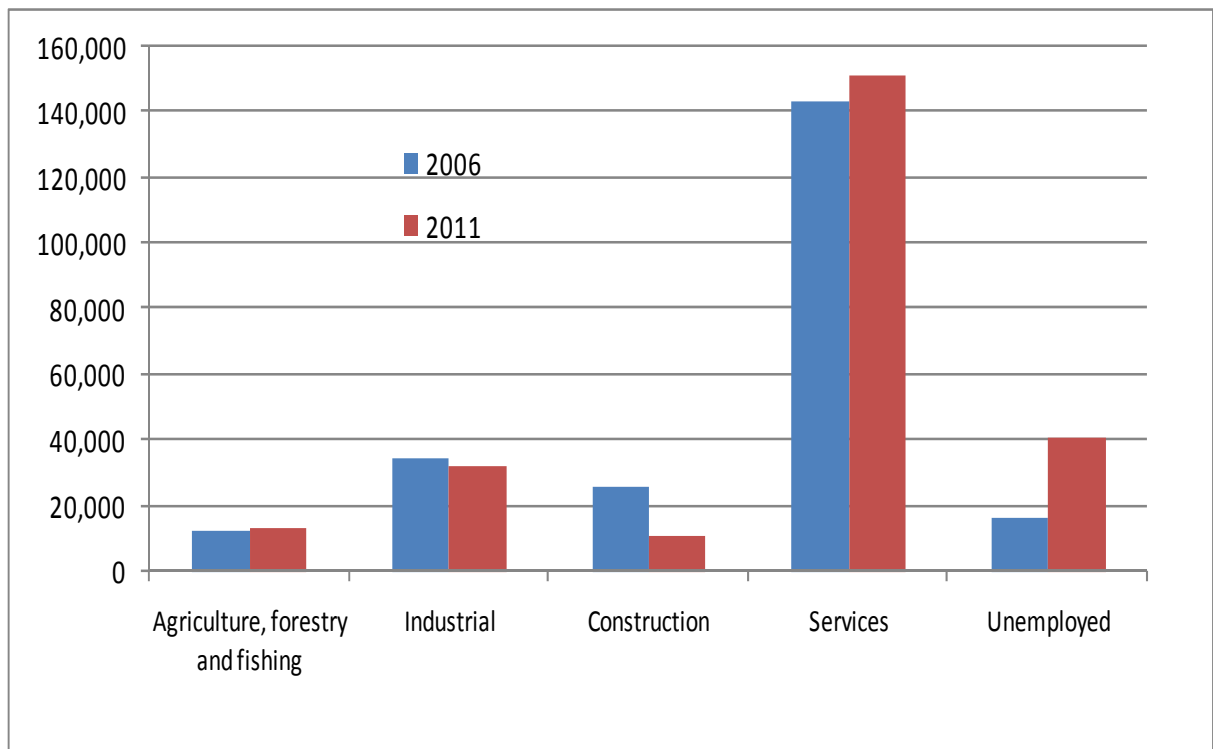
Figure 2.2 Population change



Source: CSO

The composition of the city and county labour force is shown in Figure 2.3. The predominant importance of services is clearly illustrated, as is the growth in unemployment between 2006 and 2011.

Figure 2.3 Cork city and county labour force



Source: CSO

Whilst generally employment in Cork has held up relatively well in comparison to some other areas during the recession, the profile and distribution of employment has not been entirely in line with plans as set out in CASP, and unemployment remains a major challenge. For example the redevelopment of brownfield sites, particularly Cork docklands, has been subject to delays in the delivery of vital infrastructure as well as inherent difficulties in developing the area itself. At the same time developments such as Cork Airport business park have led to employment growth in some suburban areas and potential competition between the city centre and wider Cork metropolitan developments.

Cork also has to deal with issues of social disadvantage and inclusion, with different needs across the city and county. Cork city faces challenges of relatively high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. The Pobal HP Deprivation Index (Haase and Pratschke, 2012) shows the relative affluence or disadvantage of geographical areas based on a range of census data (Table 2.1). Scoring of the absolute HP index range from

approximately -40 (the most disadvantaged) to +40 (the most affluent). It can be seen that Cork city has a higher absolute HP Index score, and indeed roughly a quarter of Cork city's population is classified as disadvantaged to various degrees, as opposed to less than one per cent of the population in the county.

Table 2.1 Pobal HP Deprivation Index (Haase and Pratschke, 2012) for Cork city and county

	Absolute HP Index Score 2006	Absolute HP Index Score 2011	Change in Absolute HP Index Score 2006-2011
Cork City	-4.08	-8.98	-4.90
Cork County	2.83	-4.21	-7.04

Finally, Table 2.2 gives some basic data on Cork city and county councils.

Table 2.2 Cork City and County Councils - Statistical Profile

City/County	Population 2011	Area (square km)	Expenditure 2015 budget (€m)	Commercial rate 2015	Number of staff end 2013	Number of Councillors		
						2013	2014	
Cork City	119,230	39.61	158,822,400	74.05	1,247	31	31	
Cork County	399,802	7467.97	289,176,248	74.75	2,021	48	55	
Municipal Districts								
Ballincollig/Carrigaline								10
Bandon/ Kinsale								6
Blarney/Macroon								6
Cobh								7
East Cork								6
Fermoy								6
Kanturk/Mallow								6
West Cork								8

3. Summary of issues raised in submissions

A total of 96 submissions were received including the submissions made by Cork City Council and Cork County Council (see Appendix 2). Particular attention was given by the Committee to the substantial submissions of the city council and the county council, both in their own right and as they encapsulated many of the issues raised in the other submissions.

Across the submissions, while they divided into those who favoured a boundary extension, those who favoured a merger, and those who expressed no preference, the Committee noted a significant number of areas of agreement. There was, for example, a general view that preserving the status quo is not an option to be considered seriously.

At the same time, there was widespread agreement around the good working relationship that exists between the city and county councils, as noted at the beginning of section 2.5 of this report. There was a strong view expressed in many submissions that initiatives such as the LUTS and CASP represent significant positive illustrations of the benefits of good inter-working by the councils.

A particularly strong point of consensus noted by the Committee as emerging from the submissions was the widespread support for the creation of a larger metropolitan area, whether in a merged authority or in the context of retaining separate city and county councils. It was a commonly expressed view that a larger metropolitan area is needed for Cork to be a main driver of economic and social development in the region, nationally and internationally.

With regard to setting the context for reviewing and assessing options, again there was a strong degree of consensus amongst the submissions on a number of items. There was wide agreement that any option chosen should enable local government in Cork to:

- Enhance the voice of Cork on the national and international stage. Having a strong voice for Cork was seen as important.

- Promote the role of Cork city, as a large metropolitan city, as a critical driver of development. The Cork city region is seen as the driver for the south-west region, and as a viable counterweight to Dublin, and hence as crucial to balanced spatial development on the island. This metropolitan role is seen in many submissions as vital in attracting and retaining foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Address the distinctive needs of county towns and peripheral areas of the county. Several submissions stated that development of the city should not be at the expense of other areas.
- Address issues of social disadvantage and promote social inclusion in Cork city, given the scale of the challenges here.
- Recognise the need for a strong role and office of Lord Mayor of Cork city, in the context of the long tradition, history and level of service of this office. And in the context of having a strong voice nationally and internationally.
- Place Cork in a position to advance the role of local government in coordinating services across the region, in the context of wider public service reform. Several submissions noted the need for strong local government with an enhanced role in economic and social development and with greater authority.

Just over a third of the submissions were in favour of a boundary extension and maintaining a separate city and county council. In summary, the main points made by those favouring a boundary extension were that:

- Putting the city on a par with municipal districts in a merged authority is not acceptable given its relative size, economic and strategic importance. The city would not have independent, direct control over its budget, have the ability to raise finances or in general the degree of autonomy a city the importance of Cork should have.
- Extension would reflect the key role of a strong city, second-tier city and the city region for economic and social development, growth and prosperity.

- Priorities of, and challenges facing, the city and county are different. The county focus is on agriculture, rural development, agri-food, fisheries and tourism. The city focus is on industry, urban services, transport, retail, commerce, and social inclusion.
- Collaboration between the councils has been shown to work and will continue with regard to coordinating planning and investment at the regional level.
- Areas of suburbs outside the current boundary have the benefits of city facilities without contributing to their running costs. The boundary needs to change to reflect the reality of what the city actually is.
- The area is too large geographically for a single authority, and would also present democratic representation challenges. A full council of 86 members or over would be difficult to manage. It would be difficult for councillors to get a fair hearing for their constituents, urban or rural in a single authority.
- International and other evidence shows little or no savings to be made from a merger regarding economies of scale. Savings can be made through more use of shared services.
- The expansion of development activity in the areas of the county that are on the fringes of the city detracts from the attractiveness of the city centre and make its development more difficult.
- The wealth of knowledge and experience of technical and other staff could be lost in a merger in the context of rationalisation.

Roughly a third of submissions were in favour of amalgamation of the city and county councils. In summary, the main points made by those favouring a merger were that:

- A merged authority is best placed to provide a stronger voice for Cork, promote investment, economic and social development, planning and tourism. Also better

placed to deal with regional and national bodies such as NRA, IDA, EPA and Irish Water.

- Merger would create a unit to provide a credible counter-weight to greater Dublin and facilitate the development of the Cork Gateway.
- Extending the city boundary would re-enforce a failed strategy and may encourage competition at the new boundary line. A new strategy is needed and is best delivered by a merged authority.
- The county would be disadvantaged by loss of population and revenue base, and its ability to meet the needs of its remaining citizens compromised.
- Merger avoids the problems of having to re-balance finances between the city and county, transfer of assets and liabilities, and staff transfers. The requirement for the city to provide financial compensation to the county would mitigate the benefits of boundary extension.
- Merger will provide savings in the form of streamlining and reduction of duplication of functions.
- A unitary authority would be more successful in tackling problems that affect both the city and the county such as traffic congestion and high levels of car dependency.
- The continuation of a focus on the needs of rural and peripheral areas and areas of urban disadvantage is best done in the context of a merged authority with access to resources and skills/capacity levels of sufficient size and quality.
- Merger will be a permanent solution and not require re-visiting in the future, with one set of policy makers and one implementation team.

4. Status quo not an option

Before going on to examine the choice between amalgamation and retaining two councils with an enlarged city boundary, in this chapter the lack of support for maintaining the status quo is noted.

Whilst included for completeness, and to provide a baseline against which other options can be assessed, the Committee's consensus view is that retaining the current boundary is not a realistic option. In announcing the review, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government effectively noted that the status quo was not an option when he stated that he sees a clear case for extending the Cork city boundary to encompass a wider metropolitan area and was appointing an independent group to review the boundary and examine whether the local authority structures should be merged. Also, as noted in Chapter 3, there was no demand for retaining the status quo from the submissions received. The Committee agree with these viewpoints.

The no change option would continue to see the city and county work independently, albeit collaboratively, to secure the best interests of their respective areas and the region as a whole. However, it would do nothing to enhance the voice of Cork with regard to economic and social development and the possibility of competition or uncertainty with regard to the activities of the two councils remains. There would be no significant changes in governance, service delivery, staffing or efficiencies other than those arising in the normal course of work and in the context of national developments in local government. Cork would continue to operate at a sub-optimal level.

International research indicates that economic, social and environmental sustainability are vital to the development of cities and their regions. An OECD (2006) report *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy* argues that cities suffer from a series of problems which include congestion, poor environment, housing shortages and the formation of ghettos. Effective city planning means that cities must have the space and strategic vision to address these problems. Vibrant cities require space to grow and within their boundaries

there must be planning for housing, recreational space, retail and business space and industrial locations.

A EUROCITIES (2013) working paper also makes the point that the urban/rural distinction in the context of the development of city regions should be seen more as a continuum than a clear distinction:

There is an increasing mismatch between cities as administrative entities and the reality of urban life. The administrative boundaries of our cities rarely fully cover the built up area around a city, job markets, business flows, private and public services or the city's 'ecosystem'. Social and functional differences between life in cities, suburbs and surrounding communities overlap in many ways and it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a clear limit between urban and rural areas. Large functional urban areas have thus developed more generally around cities and towns across Europe.

Because of this, cooperation between cities and their surrounding areas, within these functional urban areas, is necessary and should be based on a shared vision. The need for access to a wide range of resources, such as local food chains and food production, natural heritage, sports, leisure and recreational facilities, means that cooperation is essential to increase the sustainability and overall quality of life for everyone. Availability of land and lower real estate prices outside the city are important assets for locating functions that serve the whole metropolitan area and that require a lot of space. On the other hand, hub cities are often the main attraction for visitors, who also make use of surrounding areas. Due to their size, metropolitan areas can provide services to benefit both those who live in the city and those living in more rural surrounding areas e.g. hospitals, culture, waste and water management and treatment as well as connections to major transport systems.

This situation challenges the traditional perception of two clearly different types of regions: urban and rural

There is a clear case for not accepting the status quo with regard to local government arrangements in Cork.

5. Options for local government arrangements

The terms of reference require the Committee to determine (a) whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or (b) whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified.

The Committee identified a number of criteria against which the amalgamation and boundary extension options were assessed, namely:

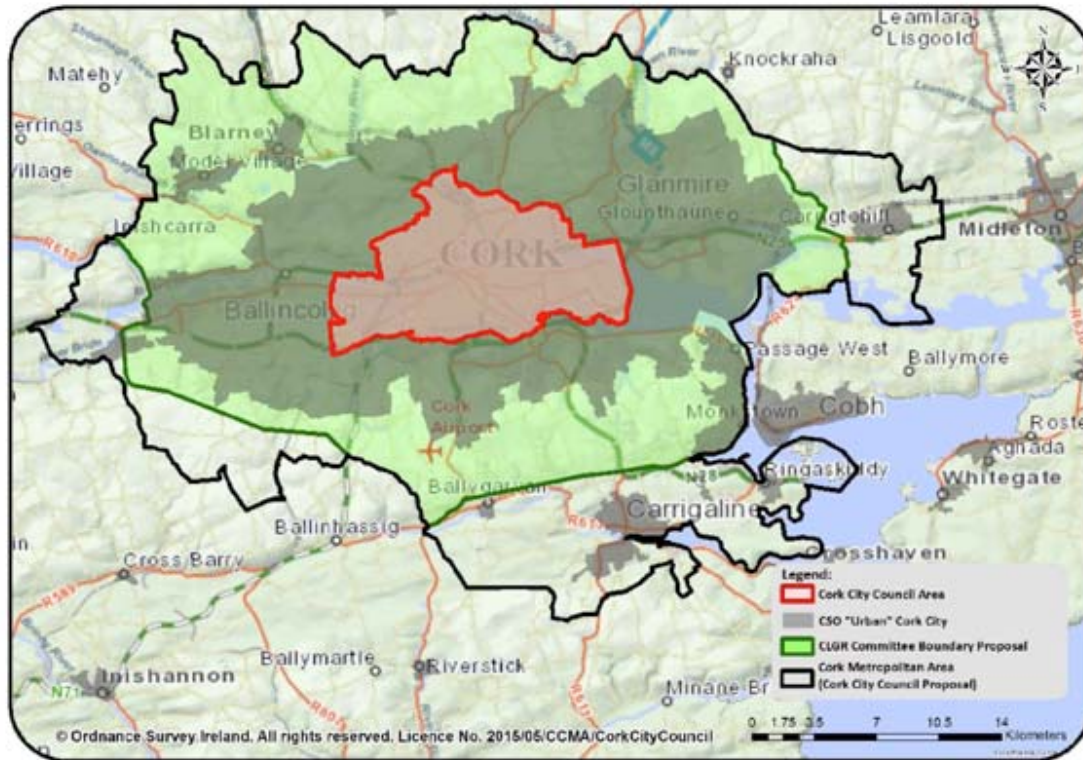
- ***Economic and social development*** - the implications for economic and social development and the ‘voice’ of Cork local government at regional, national and international levels. Issues such as what configuration is most likely to lead to an enhanced place-shaping role for Cork in terms of securing an attractive location for economic and social development.
- ***Governance, accountability and local democracy*** – the implications for political governance and the functioning of local democracy. This includes issues such as local political oversight and accountability, and the role and arrangement of the metropolitan and municipal districts.
- ***Service delivery*** – the impact on service delivery. The main issue here is the impact of the options on the quality of and access to services, and efficient delivery on the ground. Staffing issues are relevant here particularly with regard to the implications for capacity and innovation, staff motivation and performance.
- ***Financial impact and complexity*** - the degree to which the arrangements affect the financial arrangements and complexity of public service provision in Cork. This includes the issue of potential compensation between the city and the county in the event of boundary extension and the requirement that there are no additional ongoing costs to central government through increased subvention.

- **Efficiency** – the potential cost or other savings associated with the pursuit of the option. Issues such as corporate overheads and unit costs of delivering services are pertinent here.

The unitary authority option is straightforward to define, involving unification of the two councils. In looking at a boundary extension and two council option, the Committee considered a number of boundary extension options for Cork city from a minimal extension to bring in to the city developed areas immediately to the north and south, through to Metropolitan Cork, as defined in LUTS and CASP and used by the city and county council for planning purposes.

The view of the Committee is that while the minimal boundary extension might address immediate pressures, it would not cater for the long-term needs of Cork. The Committee also view the Metropolitan Cork option as the boundary for Cork city in the context of two separate authorities as being too large, opening up the prospect of urban sprawl and weakening a focus on development of the inner city and its environs. In the end, two sub-options were chosen for examination: (a) a boundary extension that includes the satellite towns of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Carrigtohill and Glanmire (see Figure 5.1, the black line, which is the option put forward by the city council) and (b) excluding Carrigaline and Ringaskiddy (see Figure 5.1, the green line, developed in Committee).

Figure 5.1 Boundary extension options



After extensive deliberations, the Committee did not reach a unanimous view on either of the two options as a satisfactory solution. However, a majority of three Committee members (Tom Curran, John Lucey and Alf Smiddy) favour amalgamation of Cork city and county councils into a unitary authority. Two Committee members (Dermot Keogh and Theresa Reidy) favour a boundary extension for Cork city and the retention of two separate city and county councils.

Chapter 6 sets out the case for amalgamation into a unitary authority as supported by the majority. The position of the minority in favour of a boundary extension for Cork city and the retention of two councils is presented in Appendix 6. Chapter 7 summarises the case against boundary extension. Chapter 8 sets out conclusions and recommendations and suggested next steps.

6. The case for a unitary authority

A unitary authority would combine Cork City and County Councils into one council serving the citizens of Cork. This would result in an organisation of approximately 3,200 staff and a budget of approximately €440m, with a population of 520,000 (Cork County Council currently has a population of 400,000 and Cork City Council a population of 120,000). The authority would be divided into three divisions (Metropolitan Cork, North and East and West and South) each with municipal districts, with Cork city operating as the centre of the Metropolitan Cork division. The Metropolitan Cork area has a population of approximately 290,000. The other two divisions would have populations of approximately 115,000 each. The city within the metropolitan area should be redefined to reflect the current reality on the ground, a task to be done by the implementation group following on from this report.

The case for one council is set out against the agreed criteria below.

Economic and social development

Major challenges facing local government such as infrastructure development, demographics, economic development, hazards and environmental management are regional in scale, nature and effect. Issues dealt with by local authorities, such as waste management and environmental protection, water, housing, and planning, require thinking and planning on a sub-regional and regional scale. Their impact crosses current council boundaries, and local government responses need to be sub-regional and regional in scale. Current decision-making at this level relies on collaborative decision-making and action between the city and county councils, which has not been sufficiently successful in the past for the region to rely on it to effectively meet future challenges.

A significant benefit of a merged authority is the provision of a single voice for Cork. There would, for example, be a single point of contact for liaising with investors, one plan for jobs, one retail strategy, and a single marketing/business support unit. When bidding to bring in development or events there would be one pool of money to draw on. One planning authority would create a single vision for Cork and would be well placed to

influence the national planning framework balancing the influence of Dublin and the east coast. A particular benefit of the Auckland merger experience was that unified and integrated direction has been achieved through a single vision and plan for the Auckland region. The council and the Auckland region have benefited from integrated planning.

There would be the elimination of two authorities bidding against one another for business. The submission by the Cork Chamber, the leading business organisation in the region and representing around 1,100 businesses in the city and the county, makes the case from a business perspective for a unitary authority with a strong metropolitan division at its core to provide the capacity and resources to drive economic development. A single economic development unit would be created which would work with both the public sector and the private sector to advance economic activity across the whole region. The single voice for Cork would have a number of inter-related advantages:

- Championing Cork at every opportunity, and overcoming the divisions that are currently there, and that comes with fragmentation.
- Creating leverage in dealing with other state agencies and the private sector, and leverage in fighting and pushing with a single minded force to drive the region forward.
- Acting strategically as a body that would unite and galvanise Cork as a driving force around one strong vision, and a single point of contact to act as a cohesive force to catapult the entire region forward.
- Focusing on economic development, making it centre stage in a unitary situation, providing a consistent regional approach to FDI, job creation, tourism, sport, etc. and strengthening local government influence in dealing and negotiating with the private sector, other semi state bodies, and government.
- Eliminating competition and bidding between the two authorities and eliminating duplication, leading to enhanced, more effective and efficient service delivery.

The single economic development unit could build on the work done to date by the city and the county. Cork County Council, for example, has for a number of decades been at the forefront of infrastructural planning and development as a driving force for economic development in both the metropolitan area of Cork and throughout the Cork region with large areas of industry, job creation and local and international enterprise carefully planned (e.g. Little Island and Carrigtohill, Cork Airport, Ringaskiddy and Carrigaline). This role of the council at the forefront of development in the metropolitan CASP area has helped create an integrated strategy in the metropolitan area and throughout the region, in particular bringing benefits to all areas both inside and outside the metropolitan area of the county. The success of CASP to date and the aims and vision it promotes could be set aside with an enlarged city. By combining forces the city and the metropolitan area can become the powerhouse and a driver of the entire region with the sum of the parts achieving much more than if managed by two separate authorities.

Also from a tourism development perspective there are gains to be achieved from unification promoting a single vision selling the Cork experience: the historic city with shopping, restaurants and entertainment etc., as well as the scenic and tranquil county, beaches, coastline sailing etc.

With regard to the international experience, in reviewing Australian and New Zealand experience with local government amalgamation and mergers, Aulich et al (2011) make a point about what they term 'economies of scope' that can arise from mergers that can enhance the role of local government in economic and social development:

...consolidation provides important opportunities to capture economies of scope and enhance the strategic capacity of local government. Economies of scope increase the capacity of councils to undertake new functions and deliver new or improved services that previously were not possible. Significantly, they enable councils to shift their focus towards a more strategic view of their operations. We argue that this enhanced strategic capacity is in part a function of increased size and resource level, but it is also related to the potentialities that are created by the pooling of knowledge and expertise. The process of consolidation can generate a

focus that transcends individual local government boundaries and encourages councils to operate in a broader context – one that is more regional or system-wide – and enables them to relate more effectively to central governments. Enhanced strategic capacity appears essential to local government’s long term success as a valued partner in the system of government, and this emerged as probably the most important issue for councils to consider in examining different modes of consolidation.

A further consideration when looking more broadly is the prospects for local government taking on more functions from central government and hence enhancing their strategic and developmental role. A single council speaking with one voice for Cork and with an enhanced skill base of expertise in functional areas would be better placed to argue the case for the transfer of more powers to local government (aspects of health, education and social services for example). In view of the relatively limited role of local government in Ireland there is a good case for greater devolution of functions from central government to local authorities. One council, given its scale and standing, would be harder for central government to ignore or side-line, as has happened to local authorities in the past.

If two separate authorities are retained, with an enlarged city and a smaller and likely weaker and more isolated county, this would lead to potentially more divergent views on what is best for Cork, given the authorities would have significantly different natures in a new configuration. It is also the case that national agencies concerned with major infrastructural and development opportunities such as the National Transport Authority, National Roads Authority, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland would continue to have to deal with two authorities with potentially complementary, but also potentially competing demands.

A further concern with regard to the impact of a boundary extension to the black line in Figure 5.1 is the effect on balanced economic and social development in the enlarged city itself. It is possible to envisage a scenario whereby if the satellite towns are now in the expanded city jurisdiction it will be difficult to prevent urban sprawl into the greenbelt

area. Furthermore the availability of serviced lands in these satellite towns will draw development into these areas, potentially to the detriment of a focus on development in the city centre. With a unitary authority, there will be a single planning authority so the possibility of urban sprawl being facilitated by a boundary extension should not arise.

Amalgamation would strengthen the positioning, status and image of Cork city globally, and also the entire Cork region, and help spearhead and create a new drive, energy and focus, on the back of substantial FDI and related experience and knowledge secured in the city and county over many decades. Amalgamation would also bring a new impetus to unlock and drive forward critical projects such as the re-development of the docklands, the convention centre, the national diaspora centre and other critical projects that drive and secure tourism and jobs. To this end unification would galvanise and mobilise citizens around a new and exciting future for Cork.

Governance, accountability and local democracy

Although accepting it is too early to form definitive judgements from the Limerick and Waterford mergers, evidence provided by the executives from Limerick and Waterford indicate no diminution of the role and status of the city in the revised governance arrangements following merger. Indeed, the chief executives cite the ability to better plan for the expanded region as a strength of the new arrangements and as an enhancement of the city.

While there were divergent views, political support was expressed at both local and national level for the amalgamation of both councils. The county council agreed to support a recommendation for a merger of both authorities. Several national politicians have expressed a preference for merger. A single council affords the opportunity to address the imbalance of representation between the city and the county. The city representational ratio is 1:3846 whereas in the county it is 1:7269 (the national average is 1:4830). Maintaining the total number of councillors (city and county) at 86 would give a representational ratio of 1:6035. Metropolitan Cork with a population of 290,000 would have 48 councillors and the other two divisions 19 councillors each. This gives a strong voice at unitary council level to the city and Metropolitan Cork division. There would be

a concern that with boundary extension and an expanded city of 230,000 that the number of councillors would be capped at the current level of 31. This would result in a representational ratio of 1:7419, thereby weakening democratic representation.

A possible alternative to a unitary council of 86 would be for a smaller number of members to be appointed to meet at unitary council level from the three divisions. This could limit the size of the unitary council (say to 30 members) in order to facilitate more streamlined decision making.

By combining the two authorities the enlarged city would be centre stage in the unified structure, and would be the epicentre and powerhouse of the region. In addition, a deputy chief executive position could be created with designated responsibility for Metropolitan Cork, and also for economic development for the entire authority.

It is important that in a unitary authority the city Lord Mayor remains an integral part of the political make-up, ensuring the city is not disenfranchised in any reorganisation. The Lord Mayor should be elected by members of the metropolitan division, with the other two divisions electing a chair and the unitary council electing a cathaoirleach/chair. Indeed, there is also a strong case for the cathaoirleach/chair of the unitary council serving for the full term of the council, and the merits of this should be examined during the implementation process. The designation of the office of mayor on a national level is currently being considered by a local government advisory group established by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, but the outcome of these deliberations was not known at the time of this report. Another possibility that might be considered in this context is the option of a directly elected Lord Mayor.

The unitary council would meet on a bi-monthly basis, focusing primarily on high level strategic issues such as planning (development plan and local economic and community plan), budgeting and county-wide issues in areas such as housing, roads and the environment. Divisions and municipal districts would meet monthly, with the maximum possible delegation to these levels. The county submission proposes a working model that provides the basis for how such an arrangement could work.

Maximising the role of municipal and metropolitan districts offers a way of maintaining and developing local government and avoiding over-centralisation and distance from citizens of an amalgamated council. Municipal districts currently have a number of powers including to adopt local area plans, levy local charges and bring in additional income. There are municipal district budgets and districts can consider and amend draft budgetary plans. Municipal districts also consider and adopt an annual schedule of proposed works to be carried out in the district. However, there is a case for further autonomy being granted to municipal districts and giving them more discretion on prioritising budgetary spend. The creation of area committees within the city could further enhance local decision making and democracy.

The new single council model would strengthen democracy within the Cork region. A cornerstone of the new model is that citizens throughout the county will be put first. All existing local government anomalies in services between the city and county would be eliminated. This amalgamated local government model will open up the city to the county and the county to the city, with the city at the heart of the Cork region and with a consistent approach for all Cork citizens. In this way, amalgamation will strengthen local government and democracy in the region with the citizen coming first.

Service delivery

Associated with the ‘economies of scope’ argument, it can be contended that a unitary authority would be best placed to capitalise on an enlarged and enhanced staff skill base to develop new and innovative approaches to service delivery. A single council would be best placed to ensure the full integration of local government services on a regional basis, and the creation of centres of excellence regionally for all primary services, including economic development, planning and social housing, etc. In this way the expertise of management and staff would be leveraged and used for the benefit of all of Cork and all citizens.

Centres of excellence would be created through unification, and local government citizen/customer service centres set up throughout the region, accessible for and by

citizens, fully aligned and integrated, providing regional consistency, citizen friendly services, integrated smart technology, etc.

A unitary authority would create fairer and more equal systems for citizens with elimination of inefficiencies, bureaucracy, duplication, anomalies, etc. (as an example in housing where at present different rules and criteria apply depending on whether you are in the city or county). A reduction in the cost of business to businesses should follow.

In many cases amalgamations are seen as important in strengthening the professional capacity of local authorities as much if not more so than improving efficiency. A key issue here is building and retaining capacity to ensure that services are maintained and developed and to attract and retain suitably qualified staff. It is about developing an organisation that can create centres of excellence, and has sufficient capacity and a critical mass to develop all levels of staff and create succession planning to support personal and organisational needs. The focus is on securing, maintaining and developing the highly skilled staff needed to manage the increasing complexity within local government services.

The Welsh Commission experience cited in Appendix 5 is considered of relevance here. While they found little evidence that small authorities provide worse services than larger ones, they did find that the breadth and depth of capacity and particularly the resilience of smaller organisations can be a real challenge. A smaller county would remain one of the larger local authorities in Ireland, but would face challenges of resilience in the longer-term in comparison to the current situation and in comparison to a single council. In a two authority scenario, the ability of the county to address service delivery needs would be affected, in part depending on the scale and nature of loss of staff from the county to the new city council.

Financial impact and complexity

Given a merged authority, the issue of agreeing compensation between councils or the establishment of a formal equalisation fund does not arise. As the city annual rate on valuation (ARV) stands at 74.05 while the county ARV is 74.75, a difference of less than

1 per cent, harmonisation should cause little difficulty. Both authorities have set the local adjustment factor for the local property tax at -10 per cent so the charges are the same.

In the boundary extension option, data provided by the county estimates a financial net loss to the county of between €27 and €36 million per annum arising from the extension of the city boundary (depending on whether the green line or black line in Figure 5.1 is used as the city boundary). Accepting that these figures are a best estimate and based on a number of assumptions, even allowing for a generous margin of error this is of a completely different order of scale than anything in the past elsewhere in the country with regard to the financial impact of boundary extensions. There would be significant challenges associated with setting up arrangements that would (a) finally determine the level of compensation needed from the city to the county and (b) ensure a rigorous, agreed system for transfers between the councils over a number of years. The government's position, as set out in the terms of reference, is that there should be no ongoing additional cost to central government through increased subvention arising from any option chosen, setting a further context for financial sustainability.

Under amalgamation all existing loans would be consolidated in the unitary authority and neither the city nor county would have to take on loans from either council. Under the boundary extension option, the city would take on the debts of the county for the area transferred. On figures provided by the county, loans outstanding in 2014 amounted to €105 million (on the basis of the black line boundary), with principal and interest payments of €4.9 million per annum.

With regard to the idea of an equalisation fund proposed by the city and others, to run in perpetuity, while such an arrangement is technically feasible, it would be a complex job. There would be scope for major disagreement between the city and the county about what should be included. It is quite likely that some form of independent arbitration will be needed, and the scope for dispute and discord is significant. The process is likely to be time consuming because of its complexity. This would result in a period of potential uncertainty and stagnation in the administration and development of the new areas. Also, the money distributed through such an equalisation measure would effectively be lost to

the city and hence not be available to address the needs of the city, diverting focus and resources away from re-development of the city. A fund of this scale would also pose a serious question on the viability of separate authorities as independent decision-making entities.

Regarding staffing changes, if the city boundary is expanded and two councils retained, data supplied by the county estimates that somewhere between 260 (green line boundary) and 370 staff (black line boundary) could be expected to transfer, depending on the criteria used to determine staff transfers. Given that at the end of 2013 the county had a staffing level of 2,021 and the city of 1,247, this would represent a substantial shift, even allowing for a significant margin of error in the estimates. It could be regarded as more the equivalent to a merger of two organisations rather than a minor staffing adjustments (Leitrim, Longford and Carlow councils, for example, all have total staff complements of less than 300).

There would be major challenges associated with staff transfer. Getting agreement on the numbers and type of staff to move would not be straightforward and unless handled sensitively would run the risk of reducing the skill base available to the county (for example, working for a bigger metropolitan authority may be seen as more attractive for the more go-ahead employee than working for a smaller county). Accommodation would need to be sourced for the staff transferring to the city, which would be an additional cost. Undoubtedly industrial relations difficulties would surface. It would also lead to the anomalous situation that staff working for the county in County Hall would be based a long way outside the county boundary.

Efficiency

The savings that have been made generally in local government in Ireland in recent years (such as over 20 per cent reduction in staff since 2008; shared services developments etc. as referenced in section 2.4) mean that any scope for further significant efficiency savings is limited. The international evidence warns that it is easy to over-estimate and over-claim the level of savings achieved.

However, there is scope for some efficiencies and savings to accrue from merger. Payroll savings in excess of €3 million per annum have been achieved in Tipperary to date and it is ahead of schedule to meet its targeted savings of €6.1 million per annum. Internationally, one of the most rigorous studies carried out, in Denmark, shows savings up to 8 per cent on average from amalgamations. The New Zealand Controller and Auditor General found that though the Auckland reforms were not primarily carried out to reduce costs, economies of scale and opportunities to leverage buying power were anticipated from a larger council. The council has reported \$81 million (€55 million) of efficiencies in the first year.

Merger would lead to a reduction of administrative duplication and freeing up, for more productive use, of resources previously absorbed by (a) management/supervision (heads of housing, planning, roads, fire services, libraries etc.) and (b) various processes such as the production of two development plans, sets of accounts, annual reports, rating, corporate plans, audit, etc., involving both staff and non-staff costs. Elimination or reduction in such costs would be a significant benefit of merger, though the benefits of this do not necessarily translate into payroll savings, at least in the short term. Such cost savings and efficiencies would address the need as raised by business representatives such as IBEC in their submission for a more efficient local government service with a focus on cost savings.

In the case of boundary extension, two councils and two executives would remain. There would be significant transitional costs associated with the creation of the new authorities given the scale of staff transfer required.

7. The case against boundary extension

Several of the points identified as weaknesses in the case for boundary extension are set out in Chapter 6 when examining the case for unification against the various criteria agreed by the Committee. These and other associated issues are set out together in summary points below. For these reasons the majority of the Committee believe that the evidence strongly indicates that boundary extension is not an option that should be pursued for Cork, and indeed would be hugely detrimental to the future development of the city region.

- Two separate authorities, with an enlarged city and a smaller county, would likely lead to potentially more divergent views on what is best for Cork than currently. This increases the challenge of coordinated planning for balanced economic and social development.
- It will be more difficult to prevent urban sprawl into the greenbelt area. A boundary extension including towns such as Carrigtohill and Carrigaline would require the new city authority to devise and implement a greenbelt style rural housing policy for the rural areas if sprawl is to be avoided in this area of intense development pressures. There is a significant risk of major erosion of the greenbelt contrary to the agreed proposals of sustainable development set out in the CASP.
- In an enlarged city it will be more difficult to focus on the city centre, with the satellite towns likely taking more development.
- There are major financial complexities associated with boundary extension. These include perpetual payment of subventions from the city to the county, debt transfer from county to city, transfer of assets and liabilities, valuations, and associated legal complexity. In particular the financial net loss to the county to be compensated has been estimated at between €27 and €36 million per annum arising from the extension of the city boundary (depending on whether the green

line or black line in Figure 5.1 is used as the city boundary). It is hard to envisage a process that could be agreed that would address such a scale of transfer. And if it were, the money distributed would effectively be lost to the city and hence not available to address the needs of the city, diverting focus and resources away from re-development of the city. A fund of this scale indeed would pose a serious question on the viability of separate authorities as independent decision-making entities.

- A boundary change of the scale envisaged is effectively a merger for the staff and structures affected. Somewhere between 260 and 370 staff are likely to need to transfer from the county to the city. There would be major challenges associated with this level of staff transfer. There would also be the consequent need to re-organise the staffing of both the enlarged city and the reduced county. The county would lose skillsets that would need to be replaced. Determining past and future pension liabilities to be retained or transferred would also be required.
- It is not clear how the area which would remain the responsibility of the county would work organisationally or structurally. This area would not be a cohesive unit, would have no clear focal point and would be far removed from the existing council headquarters.
- Historical evidence tells us that boundary extension has not and cannot work despite numerous failed and deeply acrimonious attempts over the last 50 years

8. Conclusions, recommendations and next steps

8.1 Conclusions

The information and analysis set out in the preceding chapters leads to a number of conclusions:

- Adherence to the no change/status quo is not an acceptable option and would do nothing to improve local government arrangements in Cork.
- The current city boundary of Cork City Council is inadequate and there is a compelling case for its extension to define an appropriate metropolitan area for Cork.
- The majority of members of the Committee consider that a single council is the preferable option.
- The majority view is that the retention of two local authorities would fail to maximise the potential benefits of local government reorganisation in Cork. Boundary extension would also create major problems around such issues as financial compensation and scale of staff transfers. Merger – effectively creating a ‘new model’ of local government in Cork - would achieve all the benefits of a boundary extension without the attendant negatives of what in effect would be a takeover by the city of a significant area, population and resources of the county.

8.2 Recommendations

The Committee’s vision is to create a model of local government for Cork that can support and promote the success of the Cork region in social, economic and environmental terms. A Cork local authority, with a strong city as its core, of sufficient scale, resources and vigour, can have a transformational effect on Cork. This would enable Cork to act as an effective counter-weight at a national scale to the current economic predominance of Dublin and the eastern part of the country. It would help give Cork greater capacity to compete internationally and to act as an engine of growth not only for the entirety of Cork but the wider Munster/southern area of the country.

The majority view of the Committee is that this vision is best achieved through the creation of a unitary authority. It is in this context that the following recommendations are made:

1. A unitary authority of Cork City and County Council should be established as the statutory local authority for Cork as a whole, encompassing the combined areas of the current city and county.
2. An appropriate Cork metropolitan area should be designated encompassing the city and suburbs but incorporating also a further surrounding area that would be consistent with the sustainable physical, economic and social development of the city in the medium to long-term. This would be the existing Metropolitan Cork area as set out in CASP and used by both the city and county council already for planning purposes. Metropolitan Cork had a population of 289,739 in 2011 and it covers an area of 834 square kilometres (see Figure 2.1 and Appendix 4). The city within the metropolitan area should be redefined to reflect the current reality on the ground, a task to be undertaken by the implementation group.
3. The representational body for the new Cork metropolitan area should constitute one of three divisions which would form a central element of the new Cork City and County Council. In recognition of the existing divisional structures these could be titled as follows:
 - a. Cork Metropolitan Division
 - b. Cork North and East Municipal Division
 - c. Cork West and South Municipal Division
4. Municipal districts, with a metropolitan district for Cork City, should be established in conjunction with electoral area re-definition. The local electoral areas should be reconfigured to produce a greater number of more territorially compact areas which would be more closely identified with local communities and traditional local loyalties and would be more manageable for councillors.

5. Meetings of the City and County Council should focus on a limited number of key strategic issues for the authority. The structure of the unitary council should be addressed by the implementation group. A possible alternative to full unitary council meetings of 86 members would be for a smaller number of members to be appointed to meet at full unitary council level from the three divisions.
6. In tandem with the location of more strategic functions at the level of the unitary council, the role and status of the metropolitan/municipal divisions and metropolitan and municipal districts should be enhanced beyond that of current municipal districts by assigning appropriate functions that are currently confined to city/county councils to divisional and district level in Cork. These functions should be provided directly by statute. Particular attention should be given to ensuring members can perform an adequate budgetary role at metropolitan/municipal division level. In addition the potential to assign roles to the metropolitan/municipal division members in relation to functions devolved from central government should be fully exploited.
7. Special provisions should be enacted to preserve the historic civic status of Cork city, including retaining the role of Lord Mayor for the chair of the metropolitan division and associated status and customs. The option of a directly elected Lord Mayor should be considered.
8. The unified City and County Council should have responsibility for the main strategic functions of local government such as adoption of the annual budget, the corporate plan, the development plan and the local economic and community plan. An economic development unit should be established to promote and coordinate an integrated approach to development.
9. In addition to these strategic functions, significant powers and functions should be identified for devolution from central government and state agencies to the unitary authority. This would represent a radical new departure for local government in Cork, bringing it into closer alignment with its counterparts in most European states. It would also provide a model for other parts of the country.

10. All the executive and corporate functions and resources of local government in Cork should be consolidated in the unitary authority as the statutory local authority under the management of a chief executive for Cork City and County Council. This will reduce duplication and maximise efficiency.
11. The appointment of a chief executive for the new authority is a priority issue and should be progressed as soon as possible. The appointment should be advanced through an open competition process.
12. A deputy chief executive position should be created. The deputy chief executive should have designated responsibility for Metropolitan Cork, and also for economic development for the entire council.
13. The next local elections are due to be held in mid-2019. Given the importance of the changes in governance arrangements being recommended, the Committee considers that measures should be taken to develop and implement substantial elements of the new system on a transitional basis ahead of the 2019 elections.

8.3 Elaboration on key aspects of the recommended arrangements

Devolution of powers from central government

Proposals for devolution of functions from central government departments and state agencies to local government have been put forward in various reports over many years. These include the 1991 Barrington Report and the Devolution Commission reports in the mid-1990s. Relatively little progress has been made in relation to the recommendations in these reports.

In an attempt to address perceived weaknesses in previous devolution initiatives, *Putting People First* has identified lack of confidence in the local government system as a key factor in lack of progress and set out a proposed course of action to achieve real devolution. The report provides a rationale for devolution (in particular sections 1.1.2 and 2.2.9) and identifies some important functions for immediate assignment to local government in the areas of community development, economic development and

enterprise support. These recommendations were given legislative effect in the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

Putting People First also proposes more far reaching devolution in the medium and longer term as the structures, funding, governance and operational arrangements of local government are strengthened. The report sets out criteria for the selection of functions (2.2.2) and specifies conditions which should apply in the context of assignment of functions to local authorities (2.5.1), including responsibility at national level for funding, policy and accountability in relation to devolved functions, the need for such functions to be adequately resourced and avoidance of duplication. Specific legislative provision for the implementation of devolution measures is already provided for in section 72 of the Local Government Act 2001, which was strengthened by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to include devolution to local level of functions of state bodies generally as well as government departments.

Previous experience would suggest that making progress with the devolution agenda is likely to be challenging. But the particular circumstances presented by the Cork local government review provide a unique opportunity to pursue devolution of powers to local level. The need for greater focus on enhancing the role and powers of local government in addition to structural change is a theme that has been raised by several submissions made in the course of the local government review in Cork. While there is a good case for devolution generally, in the context of a new model of local government for Cork, with a single authority encompassing a much larger territory than any other local authority in the state, a population broadly equivalent to Dublin city, and a new model of governance, the case would be compelling.

It is beyond the terms of reference of the Committee to recommend specific functions for devolution. However, previous recommendations from studies cited above and matters signalled in *Putting People First* could provide a useful starting point. The sort of areas that might have potential for devolution include appropriate elements of public transport, tourism, heritage, national parks and monuments, education, community related health and welfare functions, further aspects of economic development, additional planning

responsibilities e.g. foreshore licences, and functions of national agencies which are to a significant degree locally or regionally based. The task of identifying specific functions for devolution and appropriate lead-in times could be assigned to an implementation group.

Financial issues

Clearly there will be some financial costs associated with transition to the new local government arrangement. It is important that a rigorous due diligence process is followed and that sufficient resources are provided to ensure a smooth and speedy transition, but at the same time ensure that the transition is managed in a cost-efficient manner. Previous experience in the cases of Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary are of relevance here and should be drawn on.

With regard to savings, the continuing efficiency drive affecting local government in recent years has had a significant impact and means the scope for further efficiencies is constrained if services are to be maintained. Nevertheless, in both the medium and longer-term there is scope for some financial savings. A savings target should be established by the implementation group in the light of an agreed revised organisational structure and workforce plan.

Representational and electoral arrangements

The determination of electoral areas and distribution of members is a matter for an Electoral Area Boundary Committee. Following on from a decision on the appropriate arrangements for Cork city and county, an Electoral Area Boundary Committee should be established to make recommendations on the number of elected members and the formation of electoral areas in time for the local elections in 2019. The Electoral Area Boundary Committee should include in its examinations a number of anomalies highlighted in submissions. In particular, as things stand the West Cork electoral area has a total of 8 elected members covering a very large geographical area (roughly equivalent to Leitrim as some submissions noted) with 6 main towns. And the town of Carrigaline is currently split between two municipal districts. Towns should remain as integrated entities within any electoral boundary arrangements.

Local electoral areas are likely to be reviewed in light of results of the 2016 census. This will provide the opportunity to reconfigure the electoral areas in Cork. Smaller electoral areas should enhance the degree of identification and accountability between councillors and the local communities. This would also reduce pressures on councillors arising from issues such as travel distance, time pressures and general constituency related demands.

Metropolitan/municipal divisions and districts

There should be the maximum delegation possible of functions to metropolitan/municipal divisions and districts, promoting more effective local government and avoiding over centralisation of decision making. The unitary council should primarily focus on strategic issues affecting the whole area, and meet on a bi-monthly basis. All functions other than major policy and strategic matters should be dealt with at metropolitan/municipal division and district level on a monthly basis. At national level consideration should be given by the local government advisory group to strengthening the powers of municipal districts so as to secure the maximum possible autonomy and budgetary control.

8.4 Towards implementation – the next steps

It is desirable to begin the planning and implementation process at the earliest possible time. To this end:

- An implementation group should be established immediately following the government decision. The implementation group should draw up and oversee an implementation plan to ensure the new arrangements are in place by the local elections in 2019.
- Cork city and county councils should appoint a dedicated project team from existing staff to assist in the preparation of the implementation plan. A local co-ordinator should be appointed to drive the implementation process at local level. This should be a senior position, at least at director of service level, and someone with proven experience in large-scale change management.

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Appendix 1 Cork Local Government Review: Terms of Reference

1. The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government hereby establishes the Cork Local Government Committee under section 28 of the Local Government Act 1991, hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”.

2. The following persons are hereby appointed as members of the Committee: -

Mr Alf Smiddy (Chair);

Mr Tom Curran;

Professor Dermot Keogh;

Mr John Lucey, S.C.; and

Dr Theresa Reidy.

3. The Committee shall be independent in the performance of its functions and shall stand dissolved on submission of its final report to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

4. In accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Act 1991, the Committee is hereby required to carry out an objective review of local government arrangements in Cork city and county, including the boundary of Cork city, the local government areas and the local authorities for such areas, and to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to: -

(a) whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or

(b) whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified;
and

(c) any further related matters on which the Minister may request the Committee to make recommendations during the course of its review.

5. In the event of a recommendation that the boundary of Cork city should be altered or that Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified, the report shall contain relevant supporting information, analysis and rationale relating to or arising from such recommendation, including the following matters: -

(a) The financial and other relevant implications of the options at 4(a) and 4(b), including the potential outcomes to be achieved, and likely benefits and costs.

(b) The actions and arrangements that should be implemented in order to maximise savings, efficiency and effectiveness and to support key requirements of local government, particularly effective, accountable representation and governance, and efficient performance of functions and delivery of services.

(c) Any significant issues that are considered likely to arise in the implementation of revised arrangements and how these should be addressed.

(d) Measures that should be taken consequential to or in the context of the recommended arrangements, including any measures in relation to financial arrangements.

(e) In the event of a recommendation that Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified-

(i) the most appropriate arrangement of municipal districts within the unified city and county, including designation of a metropolitan district in respect of Cork city,

(ii) any changes which should be made in the allocation of reserved functions, or in governance arrangements generally, as between the local

authority for the overall city and county and the municipal or metropolitan district members, having regard particularly to the extent of area and population in Cork city and county.

- (f) In the event of a recommendation that the boundary of Cork city should be altered, any matters in relation to which provision should be made in a primary order or a supplementary order (providing for matters arising from, in consequence of, or related to, the boundary extension) within the meaning of section 34 of the Local Government Act 1991, including any financial adjustments required.
- (g) Any interim measures which should be taken in advance of, or in preparation for, the full implementation of the recommendations.
- (h) The appropriate timescale for implementation of recommendations, including any interim measures.

6. In carrying out its review and formulating its recommendations, the Committee shall address the following matters in particular: -

- (a) The need to take full account of: -
 - (i) experience to date of local authority merger in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, including the type of administrative streamlining, efficiencies and economies of scale achieved, and non-financial benefits arising from unification;
 - (ii) current demographic and relevant spatial and socio-economic factors, including settlement and employment patterns;
 - (iii) detailed information to be provided by the relevant local authorities in relation to their structure, services, finances and operations or other matters relevant to the Committee's functions;

- (iv) Government policy in relation to local government as set out in the Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First, and in relation to the public service and the public finances;
- (v) any relevant analysis or recommendations in reports or studies relating to local government, to the Cork area, or to any of the Committee's functions.
- (b) The relative degree of complexity that would be likely to arise in organisational, financial or other administrative aspects of different options or arrangements considered, or in the implementation of, or transition to, such arrangements.
- (c) The need to maximise efficiency and value for money in local government.
- (d) The need to ensure that Cork city and county is served by viable and effective local government, including any arrangements considered necessary to strengthen local government and enhance the effectiveness of democratic representation and accountability.
- (e) The need to ensure that the future local government arrangements recommended are financially sustainable and will not result in an ongoing additional cost to central Government through increased subvention.
- (f) Staffing, organisational, representational, financial, service delivery and other relevant requirements.
- (g) The need to maximise the capacity of local government to promote the economic and social development of Cork city and county and the wider region in the context of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines, and of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and Local Economic and Community Plan, to be drawn up under the Planning and Local Government Acts, respectively.

- (h) The need to maximise the capacity of the Cork metropolitan area, in particular, to act as a strong and dynamic focus and generator of growth for the wider hinterland, and that of other urban and rural areas to contribute in that regard in the context of balanced development.
 - (i) Any weaknesses in current local authority arrangements or operations that need to be addressed.
 - (j) Any additional matters that the Minister may specify.
7. The Committee shall make such recommendations with respect to the requirements at (4) and (5) and (6) as it considers necessary in the interests of effective, efficient and innovative local government. It shall prepare and furnish to the Minister, no later than nine months after the commencement of the review, a report, in writing, of its review and recommendations, which the Minister shall publish.

January 2015.

Appendix 2 List of those who made submissions

CORK LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW SUBMISSIONS

1 Mr. Michael Creed T.D

2 Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald

3 Mr. Michael Moynihan T.D

4 Mr. Jim Corr

5 Cllr. Mick Finn, Cork City Council

6 Ms. Áine Collins T.D

7 Mr. Emmett Murphy, Carma

8 Mr. Michael Mulcahy, Little Island Business Association

9 Mr. Martin Murray

10 Ms. Joan Twomey

11 Ms. Joan Twomey

12 Ms. Mairéaid De Búrca

13 Cllr. Mick Barry, Cork City Council

14 Mr. Ciarán Lynch T.D

15 Mr. Ken McCarthy

16 Mr Jerry O’Sullivan

17 Mr. Dan Boyle, Green Party

- 18 Ms. Joan Twomey
- 19 Mr. Andrew Roache, Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail
- 20 Mr Ken D McCarthy
- 21 Mr. David Egan
- 22 Mr. Ray Bridgeman
- 23 Mr. Ken McCarthy
- 24 Mr. Brian McCutcheon, McCutcheon Halley Walsh, Chartered Planning Consultants
- 25 Mr. Liam Ronayne
- 26 Ms. Margaret Peters, West Cork Communities Alliance
- 27 Dr. Aodh Quinlivan, UCC
- 28 Mr. Brendan Devlin
- 29 Mr. Pat Lyons, Pat Lyons & Associates, Chartered Planning Consultants
- 30 Mr. Finbarr Buckley, Buckley & Co. Registered Auditors & Accountants
- 31 Mr. Bernard Lynch, Crosshaven Community Association.
- 32 Mr. Jerry O'Sullivan
- 33 Mr. Billy Kelleher T.D
- 34 Mr. Aiden Patrick Hennigan
- 35 Mr. Michael Wall, Carrigaline Community Association Ltd
- 36 Dr. Brendan J. Murphy, Cork Institute of Technology
- 37 Fine Gael Elected Councillors, Cork City Council

38 Mr. Mark Flynn

39 Mr. Declan Connolly, Cork Branch of Impact

40 Ms. Christine Moloney, LeisureWorld

41 Ms. Emer Cassidy, Ballincollig Business Association

42 Curraheen European Healthcare Limited c/o McCutcheon Halley Walsh, Chartered Planning Consultants

43 Mr. Sean O'Driscoll

44 Mr. Hugh Creegan, National Transport Authority

45 Mr. Michael Dineen

46 Mr. Kevin Burke

47 Mr. Ian Dempsey, Board of West Cork Development Partnership

48 Mr. Micheál Martin T.D

49 Ms. Tricia O'Sullivan & Ms. Sarah Moran, Irish Planning Institute Cork Branch

50 Ms. Caitríona O'Sullivan

51 Ms. Grace Curran

52 Mr. Finbar Harrington, Cork County Community and Voluntary Forum

53 Mr. Ger Reaney, Cork & Kerry Community Healthcare Organisation (HSE)

54 Mr. Joseph O'Brien, Construction Industry Federation

55 Mr. Michael McGrath T.D

56 Mr. Fred Barry, National Roads Authority

- 57 Mr. Niall MacCarthy, Cork Airport
- 58 Ms. Kate Gibney, Southern Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force
- 59 Ms. Caroline McCarthy, Carrigaline Business Association
- 60 Ms. Ciara O'Neill, Butler O'Neill Planning Solutions
- 61 Mr. Joseph Kirby, Cork Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force
- 62 Ms. Fiona Buckley, Fáilte Ireland
- 63 Mr. Ian Dinan, Fine Gael
- 64 Mr. Ray O'Connor, IDA Ireland
- 65 Mr. Fergal O'Brien, IBEC
- 66 Mr. Jerry Buttimer T.D
- 67 Mr. John O'Donnell
- 68 Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond, Cork County Council
- 69 Ms. Marielle Monaghan
- 70 Mr. Michael O'Flynn, O'Flynn Construction
- 71 Cllr. Daithi O'Donnabhain, Cork County Council
- 72 Ms. Helen Barrett, Cork Environmental Forum
- 73 Ms. Michael O'Neill, Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce
- 74 Ms. Rebecca Loughry, Cork Equal & Sustainable Communities Alliance
- 75 Mr. Adrian Kearney
- 76 Mr. Noel Harrington T.D

77 Cllr. Bobby O’Connell, Local Authority Members Association

78 Cllr. Tim Brosnan, Cork City Council

79 Mr. Robert Diggin

80. Mr. Maura Walsh, I.R.D. Dunhallow Ltd

81 Mr. David Morey

82 Cllr. Noel Collins, Cork County Council

83 Ms. Frances Fitzgerald, T.D, Minister for Justice & Equality.

84 Mr. Michael B. Murphy, University College Cork

85 Mr. William Brady, UCC Centre for Planning Education & Research

86 Mr. Seamus Coleman, Cork Sinn Féin

87 Mr. Damien Wallace

88 Mr. Kieran Lettice, Energy Cork

89 Ms. Alma Murnane, Cork Chamber

90 Southern Regional Assembly

91 Mr. Lawrence Owens, Cork Business Association

92 Mr. Pádraig Mac Consaidín

93 Chief Superintendent Michael A Finn, Cork City LCDC

94 Mr. John Curtin, Office of Public Works

Plus submissions from Cork City Council and Cork County Council

Appendix 3 Consultation process

A public advertisement seeking submissions from interested parties was published in the following papers:-

- 30th January, 2015: Irish Examiner, Irish Times, Irish Independent, Evening Echo.
- 4th February, 2015: The Carrigdhoun
- 5th February, 2015: The Corkman, East Cork Journal, The Avondhu, The Mallow Star, Cork Independent, Douglas Post.
- 6th February, 2015: Cork News
- 7th February, 2015: The Southern Star

A number of prescribed bodies and relevant organisations were written to on 30th January 2015 informing them of the commencement of the review.

The Committee accepted submissions up to and including Friday 6th March, 2015.

The Committee met with representatives of each of Limerick and Waterford City & County Councils, and Tipperary County Council, to hear about the experiences to date of these local authority mergers.

An induction presentation was delivered to the Committee by Mr. Tim Lucey, Chief Executive, Cork County Council and Ms. Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council and their respective Management Teams on 27th February, 2015.

A meeting with Members of Cork City and County Councils took place on 23rd March, 2015.

Meetings with Cork based Oireachtas members and ministers and MEPs took place during March and April.

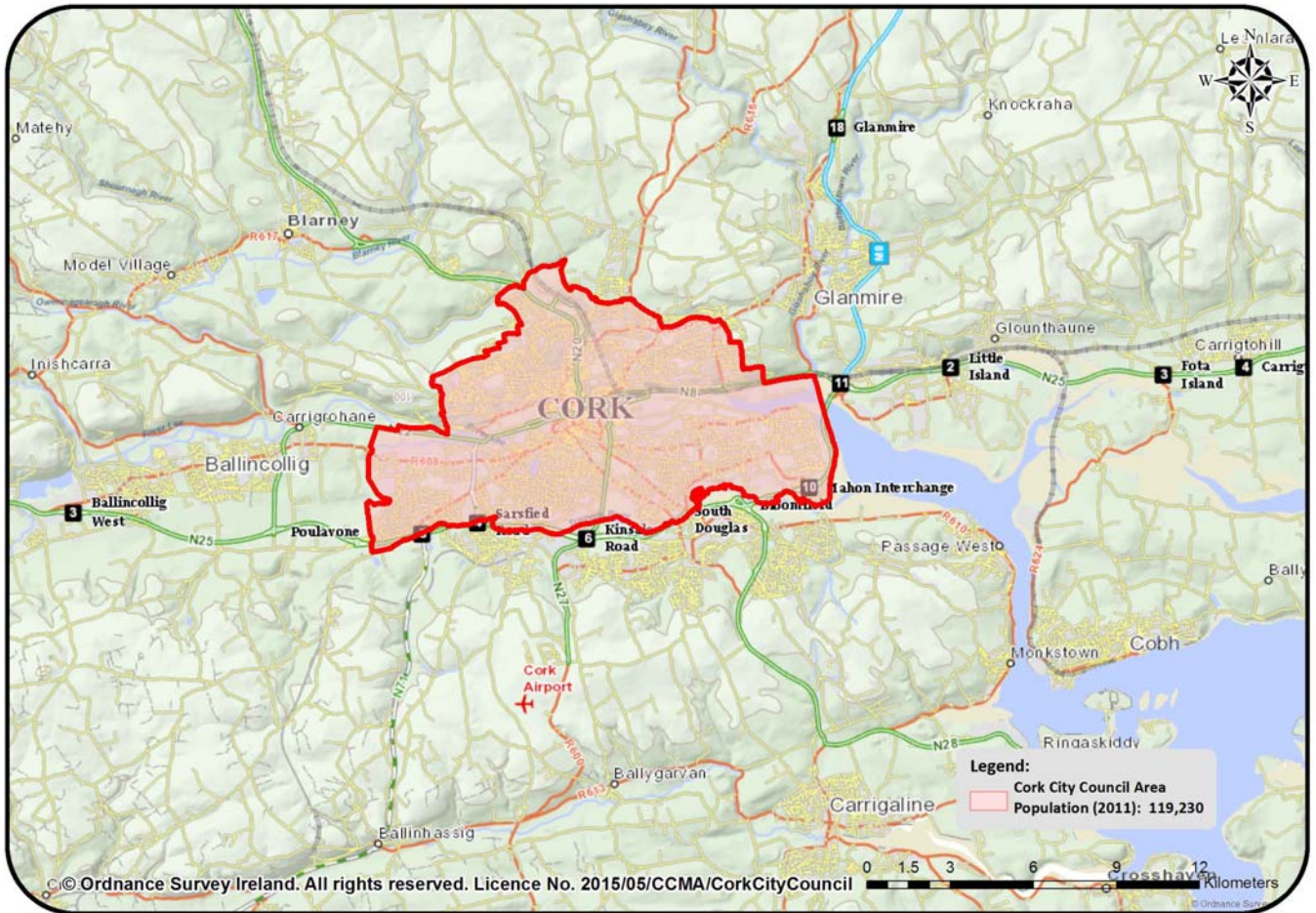
A number of subsequent meetings were held with the City and County Councils and with various experts and stakeholder groups to clarify and develop issues raised in submissions.

A total of 96 submissions were received, including those submitted by the two local authorities.

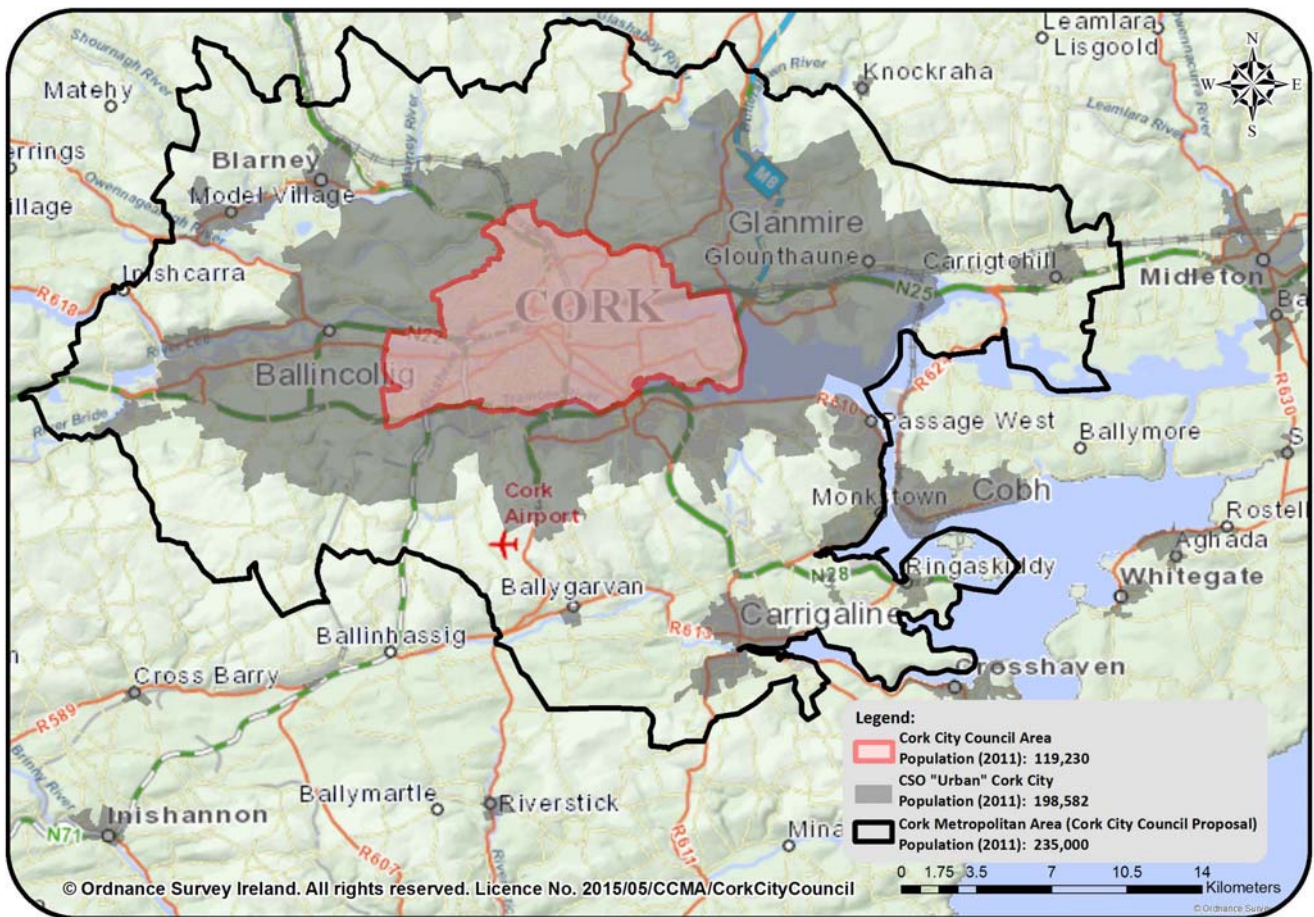
Appendix 4 Maps

The following pages contain maps of areas referenced in section 2.1 of the report.

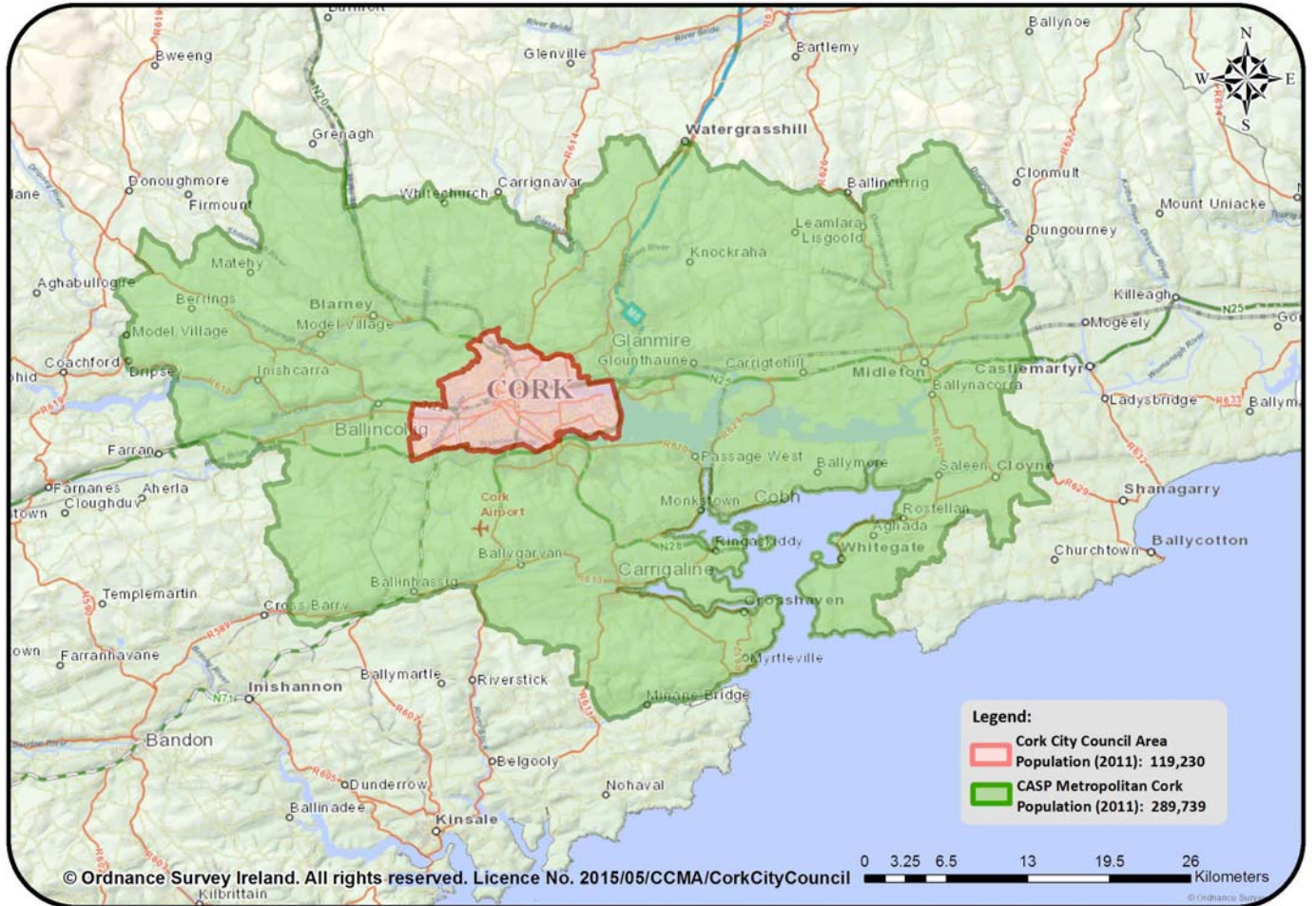
Cork city



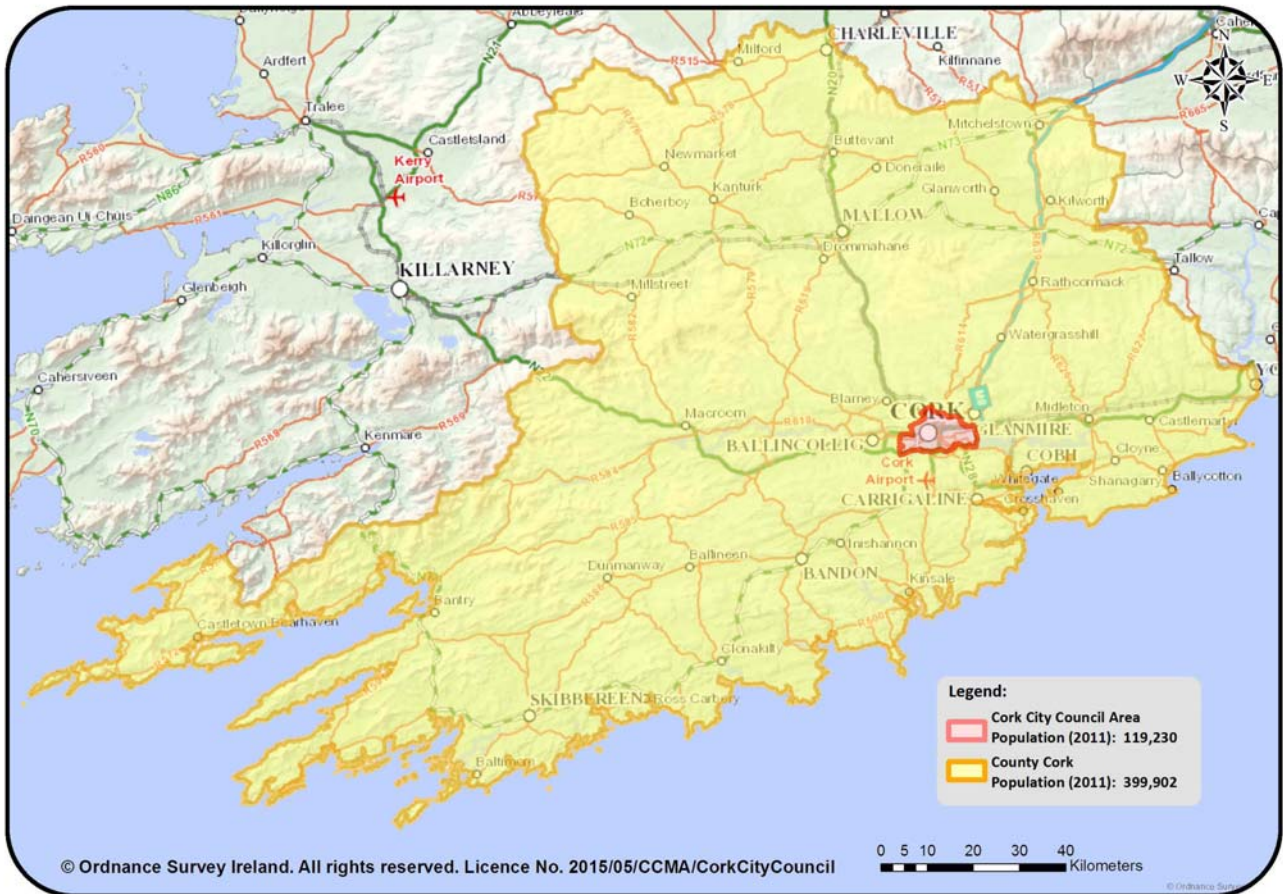
Cork metropolitan area (City Council proposal)



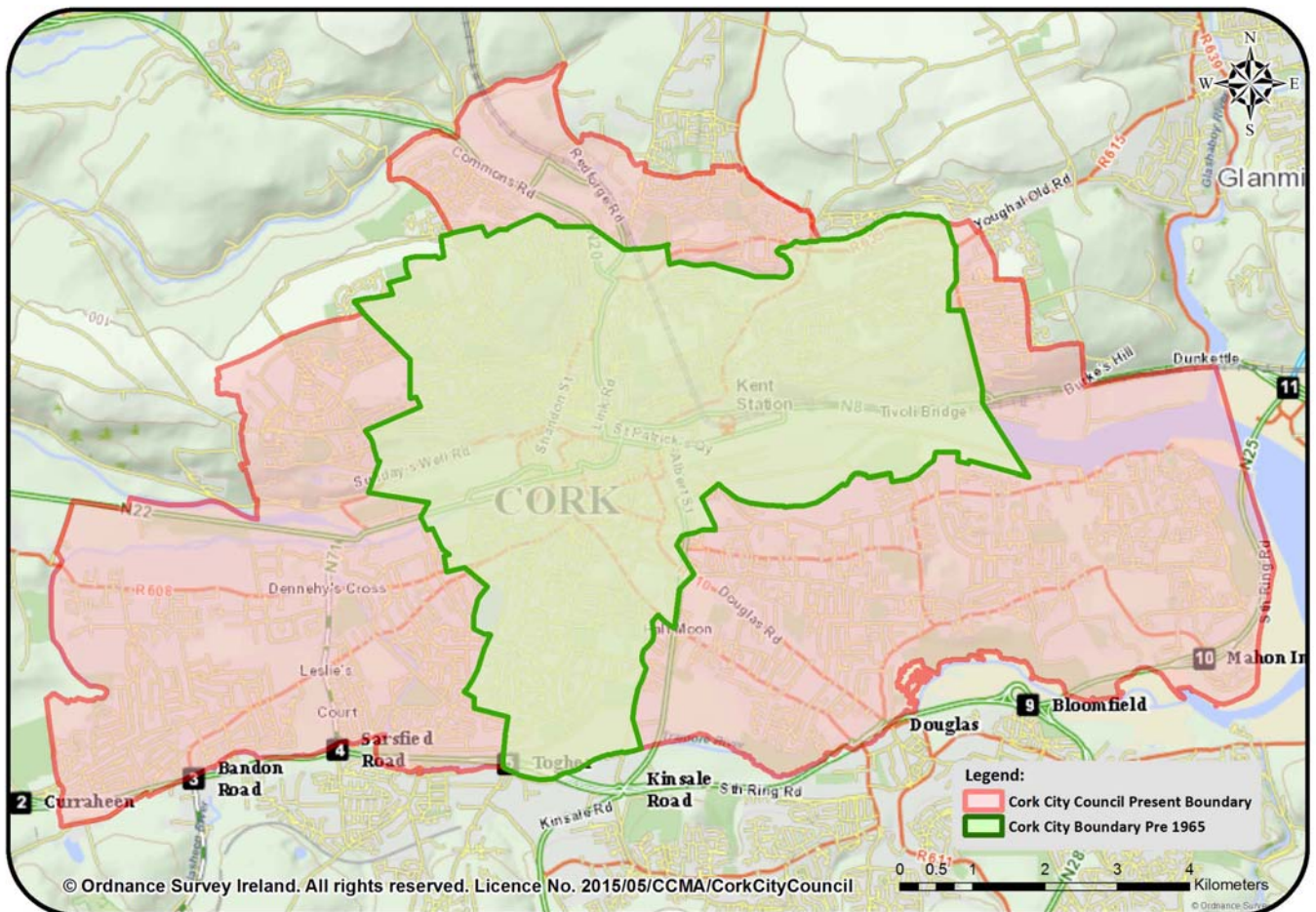
Metropolitan Cork



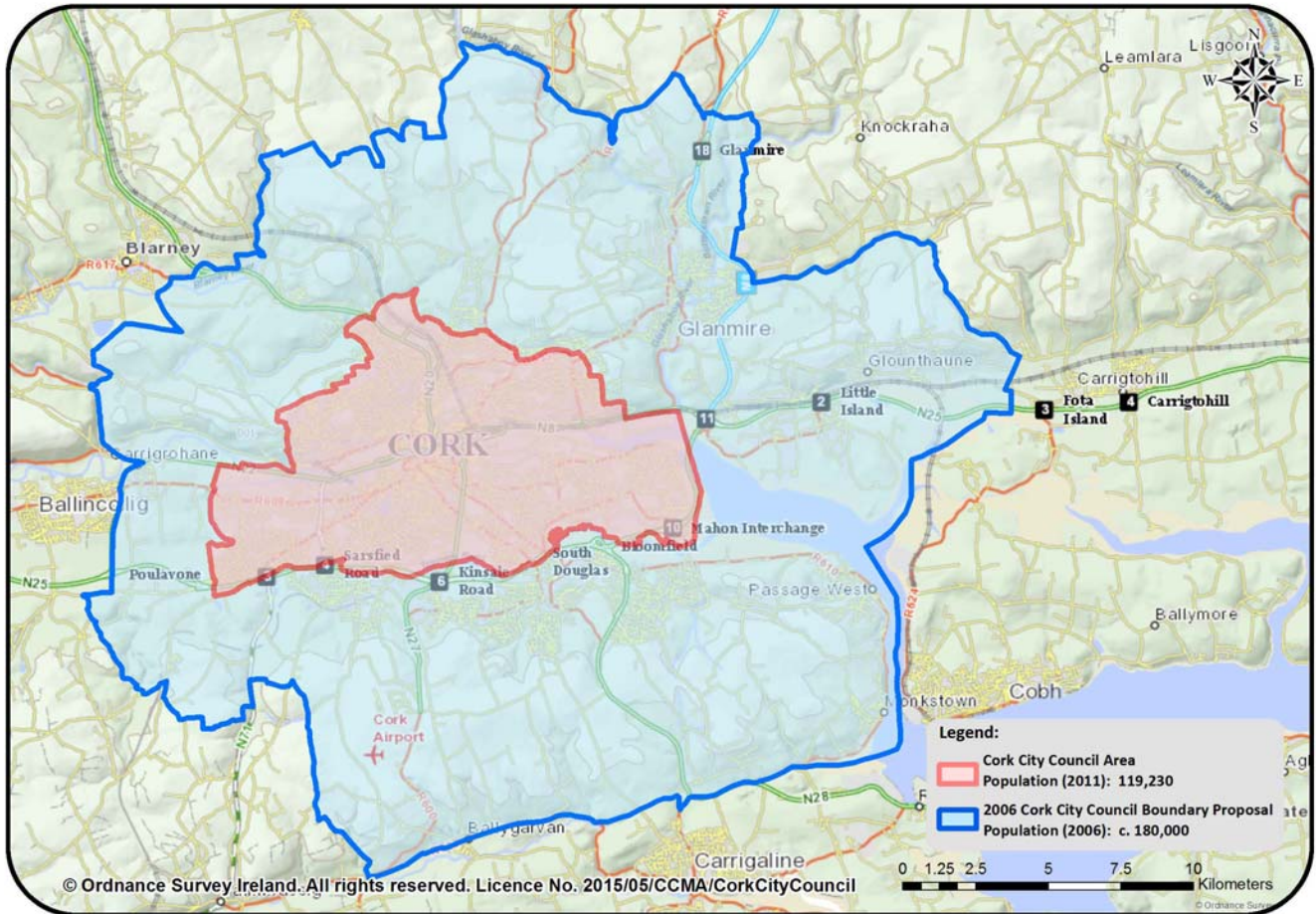
Cork County



Cork city 1965 boundary extension



Cork city proposed 2006 boundary extension



Appendix 5 Overview of selected international experience with local government reorganisation, mergers and amalgamation

**Richard Boyle
Research Division
Institute of Public Administration
August 2015**



An overview of selected international experience with local government reorganisation, mergers and amalgamation

1. Introduction

Drawing lessons from international experience with regard to local government is fraught with difficulties. Different administrations devolve different functions to local government, and systems and practices of government differ.

A distinguishing characteristic of local government in Ireland is the relatively limited range of functions undertaken by local authorities. Many local authorities in other OECD countries have responsibility for a much broader range of social services, including primary and secondary education, health, social welfare, care of the elderly and childcare services, public transport, and policing.

Ireland, along with the UK, also has local authorities with a relatively large population size (at 148,000 per authority on average) compared to many other OECD countries. Denmark, for example, has an average population of 54,000 per local authority, and The Netherlands an average of 40,000. But again this data should be interpreted cautiously and variations in the functions and tiers of government means simple comparisons of numbers and average populations can be misleading. Some countries have more than one tier of local government with the local tier dealing with relatively modest operational functions with more strategic decisions being taken at the regional level. If, for example, municipal districts were included in the Irish figures (as some functions are delivered through municipal districts, even though formally they are a part of the county or city council) the population size would be of the order of 36,000. Also, the average figure masks large variations. For example in The Netherlands four municipalities have populations greater than 250,000.

Importantly for cities such as Cork and Galway, city region authorities tend to be larger, even in countries with a large number of smaller authorities. Finland is a good example, where the Finnish Capital Region consists of four municipalities with city status (Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo and Kauniainen) whose total population is about 1.1 million, with the population of Helsinki municipality about 620,000.

2. International trends

There is a general trend in many OECD countries to reduce the number of local authorities (Chatry, 2015). In Finland, they reduced from 452 to 339 authorities in the 2000s and current plans are to reduce down to around 70 municipalities. In 2007 the Danish government undertook a major reform, which reduced the number of authorities

from 272 to 98, and abolished the intermediate tier of 13 authorities. Proposals in Norway are to reduce from 428 to about 100. In Australia, Aulich et al (2011: 8) note that:

The available evidence points to a particular need for ongoing consolidation of local government activities in metropolitan areas. Growing concerns about Australia's capacity to manage rapid metropolitan growth and change, and the federal government's move to develop a national urban policy and promote better metropolitan planning, call for a demonstration of local government's capacity to make a strong contribution on behalf of local communities and in the broader regional and national interest. There is a widespread view that this calls for substantially larger local government units as well as collaborative planning and resource sharing.

There have been some adverse reactions to some mergers, and proposals for de-amalgamation and some de-amalgamations, notably in Queensland, and in some parts of Canada particularly Quebec.

The reasons put forward for merger and amalgamation are generally that it represents an effective method of enhancing the operational efficiency of local councils, improves their administrative and technical capacity, generates cost savings, strengthens strategic decision-making and fosters greater political power. By contrast, opponents of consolidation typically underline the divisive nature of amalgamations, the absence of supportive empirical evidence, the equivocal outcomes observed in case studies, and the diminution of local democracy (Dollery and Kortt, 2013: 74).

Dollery (2014) identifies five main policy lessons derived from real-world amalgamation episodes:

- Entities designated for amalgamation must be carefully designed
- Amalgamation proposals must meet minimum levels of community support
- New amalgamated entities must be viable
- Transaction costs and transformation costs of amalgamation must be minimised
- Potential sources of conflict must be minimised

3. Case studies

Auckland

In 2010, Auckland merged seven local authorities and one regional environmental

authority into a consolidated single metropolitan authority - the Auckland Council. This provides a unitary local government covering one third of New Zealand's population, spending about \$3 billion per annum and employing more than 5000 staff.

According to Mouat and Dodson (2014) the Auckland case shows an emerging logic of super amalgamation in which the re-bordering and reconstitution of urban governance as a 'super-sized' metropolitan authority is designed to deliver coordinated efficiency. They note that super-sizing is emerging as a (neoliberal) governance strategy aimed at achieving metropolitan efficiency, economic and environmental goals and activating community governance (p138).

The council comprises elected councillors, the mayor and local boards all working with a range of council controlled organisations (CCOs), which provide core services (CCOs provide such services as property management, tourism and transport). The Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 (the Act) established a two tier governance structure, comprising the governing body and 21 local boards. Thirteen wards elect 20 councillors to the governing body. The governing body deals with decision-making at a strategic and regional level. The 21 local boards deal with:

- community-based engagement
- shaping and monitoring local services
- bringing local perspectives to region-wide policies and plans

Local boards are intended to enable the governing body to focus more effectively on regional issues. Decision-making responsibilities are shared between the two tiers. Both tiers are responsible and democratically accountable for the council's decision-making.

The Controller and Auditor General (2012) carried out a review of aspects of the merger. In relation to governance she found that:

- the governing body had not yet taken on its strategic and regional governance role but was still operating as an 'old-style' council; and
- local boards had not yet embraced their part in collective responsibility for the council's decision-making, and tended to act in a more limited community advocacy role.

She was also particularly concerned about the huge amount of reading expected of members of governing body committees and local boards.

With regard to savings, she found that though the Auckland reforms were not primarily carried out to reduce costs, economies of scale and opportunities to leverage buying power were anticipated from a larger council. The council has reported \$81 million of efficiencies in the first year and is forecasting \$1.7 billion of efficiency savings during the next 10 years. Efficiency gains have been made through the bargaining power brought by the council's scale in procurement. The council has consolidated multiple contracts with the same supplier for similar services throughout the region, and rationalised the numbers of suppliers of similar services, to improve value for money. For example, park maintenance contracts in the region were recently merged from 78 to 12 contracts, resulting in savings compared to previous contract costs.

Perhaps the main benefit she found was that unified and integrated direction has been achieved through the vision and plan for the Auckland region. The council and the Auckland region have benefited from integrated planning:

We heard from everyone we spoke to about the unifying and focusing benefits of the Auckland Plan. The Plan has provided a coherent strategic regional direction, including a sense of purpose, a sense of regional identity, and recognition of Auckland's national significance. This direction has a lot of organisational, stakeholder, and public support ... Many people we spoke to told us that the proof of the success of the amalgamation lay in the planning achievements of the Council in the last two years. (p25)

Plans for a similar amalgamation of councils in the Wellington region were cancelled by the Local Government Commission in June 2015. The Commission cited a lack of public support for the plans.

Brisbane

(This section largely derived from O'Riordan, 2012)

Brisbane City Council serves a population of just over 1.1 million and derives from cities, towns and shires merged in 1925. Brisbane is often cited as the example of a successful major Australian city which is not characterised by a fragmented local government structure.

The city council is made up of 26 wards with a lord mayor and 26 councillor positions. All Brisbane city residents elect the Lord Mayor and elections are held every four years. The role of the Lord Mayor is defined in the 2010 Act to include the following: 'It is the responsibility of the mayor to provide a visionary and strategic role in the economic, social and environmental management of Brisbane. The mayor has additional

responsibilities to lead as the first among equals. Only the mayor has the power to direct the CEO and senior contract employees.’

The councillors are elected on a ward basis representing approximately 30-35,000 people. They each have a ward office staffed by city council personnel who oversee delivery of local services. Extensive public engagement is a hallmark of the political role of each councillor. This is used to ensure an on-going engagement with local communities in the absence of local structures below that of the city council. Responsibilities of mayor, councillor and chief executive are clearly delineated in the City of Brisbane Act 2010.

One of the key ‘weapons’ of the mayor in Brisbane is that the council is a shareholder in the utilities supplying the region and in that role is represented on the relevant boards. This includes water and transport utilities and other development/investment vehicles for the region.

A further point of note from Brisbane is the application of long-term thinking to its development. The City economic strategy reaches out to the 2030’s while its immediate local consent process is underpinned by a highly consultative process based on local neighbourhoods. In other words before the professional staff of the council prepare the plans they must engage in ‘blue sky’ thinking with local communities under the leadership of the relevant ward councillors. The City of Brisbane Act 2010 and associated regulations emphasise community engagement. The Act stipulates that the council must have a community plan and a community engagement policy.

Perth

A Metropolitan Local Government Review Panel was appointed in June 2011 to examine the current and anticipated regional, social, environmental and economic issues affecting, or likely to affect, the growth of metropolitan Perth in the next 50 years, as well as current and anticipated national and international factors. The panel’s task was to recommend the most appropriate local government structures and governance models for metropolitan Perth.

Current governance arrangements in Perth are complex. As well as the 30 local governments there are six regional local governments and a number of regional organisations of councils. With the population expected to reach 2.3 million by 2026, and perhaps 3.5 million by 2050, Perth’s metropolitan area is experiencing an unprecedented rate of growth.

The panel found weaknesses with the current metropolitan local government arrangements (Metropolitan Local Government Review Panel, 2012):

- There is a significant level of duplication and wasted resources.
- There are great inconsistencies in processes and approaches which result in difficulties for business, lost opportunities for communities, and confusion for consumers.
- The fragmented approach to local planning results in a system that is unnecessarily complicated, uncoordinated and lacking in strategic focus.
- Some local government boundaries are illogical.
- There is a great variation in the size and capacity of local governments.
- A large disparity in service levels between different local governments exists.
- The structure has limited ability to address region-wide issues.
- The current structure will not serve Perth's future needs

At the time of releasing its draft findings, the panel considered the most appropriate options to be the following:

- 10 to 12 local governments
- five to six local governments
- one metropolitan local government

Feedback from the submissions showed limited support for five to six, and one local government. After further deliberation, including considering the information presented in the submissions the panel determined that a structure based on 12 local governments was its preferred model.

The size of the City of Perth emerged as a consideration in the review, especially since the spilt of the former City of Perth into four local governments in 1993. The panel believes there is a strong case for increasing the size of the City of Perth and giving it an enhanced role. The City must be of a sufficient size to be a serious national and international player, and to advocate for the whole of the metropolitan area. By increasing its size, the City will boost its capability and responsiveness, diversify its population, and enhance its international standing. The population of the modified City of Perth is estimated at around 116,000.

Wales

A Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (2014) has reported on an examination of all aspects of governance and delivery in the devolved public sector in Wales. This included the issue of local government re-organisation. While no action has yet been taken on the report findings, the thinking of the Commission with regard to local government amalgamations is of interest.

The Commission find little evidence that small authorities provide worse services than larger ones. However, they find that the breadth and depth of capacity and particularly the resilience of smaller organisations can be a real challenge. They believe there are several areas where small scale creates critical and unacceptable risks to governance and service delivery. In particular they find:

...the focus in smaller organisations tends to be on simply providing day-to-day services in established ways. There can be neither the expertise, nor the funds, nor the leadership to do anything else. In particular, we agree with the main regulators that smaller organisations may lack the flexibility to anticipate and respond to emerging pressures; and to do so effectively and with the necessary pace and consistency. They can also lack the vision or capacity to develop and adopt innovative approaches to service provision and management. That is not a criticism of those involved: it is simply that when managing routine delivery is such a challenge, it is hard to find the space or resource to do anything more strategic or long-term (p. 80-81).

The existence of a large number of small organisations is found to increase competition between them to secure the best leaders, managers and professionals, and overall means that talent is spread too thinly.

They note that small organisations often seek to collaborate and share services so as to secure the capacity and expertise they need. But they heard evidence both that smaller organisations often find it harder to collaborate effectively, due to the need to devote significant management capacity to this, and that national and regional-level organisations find collaborating with so many other organisations difficult (pp. 81-82).

The Commission recommend merging the 22 local authorities into larger units:

This appears to be the best option for addressing the risks of small scale and indeed the only one that is both viable and deliverable in the short to medium term. Such a programme is necessary to maintain local democracy, deliver cost savings and create local authorities that are resilient and better able to withstand

the challenges ahead. It is also the option that will allow for timely implementation and the least possible impact on the delivery of front-line services (pp. 87-88).

In June 2015 the UK government set out options for the possible reorganisation of councils in Wales that would see the number of councils cut down to eight or nine. This would include merging Cardiff with the Vale of Glamorgan and Swansea with Neath Port Talbot.

Manchester

The ten authorities in Greater Manchester were the first in the UK to develop a statutory combined authority which co-ordinates key economic development, regeneration and transport functions. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was established on the 1 April 2011. It is important to note that the ten cooperating authorities remain, so it is not a merger or a boundary change, but a higher tier of government at the regional level. As a body, the GMCA comprises the Leaders of the 10 constituent councils in Greater Manchester (or their substitutes). It meets on the last Friday of every month.

The GMCA has the power to establish joint committees, committees, strategic commissions and agencies. These are designed to discharge the functions of the GMCA Executive Board in respect of particular areas of work such as:

- Greater Manchester Low Carbon Hub (formerly the Environment Commission)
- Greater Manchester Interim Health and Wellbeing Board (formerly the Health Commission)
- Planning & Housing Commission
- Transport for Greater Manchester Committee
- Manchester Family / Centres of Excellence

The leadership for the above is made up of a mixture of elected members and representatives from other partners, including the private sector, other public sector agencies and the voluntary sector. The representatives are not there to represent specific geographical areas, political groups or sectoral interests, but to perform a role for the city region as a whole; and are appointed based on skills and experience. Consequently, the intention is that not every local authority will have a representative on each of the above.

Under arrangements recently agreed with the Government a new, directly elected Mayor of Greater Manchester will receive the following powers:

- Responsibility for a devolved and consolidated transport budget.
- Responsibility for franchised bus services (subject to consultation by Greater Manchester), for integrating smart ticketing across all local modes of transport, and urgently exploring the opportunities for devolving rail stations across the Greater Manchester area.
- Powers over strategic planning, including the power to create a statutory spatial framework for Greater Manchester. This will need to be approved by a unanimous vote of the Mayor's Cabinet.
- Control of a new £300 million Housing Investment Fund.
- Control of a reformed earn back deal, within the current envelope of £30 million a year for 30years.
- Take on the role currently covered by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) will receive the following powers:

- Responsibility for devolved business support budgets, including the Growth Accelerator, Manufacturing Advice Service and UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) Export Advice.
- Control of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers in Greater Manchester and power to reshape and re-structure the Further Education (FE) provision within Greater Manchester.
- Control of an expanded Working Well pilot, with central government funding linked to good performance up to a fixed DEL limit in return for risk sharing.
- Opportunity to be a joint commissioner with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the next phase of the Work Programme.
- GMCA and Greater Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups will be invited to develop a business plan for the integration of health and social care across Greater Manchester, based on control of existing health and social care budgets.

Birmingham

Birmingham City Council has been in the news in the UK following a review of the council undertaken by Sir Bob Kerslake, permanent secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government (Kerslake, 2014). The review was commissioned by the leader of Birmingham City Council and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government following concerns regarding its management and governance of schools.

In the report, Kerslake highlights deep-seated problems such as a low-skilled workforce, an arrogant attitude towards partnerships, a multiplicity of plans and strategies that are not followed through and the absence of a clearly articulated vision for the city. One issue which arose for consideration was the size of the city council. With a population of 1.1 million people Birmingham City Council (BCC) is the largest metropolitan local authority in England.

Kerslake (2014: 15) found that the size of the City acts as both a badge and a barrier. People feel a sense of pride in the city and in working for the council. The council's size gives it the capacity to take on significant projects that many local authorities would struggle to achieve alone, particularly around economic development. However, in other respects size is seen as a problem. The review was told:

- it has encouraged a culture that looks inwards rather than out and an organisation that thinks and acts like a parent with all that implies;
- in the past some services, including education and children's services, have been too big to manage from the centre and have lacked the intelligence they need to operate effectively;
- the city's council wards are among the largest in the country leaving councillors with a heavy workload and make it difficult to keep in touch with the communities they serve; and,
- while other local authorities have successfully forged the partnerships needed to operate across a functional economic area Birmingham City Council has struggled in the past to build the alliances it requires to do so.

Kerslake found that the council's size fosters an unhelpful culture and attitude. However, he noted that the size of the council is not the sole reason for its problems. His view in summary is that the council's problems are not intrinsic to its size: 'Large organisations can be successful but only if the problems that can come with scale are acknowledged

and addressed. Other large authorities, such as Leeds City Council, are actively seeking to do this' (p. 16). The review examined a number of alternative governance arrangements within a retained city council and recommended a new model for devolution.

Belfast

In Northern Ireland in April 2015 26 pre-existing councils were reduced to 11 local authorities with a range of additional functions. In the case of Belfast City Council the decision was taken to expand the city council to include the contiguous urban area to form a coherent urban authority. This boundary extension resulted in a population increase from 270,000 to 335,000. The new areas were formerly parts of Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and North Down Borough Council. Economic development was one of the main drivers behind the decision to extend the boundary.

4. General comments

As noted above there is a general trend towards a smaller number of larger local authorities in several OECD countries. At the same time, there is limited evidence of significant savings or economies of scale, or performance improvement from such mergers and amalgamations. The justification is more in terms of harder to quantify issues such as improvements in strategic capacity of organisations, the limitations of benefits of shared services and cooperation, and the opportunity to enhance the skill base of a smaller number of local authorities due to less competition between them. Here, some of these issues are noted in the context of some of the criteria used to assess the Cork local government options.

Economic and social development

In reviewing Australian and New Zealand experience with local government amalgamation and mergers, Aulich et al (2011) note that:

...consolidation provides important opportunities to capture economies of scope and enhance the strategic capacity of local government. Economies of scope increase the capacity of councils to undertake new functions and deliver new or improved services that previously were not possible. Significantly, they enable councils to shift their focus towards a more strategic view of their operations. We argue that this enhanced strategic capacity is in part a function of increased size and resource level, but it is also related to the potentialities that are created by the pooling of knowledge and expertise. The process of consolidation can generate a focus that transcends individual local government boundaries and encourages councils to operate in a broader context – one that is more regional or system-

wide – and enables them to relate more effectively to central governments. Enhanced strategic capacity appears essential to local government's long term success as a valued partner in the system of government, and this emerged as probably the most important issue for councils to consider in examining different modes of consolidation (p. 10).

Aulich et al (2011: 11-12) further state, however, that their case studies and interviews suggest that there is a 'cut-off point' in terms of feasible consolidation, especially where considerable travel distances are involved. Shared services may be impractical or yield very limited benefits; travel distance becomes prohibitive for effective amalgamations; democratic representation simply becomes too onerous; and establishing any form of community of interest becomes difficult.

Governance, accountability and local democracy

The experience from Auckland, and from Birmingham, suggests that if merger is pursued as an option, there is a need for a whole of region governance capacity focused on strategic issues, to be complemented by more local governance arrangements that enable local issues to be addressed in an effective manner, and the local relationship between citizens and council maintained and developed.

Danish local government reorganisation experience (Kjaer et al, 2010) suggests that there is a tendency in the new and larger municipalities for influence to move away from ordinary councillors and in the direction of a few increasingly influential top figures within the council (the inner circle), i.e. the mayor and the committee chairs. It was also found that the amalgamations have strengthened the influence of the administration compared to the councillors. Amalgamation also tends to increase the workload of councillors. Though Hansen (2014), also looking at Danish experience notes that these trends are marginal in nature and states that while municipal mergers do carry some democratic costs the size of these costs are small and should not be overstated.

Service delivery

There is limited evidence from the literature or the cases examined of the impact of amalgamation and merger on service delivery. In a review of the academic literature, Callanan, Murphy and Quinlivan (2014) found that several studies suggest that larger local authorities may be less responsive, and more bureaucratic. The studies further suggest that because larger local authorities tend to undertake more 'in-house' activities than smaller local authorities they are less prone to using alternative delivery systems. Undertaking a review of selected service indicators of Irish local government performance, they also found that:

...there is very limited evidence of correlations between local authority size on the one hand and a large number of service indicators on the other, including revenue collection (housing loans, commercial rates and non-domestic water charges), timelines for the processing of planning applications and motor tax and driving licence applications, levels of unaccounted for water, litter pollution levels, recycling rates, and planning enforcement and building control. In these areas, and others, the findings suggest that there is no perceptible link between population size and local authority performance (pp. 389-390).

The Chief executive of Durham County Council in England has claimed a number of benefits arising from the creation of a unitary authority for the county (Garlick, 2014):

- Common allocations policy- choice based lettings
- Countywide homelessness prevention
- Expanded green waste collections
- Assisted bin collections
- Key fees and charges harmonised
- Integrated planning service
- Taxi licencing harmonised and enhanced

In many cases amalgamations are seen as important in strengthening the professional capacity of local authorities as much if not more so than improving efficiency. A key issue here is building and retaining capacity to ensure that services are maintained and developed and to attract and retain suitably qualified staff. It is about developing an organisation or organisations that has sufficient capacity and a critical mass to develop all levels of staff and create succession planning to support personal and organisational needs. The focus is on securing, maintaining and developing the highly skilled staff needed to manage the increasing complexity within local government services.

An important issue for all options that involve change is the disruptive effect change can have on staffing motivation and performance. A study of English local authorities facing reorganisation found that performance deteriorated prior to the onset of new structures. Issues including a reduction in staff morale, loss of managerial expertise due to increased turnover, 'planning blight' as strategic decisions are put on hold until the new organisation is established, and distraction from the core purpose of service provision, all led to a drop in performance. In this case, the short term consequences of the reorganisation were negative (Andrews and Boyne, 2011). If performance is not to be

disrupted and morale and motivation adversely affected, any change needs careful planning and phasing.

Efficiency

The experience with amalgamation seems to be an extremely varied one, with disputed costs and benefits. Different studies produce different and sometimes inconsistent results.

Aulich et al (2011: 10) found that there is little evidence that amalgamation will of itself yield economies of scale greater than those achievable through other forms of consolidation, or that such economies are available across many of local government's functions by whatever means. They found few robust examples in the literature, in the case studies examined, or in the experience and knowledge of the experts with whom they spoke. Yet they note that many in central government – and some in local government – still cling to the belief that substantial savings can and should be made.

There is some international evidence that for more labour-intensive services a larger local authority may cost proportionately more rather than less, while savings may result for more capital-intensive services (Callanan, Murphy and Quinlivan, 2014).

One of the more rigorous studies found of the impact of local government amalgamations on cost comes from Denmark. In the period 2005-2010 a large-scale municipal reform took place, where 238 municipalities were amalgamated into 65 new entities, while 33 municipalities were left untouched. A comparative analysis of those municipalities that had been amalgamated compared to those that had been left alone found that administrative spending is lower for amalgamated municipalities. In 2007, immediately after the reform, amalgamated municipalities spent 0.2 per cent less than those municipalities left untouched. In 2008, the savings amounted to 3.2 per cent; in 2009 6.4 per cent, and in 2010, 8.4 per cent (Blom-Hansen et al, 2011).

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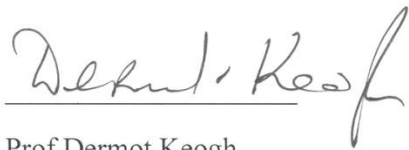
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Appendix 6 Minority Report

Cork Local Government Review

Minority Report

Handwritten signature of Dermot Keogh in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Prof Dermot Keogh

Handwritten signature of Theresa Reidy in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Dr Theresa Reidy

September 2015

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Foreword

We submit this minority report to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, with the recommendation that Cork City receive a substantial boundary extension in accordance with the terms of reference provided to the Cork Local Government Review in January 2015. Based on 2011 CSO data, Cork City Council should have a population of no less than 230,000 and Cork County Council would have a population of 290,000 citizens.

We dissent from the recommendation in the majority report of the Cork Local Government Review that Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be amalgamated.

The Committee is in agreement that retaining the *status quo* is not a realistic option. The Committee identified a number of criteria against which the options of boundary extension and unified council were assessed but it was not possible to agree a consensus position within the Committee on the final decision.

Following circulation of a draft report in August, it became clear to us that it would not be possible to accommodate both positions within a single report. We disagreed with substantial parts of the draft report, the main finding and most of the conclusions. At that point, it became necessary to draft a separate minority report which documented the case for a boundary extension and provided more extensive arguments and evidence to support the case for a boundary extension for Cork city.

Hereafter, we document the evidence which we have used to arrive at the conclusion that the county of Cork should retain a city council and a county council and that the city administrative area be expanded considerably. We include a recommendation on the location of the new boundary and on the transition arrangements needed to implement the main recommendation of this report. The report also includes recommendations on mandating

greater horizontal co-operation across local authorities within regions and a recommendation that a permanent, legally binding, mechanism be put in place to address the boundaries of the state's major cities every ten years.

We regret that, in some instances, this report does not provide enough detail to make precise findings, such as in the specific final location of the city boundary, the reconfiguration of local electoral areas and the final financial and staff implications of the boundary extension. We make recommendations in principle but the differing views within the committee, the short time frame for the deliberations and the robustness of the data provided to the committee mean that precision is not always possible.

We wish to thank the members of the secretariat from Cork City Council (Paul Moynihan and Nicky Carroll) and Cork County Council (Niall Healy and Linda Skillington) who supported the committee in its work and we would also like to thank Dr Richard Boyle from the Institute of Public Administration for his research support during our work. We would also like to offer a particular note of thanks to the public representatives, business organisations, trade union representatives, public sector organisations, academics and citizens who made submissions to the committee and met with us over the course of our work. To a person, they were committed to contributing to the best possible future governance structures for Cork.

Prof Dermot Keogh

Dr Theresa Reidy

Executive Summary

On the 15th January 2015, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr Alan Kelly TD, appointed a statutory committee to review the Cork city boundary and other local government arrangements in Cork. The Committee was asked to carry out an objective review of local government arrangements in Cork city and county and to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to:

- a) whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and, if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or
- b) whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified

The full terms of reference for the Committee are set out in Appendix one.

The Cork Local Government Committee was chaired by Mr Alf Smiddy and its members were Mr Tom Curran; Professor Dermot Keogh; Mr John Lucey, S.C.; and Dr Theresa Reidy. The Committee was independent in the performance of its functions. The Committee consulted extensively during the course of its work. An invitation for submissions was made in the local and national press, which produced approximately 100 written responses. The Committee also met with the executive and elected members of Cork City Council and Cork County Council, national politicians, and with individuals and groups from business, the community and academia, and reviewed a number of relevant reports and publications, both national and international.

A list of those who provided submissions in response to the consultation and details on the consultation process are available at

<http://www.corklocalgovernmentreview.ie/submissions.html>

In this Minority Report, we recommend that Cork City Council be given a large extension to its current administrative boundary. Areas in the immediate hinterland of the administrative boundary, including Douglas and Togher, should be integrated into the city. Citizens in these

areas live in Cork city in every respect, except for local government administration. But the city should be expanded to provide for development and growth in the next decades. The new boundary should include the existing commuter areas of Ballincollig, Blarney, Glanmire, Carrigtwohill, Ringaskiddy, Carrigaline and Ballygarvan. Please see Appendix two for a map noting the proposed new boundary for Cork city.

Cork city needs an independent and autonomous future. It is the second city in the state and it should be empowered to grow and develop in that spirit.

We also recommend that the already strong horizontal co-operation between Cork City Council and Cork County Council be placed on a formal basis, with joint committees of both councils established to lead strategic policy, especially in the areas of economic development, planning, transport and international co-operation. These committees should be established on a legally binding basis and policy agreed at this level should be binding on both councils. Cork can become a model of regional co-operation, to be replicated in other regions of the country.

Introduction

Cities drive regions. This is the overwhelming conclusion of the international research literature and of the submissions which were made to the Cork Local Government Review. Ireland has experienced rapid urbanisation since the 1990s and the growth in Irish cities and towns coincided with a period of rapid economic expansion. Cities are at the epicentre of economic development, because they offer population density, scale and sophisticated intellectual, business, transport and telecommunications infrastructures. Governance arrangements must take account of this reality. A competitive city must have the autonomy, financial independence and scale to allow it to compete internationally. Cork city is the second largest city in the country and it has a vital role to play in the future economic and social development of the state. As a consequence, we recommend that the administrative boundary of Cork city be extended substantially.

The administrative boundary of Cork city should be extended to reflect the *de facto* city experienced by citizens and businesses in 2015 but the extension should be such that it provides space for growth and development in the city area over the next five decades. The Government's policy document on Local Government *Putting People First* and the Local Government (Reform) Act (2014) emphasise the role that local authorities must play in economic development. Local Enterprise Boards have been integrated into local authorities and greater leadership and coordination roles in economic and social policy are now mandated for local government. It is essential that governance structures are designed so that local government can deliver these vital policy roles, in economic planning and development and social and community development.

Local government in Ireland should be based on the principle of subsidiarity; that is that decision making should take place at the closest level to the citizen practicable. This principle is shared by all political parties, is evident in policy documents relating to local government for several decades and is one of the guiding ideas in the *Putting People First* plan for local government reform of the current Fine Gael and Labour coalition. The census data from 2011 indicates that the population of the smallest county council is 31,798 and the population of the largest council is 527,612. The international research on the appropriate scale for local

government is mixed but, at present, Ireland stands at the upper end of the OECD in terms of the population per local authority and in its ratio of public representatives to citizens. Two local authorities should be retained in Cork. This maintains the fundamental requirement to have decision making at a local level and should promote responsiveness to citizen needs and accountability. Throughout this report, we refer to the population and territory of Cork City Council and Cork County Council. Based on 2011 census data, Cork City Council has a population of 119,230 and Cork County Council has a population of 399,802. Hereafter, we use rounded figures and refer to the population of the county of Cork as 520,000.

The position of Lord Mayor of Cork is both symbolically and strategically important. The Lord Mayor acts as a figurehead for governance arrangements within the city and, by his/her visibility, promotes both engagement and accountability. The position resonates with citizens and business alike. No action should be taken to undermine this role, as to do so would be to undermine the authority, accountability and capacity of local government in Cork city. The historical importance of many who have held that office, Tomás MacCurtain, Terence MacSwiney, Seán French, Peter Barry and Gerald Goldberg, to name but a few, lends weight to the argument that the future of that important office should not be jeopardised or diminished in status in any way. A full list of the Lords Mayor of Cork is available at <http://www.corkcity.ie/yourcouncil/mayorsofcork/> and the occupants since 1900 are included in Appendix five.

Urban and rural areas have different economic and social needs. The requirements for both communities are best provided by focused local authorities that have the capacity and scale to deliver efficient and effective services to their respective populations.

Cork county is the largest county in the country and should be placed at the centre of national development plans. It also plays a vital part in national and regional governance. Under a revised boundary arrangement, Cork City Council would become one of the largest local authorities in Ireland with a projected population of 230,000; but Cork County Council would also continue to be in the top five in terms of its population at 290,000 and, of course also, geographical territory.

Cork city and county have been challenged by the recession as has the entire state but Cork's strengths in the fields of agri-business and food services, pharmaceuticals, computer manufacturing, software innovation, tourism, financial services and high end manufacturing have seen it weather the storm better than many other areas of the country.

The essential point is that the economic and social dysfunction which provided the foundation for amalgamation decisions in Limerick and Waterford simply do not apply in Cork city or county. However, complacency is not an option for any local authority and local government arrangements in Cork need urgent attention if Cork city and county are to fulfil their potential.

Local Government in Ireland

Ireland has a highly centralised system of governance. Local government is both functionally and politically weak. The model of local government evolved from practices before independence but the most critical point in any discussion is how little evolution there has been. The existing system of local governance is based on high levels of hierarchical control from the centre which Sellers and Kwak (2011) have demonstrated is largely exerted, in the Irish case, through limits on the fiscal autonomy of local authorities.

Evidence-based policy making is a particular weakness in Ireland and international research evidence is used sparingly. This was commented on extensively at the onset of the economic crisis but it is also evident in international evaluations of how policy is made in Ireland. The Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) platform ranks Ireland 23rd of 41 countries for having decision making backed by strategic planning and expert advice. The executive is dominant in Ireland and oversight is weak. Again, SGI ranks Ireland at 27th of 41 countries in the area of the resources available for monitoring the executive (see also Doring, 1995, for a further discussion of executive dominance).

We provide more detailed information on the evolution and development of local government in the next section. This material was prepared for the report by Dr Aodh Quinlivan, Department of Government, UCC. It provides important context on the structural weaknesses of local government in Ireland and provides information on significant changes since the election of the Fine Gael and Labour Party coalition government in 2011. Structurally, the creation of municipal districts across the country was a vital development, authorities have been given a greatly enhanced role in economic development and establishing the Local Property Tax has begun the process of providing a sustainable financial base for local government. Decisions about local government must take account of its historical underdevelopment, while planning for it to play a central role in the economic and social development of the state in the future.

Local Government Modernisation and Reform: A Modern Timeline

Prepared by Dr Aodh Quinlivan, University College Cork

“‘Impending’ reform of local government in Ireland is a false pregnancy that has lasted since 1971 at least’

- *Tom Barrington (1991, p. 163) Local Government Reorganisation and Reform*

The modern local government system was created by the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898. At that stage, there were over 600 local authorities in the country and a well-developed system of rural and urban district councils. Over the years this number was reduced to 114 and, last year, to 31.

1963 saw the last major function to be devolved to local government – planning.

The first real attempt to reform local government came in 1971 when the government published a White Paper entitled *Local Government Reorganisation*. The roots of this paper can be traced to the Public Services Organisation Review Group Report of 1969 (known as the Devlin Report) which identified deficiencies across the Irish public sector, including local government. The Devlin Report took quite a narrow view of local government, promoting the idea that local authorities should merely be the executive agencies of central government. From the Devlin Report and the 1971 White Paper to the present, there has been ‘a veritable industry at work reviewing the local government system and issuing recommendations for change’ (Keogan, 2003: 82).

The White Paper, *Local Government Reorganisation*, was published by the Irish government in 1971 when modernising and restructuring local government was a popular topic. Desmond Roche referred at the time to the ‘virtually world-wide movement towards change in local government which created a sense of expectation here [Ireland] that some kind of new deal should be seen to be under way’ (1971: 319). Similarly-themed reports had been produced in

England (Redcliffe-Maud, 1969), Scotland (Wheatley, 1969) and Northern Ireland (Macrory, 1971). The focus of the Redcliffe-Maud and Wheatley reports, in particular, was on structure. Wheatley (1969: 1) argued, ‘At the root of the trouble is the present structure of local government. It has remained basically the same for forty years when everything around it has changed.’ The White Paper in Ireland took a similar stance and it contained no significant recommendations on service delivery or devolution of functions. Rather, it advocated a single-tier system with the county remaining as the basic local government unit. It called for the abolition of all town commissions and most of the urban district councils (UDCs). In their place, strong area committees of the county councils would be established to which local services could be delegated (Keogan, 2003: 83).

The White Paper was a discussion document rather than a prescriptive one and this is reflected by the lack of detailed, specific proposals contained in it. In response to the invitation for submissions on the White Paper, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) published a comprehensive document entitled *More Local Government – A Programme for Development*. It called for the scope of local government to be broadened, through the devolution of functions and decentralisation. It sought greater autonomy, with a genuine partnership between central and local government, and argued that a three-tier system (regional-county-district) was necessary and practical.

Interestingly, there appears to have been a fundamental contradiction between the Devlin Report of 1969 and the White Paper of 1971. While Devlin saw local authorities as executive agencies with elected boards reporting to the Minister for Local Government, the White Paper promoted a pure system of local self-government whereby ‘local affairs can be settled by the local citizens themselves or their representatives, local services can be locally controlled and local communities can participate in the process and responsibilities of government’ (*Local Government Reorganisation*, 2.1.1). This vision of local self-government never came to fruition, as none of the proposals in the White Paper had been implemented by the time the government left office in 1973. The incoming administration produced a discussion document which largely rejected the White Paper proposals and recommended some limited changes of its own, which (too) were not implemented.

Another report at this time warrants a brief mention. Parallel to the White Paper process, the government commissioned McKinsey and Company to review staffing and management in local authorities. The McKinsey Report, *Strengthening the Local Government Service*, was also published in 1971. It called for ‘the establishment of management posts under the county manager for each of the major services, thus integrating technical/professional and administrative responsibility for service delivery’ (Keogan, 2003: 83). Amongst its other recommendations was the creation of the post of a Planning and Development Officer with responsibility for preparing development plans and fostering economic development. The McKinsey Report also suffered from a lack of implementation, although some of its core ideas did resurface 25 years later in another reform initiative, *Better Local Government* (1996).

Between the early 1970s and the mid-1980s, there were no official proposals for the reform of local government. However, there were significant changes to the local government landscape, by virtue of the ‘abolition’ of domestic and agricultural rates. The coalition government (1982-1987) produced a policy statement in May 1985, *The Reform of Local Government*. This document proposed a major devolution of functions to local authorities, a relaxation of *ultra vires* and the creation of new town councils for every town with a population of over 2,000. It also recommended the appointment of local councils as agencies for central government departments. Barrington (1991: 161) recalls, ‘In 1985 it looked as if a new dawn might be breaking, that the tide of centripetalism might be turned back.’ Alas, Barrington’s optimism was misplaced and he subsequently noted, ‘This programme manifestly evoked no enthusiasm in the central bodies and, when the government went out of office in early 1987, just one function had been transferred – the licensing of dogs! Even central government was not now strong enough to cope with the entrenched centralisers of the central bureaucracy’ (1991: 161). While Barrington is correct about the lack of devolution, the 1985 policy statement did lead to some structural alterations. Galway city was re-designated from a borough to a county borough (now city council) and the seed was planted for the division of Dublin county into three county councils (see Keogan, 2003: 84). Overall, however, *The Reform of Local Government* has to be classified as a missed opportunity.

The previously mentioned Tom Barrington was at the heart of the next attempt to reform Irish local government. The 1989 general election had brought together Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats (PDs) as unlikely coalition partners. Primarily through the efforts of PD negotiator, Bobby Molloy TD, local government reform appeared in the July 1989 Programme for Government. This document stated that a select committee would be formed to examine and report on the operations of local government – funding, structures, and functions. The Advisory Expert Committee on Local Government Reorganisation and Reform was appointed in 1990, under the chairmanship of Tom Barrington, the first Director of the Institute of Public Administration and a lifelong advocate for allocating more powers and functions to local government. The initial terms of reference of the committee were subsequently curtailed, when the Minister for the Environment, Pádraig Flynn TD, announced at the first meeting that the county was to remain as the basic administrative unit and that alternative sources of local government finance were not to be considered. Despite these restrictions, the committee produced a comprehensive report which Keogan (2003: 85) correctly describes as ‘certainly more visionary than anything that went before it and [it] represented the most comprehensive examination of local government since its establishment in 1898.’ The Barrington Report was completed and submitted to government in December 1990 and was officially published in March 1991. Following the use of a guillotine motion in Dáil Éireann, the Local Government Act, 1991 was passed on 18 May 1991 – largely based on the recommendations contained in the report – before the local elections of June that year (the elections which were due to be held in 1990 had been postponed due to the impending reform proposals from Barrington).

The primary recommendations of the Barrington Report are summarised by Keogan (2003: 84/85) as follows: -

- Constitutional recognition for local government;
- Devolution of functions to local authorities, including housing grants, group water schemes, driver testing, heritage and amenity, standards and control of safety at work;
- Expansion of local government's role in education, health, community care, social welfare, transport and traffic, tourism, policing, courts and justice, consumer protection and social employment schemes;
- Boundary changes to facilitate certain urban areas;
- Division of Dublin county into three county councils;
- An option for directly elected district councils or district committees of the county councils replacing existing town authorities;
- Abolition of the dual mandate (i.e. where people could simultaneously hold a local government seat and a national seat in the Oireachtas);
- Establishment of a single representative body for local government in order to influence national decision making;
- Greater attention to the policy role of councillors;
- Modernisation of the law in relation to local government;
- A substantial relaxation of the doctrine of *ultra vires*;
- Making the post of city and county manager subject to a 10-year contract
- Press and public to be allowed to attend local council meetings

The approach of the Barrington group has been likened to the 1971 White Paper submission by the Institute of Public Administration, *More Local Government – A Programme for Development*. There are many similar proposals, including the general recommendations that constitutional recognition be granted to protect local government and that a general competence be statutorily conferred on local authorities. This is perhaps unsurprising, as two members of the advisory group were also involved in the 1971 submission – Tom Barrington himself and Richard Haslam, a lecturer in University College Cork and the former Limerick County Manager. The government's response to the Barrington Report can be judged by the Local Government Act, 1991, which soon followed. The legislation, which had been rushed through the Oireachtas before the local elections, received a lot of criticism for its half-hearted acceptance of the Barrington proposals. Writing in the *Irish Independent* on 13 May 1991, James Downey described the bill (it became an enactment on 18 May) as a 'legislative monstrosity' which sent a clear message that the government had no intention of setting up a

system of meaningful, powerful local councils. While Downey's criticism has validity, the Local Government Act, 1991 introduced some positive changes in the Irish local government system and the work was continued with legislation in 1993 and 1994. For example, the principle of general competence was extended to local authorities to act in the interest of their areas. Three county councils were created in Dublin, further restrictions to the dual mandate were introduced, in some areas of local government law there was modernisation, and city and county managers were appointed on a fixed-term contract of seven years. Ultimately, however, the results were piecemeal and did not represent a radical overhaul of local government. Certainly the legislation of the early 1990s fell well short of the vision put forward by Barrington and Haslam. Keogan's (2003: 86) conclusion is balanced and fair, 'The legislative reaction to the Barrington Report was conservative, but it was a response that marked the beginning of a sustained change process.'

1996 can be regarded as a watershed in the reform trajectory, because a number of key documents were published that year. They included *Towards Cohesive Local Government - Town and Country* and the *KMPG Report on Local Government Finance*, but the most influential document was *Better Local Government (BLG)*, a programme which was the basis for significant procedural and structural changes. It proposed changes based on four pillars, namely: enhancing local democracy; serving the customer better; developing efficiency; and providing proper resources for local authorities. Its impact was far-reaching and the changes it instigated continue to be influential, particularly those facilitating strategic planning and improving customer service. Two reports published by the Devolution Commission in 1996 and 1997 also advocated reform of the sub-national government system. Constitutional recognition was bestowed on local government following a referendum in 1999, finally enshrining local government's role in defining local priorities, promoting the interests of community, providing statutory services and making clear provision for local elections every five years.

The new millennium continued the impetus for local government reform. *Modernising Local Government*, published in 2000, outlined how elements of the national Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) were to be applied at local authority level. The *Report of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems* (1998) served as a blueprint for the structural reform which resulted in the creation of County/City Development

Boards. The plethora of disparate laws relating to local government was consolidated in the Local Government Act of 2001 which also served to modernise some of the archaic provisions that were still in force. From 2003, politicians were no longer allowed to have a dual national/local mandate, in a move designed to separate local and national government systems to the perceived benefit of both and altering the practice where, for example, following the 2002 elections, 138 of the 226 members elected to the Oireachtas were also members of local councils.

In 2008, a Green Paper on Local Government reform was published. It outlined significant reforms for regional and sub-county levels and advocated stronger democratic processes. The resultant White Paper prepared in 2010 never reached the public domain due to the imminent general election.

The OECD report of 2008 also suggested ways in which the local government system could be reformed because ‘much of local authority activity is conducted within defined statutory frameworks and many functions are performed according to legislative and departmental guidelines’ (2008: 243). The unprecedented recession which affected Ireland from 2008 caused a shrinking of the services and staffing of local authorities. A *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes (2009)* led to the *Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group (2010)* and the reports by the *Local Government Efficiency Review Implementation Group (2012 and 2013)*. All advocated a reduction in local government staffing and reform of administration and financing. The local government sector surpassed some of the recommendations proposed in the 2010 *Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group (CCMA, 2013a)* – local authority staffing decreased by 24.2% nationally in the five years to 2013 while gross savings of €839m were achieved in the period 2008-2012. Achieving these savings and efficiencies involved modifying practices, attitudes and resource-usage, reforms which have had a lasting impact, both positive and negative.

One of the main topics during the general election campaign of 2011 was political reform, which featured in the manifestoes of both coalition parties and in the subsequent Programme for Government which promised ‘fundamental reorganisation of local governance structures’.

The reform spotlight focussed on local government during 2012 with the publication of *Putting People First*, an Action Programme for Effective Local Government (PPF), a comprehensive document which combined aspiration and ambition and was championed by a Minister determined to reform the system. One year later, a Local Government Bill was introduced which the Minister described as ‘the most radical reform of local government in over 100 years’ (Hogan, October 17th, 2013). Following amendments during the legislative process, the Local Government (Reform) Act (2014) became law. The Act embodied changes to local authority functions, structures, funding, performance and governance which came into force following the local elections held in May 2014.

Cork City and County: A historical overview

Diarmuid and Donal Ó Drisceoil have, in *Serving a City – The Story of Cork’s English Market*, provided a very succinct history of the development of Cork city from earliest times. Dr Richard Boyle prepared most of the following section on behalf of the CLGR on the administrative history of Cork City. A document held in the Cork City and County Archives (Collins, 1961) sets out the history of Cork city, with reference to its boundaries. Cork obtained its first charter as a municipal city in 1189. In 1608-9, a subsequent charter stated that the boundaries of the city should be fixed according to a circuit of three miles radiating from the existing external walls. The 1840 Municipal Corporations Act set the boundary that, by and large, lasted until 1955. It was unpopular even at the time, and requests for boundary extensions were lodged in 1848, 1881, 1903 and 1912, though they all failed for various reasons. During the early 1950s negotiations took place between Cork Corporation and Cork County Council regarding areas on the north and south sides of the city on which the Corporation had built, or was planning to build, local authority housing. An extension of the boundary, of 857 acres, was agreed and took effect on 1st April 1955. A map of this change is included in Appendix two.

Dr Paul Loftus has provided to the CLGR this summary of his work regarding the last Cork city boundary extension in the 1960s. On 31 May 1960, Cork Corporation petitioned the Minister for Local Government, under Section 25 of the Cork City (Amendment) Act 1941, to extend the boundary of the city from 3,346 to 12,936 acres and from a population of 80,011 to 113,211. On 24 May 1961, a public sworn enquiry into the possible extension of the boundary opened at City Hall. It sat over the period (24 May-2 June 1961, 3-12 January 1962 and 29 January-2 February 1962. On 30 September 1964, the Minister for Local Government, Neil Blaney, set out his reasons for granting a boundary extension of 6,250 acres. The valuation of the extension was £147,639, representing 12% of County Valuation. On 25 February 1965, the Minister receives a deputation of councillors and TDs from Cork City and County to discuss the financial implications of the boundary extension. Cork County Council asked for the Provisional Order to be delayed. That was rejected by the Minister but the 1965 general election did cause a delay. The extension came into force from 1 July 1965, despite both councils not being ready for the transfer of administrative functions. On 22 February 1967, after a process of arbitration, Cork Corporation was ordered to pay

£1.5 million in compensation to Cork County Council. On 18 September 1967, after much negotiations and counter-offers, Cork County Council agreed to it being paid over a period of fifteen years at a fixed rate of 6.5% interest.” The full chapter is provided in Appendix three.

Dr Boyle continued his analysis: In September 1970 in a letter to both councils, the Minister for Local Government proposed one manager for two councils. Whilst this was considered at joint committee meetings between the two councils, no action was taken. The Government, led by Jack Lynch, produced a White Paper in 1971 entitled *Local Government Reorganisation*. The section on Cork stated:

Cork city, with a total population of more than 125,000, presents particular difficulties, for substantial development is certain to take place in the general area, much of it outside, but adjacent to, the present county borough boundary. The proper planning of the area could require that the existing city and its suburbs, together with the adjacent areas in which development is likely to take place over a period of up to twenty years ahead, should be the responsibility of one authority. Indeed an enlarged area, covering both sides of the lower harbour might well be necessary. The Government have carefully considered the question of whether even more radical alterations in present arrangements should be made. They have come to the conclusion that neither the establishment of a unified authority for Cork city and county nor the establishment of a special agency (on the lines recommended in the Buchanan report) to take over some of the functions of the local authorities would be the right solution. It is, however, accepted that special steps will be essential so as to ensure that the work of the city and county authorities is co-ordinated and that their plans and activities harmonise; the Minister for Local Government will give further consideration to this aspect.

However, no changes were made on foot of this report.

In 1985, the Minister for the Environment established a commission to advise on the re-drawing of electoral boundaries in counties and county boroughs outside of Dublin. This

included advice on whether the boundary of the county borough of Cork should be extended. Again, no action was taken.

What follows below is a very condensed summary of the attempt by the City council to achieve a boundary extension since the early 2000s. On 12 January 2004, the City Council approved the City Manager's discussion document of 7 January 2004 on the City Boundary Extension and agreed that the discussion document should be forwarded to the Joint Committee of Cork City Council and Cork County Council. The Local Government Act (2001) had dealt with proposals by local authorities for an alteration of boundaries. The first stage in that process was the consultation with relevant parties. That consultation process was in progress, as reported to the city council on 26 October 2004.

The City Manager reported back to the council on 9 May 2005 on the discussion at the Joint City/County Committee. A motion was passed requesting the City Manager to prepare the necessary documents to enable the Council to consider a proposal to extend the city boundary. On 22 May 2006, a motion was passed proposing that Cork City Council would write to the Minister to seek an extension to the city boundary. A report was prepared by the City Manager. It was hoped that an agreement on a boundary extension could be achieved by the city and the county. The proposed boundary extension represented the urban area immediately contiguous to the existing city boundary and the map from 2006 is included in Appendix two. This was proposed as the most practical and 'best fit' solution between a large Metropolitan Cork area (including the satellite towns) and a minimalist extension which might result in the need for a further extension at some time in the future. The extension was justified using criteria based on the four goals of the city's corporate plan:

- civic leadership;
- developing the city;
- quality service;
- and building synergies.

The proposal was put forward from the perspective of the city and the implications for the county were not assessed. It did not proceed. There was press coverage of the plan and strong public support for a boundary extension. But the matter dragged on.

On 31 March 2008, the council was told that work was continuing on the preparation of a formal submission which would be sent, in the first instance, to Cork County Council. The expectation was that they would be ready in the autumn to make a submission. But matters moved slowly as was reported at the annual meeting of the City Council on 23 June 2008. The City Manager's report, dated 24 September 2009, was considered by the city council on 28 September. It was agreed that the Lord Mayor and the party leaders would write to the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley, to seek clarity in the current environment on proposals for a boundary extension. Consideration of the City Manager's report was deferred by the meeting.

The Lord Mayor, Cllr. Dara Murphy, wrote to the Minister on 5 October 2009 informing him that the issue of a boundary extension had been discussed in some detail at the council meeting on 28 September and that 'there was unanimity within Council that within the current environment he should lead a cross-party delegation to meet him to discuss an extension to the City Boundary'. The reply, on behalf of the Minister, stated: 'As you will be aware, Minister Gormley published the Green Paper, Stronger Local Democracy – Options for change in 2008. The Green Paper noted the need for improved coherence and focused approaches to development in key Gateways, including Cork, and explored a number of potential options for change. The renewed Programme for Government states that the strategic role and function of regional authorities will be strengthened, will reflect the Gateways and will have democratic leadership. Such considerations are clearly of strong relevance to potential Gateway boundary extension proposals.'

The letter further stated that the process of change 'will begin with the publication of the White Paper on Local Government'. The Lord Mayor was advised to await the publication of the White Paper 'prior to developing further its position in relation to a boundary extension.'

Following the change of government in 2011, the Lord Mayor, John Buttimer, told the annual meeting of the city council that he would ask the City Manager to prepare proposals for an extension to the city boundary and he would also ask the Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan to meet with a delegation from Cork City Council on the issue. On 9 September 2013, Cork City Council requested the Minister to appoint a commission, in accordance with sections 89 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2001, to examine the case for an extension of the boundary of Cork City, in the context of Section 7.3.5 of the Government policy document *Putting People First*. The dialogue continued, pending the setting up of the Cork Local Government Review in January 2015.

The foregoing brief summary illustrates that the delineation of the boundary between Cork city and county has been a source of some contention for many years. All options, from boundary extension to merger, have been considered in the past but no change has been made since 1965. We are grateful to both Dr Richard Boyle and Dr Paul Loftus for this brief overview.

Despite subsequent efforts by Cork city managers to secure further adjustments to the city boundary, it has remained unchanged since the mid-1960s. This has not been good for the democratic governance of either the county or the city. Cork City, according to Dr Denis Linehan, School of Geography, University College Cork, is *under-bounded*, meaning that, due to population growth and urban expansion, the boundaries of the city *de facto* by far outreach the boundaries of the *de jure* city. (We are grateful to Dr Linehan for meeting with the committee to discuss this issue.) In 2015, greater Cork, which might have been included in a timely and earlier boundary revision/s had successive governments had the prudence and the courage to do so, stretches arguably from Ballincollig, Tower and Blarney in the West to Carrigtwohill, Ringaskiddy and Carrigaline in the East. [See map with indicative boundary.] The city/county boundary, for example, currently dividing Douglas and Togher, and placing Ballincollig in the county, supports the thesis that Cork city is radically under-bounded. The failure by successive central governments to address this vital democratic issue was not exclusively confined to Cork City.

Historically, there has been a general failure throughout the country to make the necessary boundary adjustments to keep pace with urban expansion and development. Cork, the second city in the country, has been impeded in its growth and democratic governance by inaction on the part of central government to engage in timely and systematic reform of the Cork city boundary. The absence of decisive action by central government during the past fifty years was, at best, a policy of benign neglect. The expectation that the two local authorities would arrive at a solution by consensus never had any prospect of success. In such a process, the County authority always had, and could exercise, a veto over a boundary extension. Had there been a decisive intervention by central government, as was the case in the early 1960s, the situation would not have developed in such an unsatisfactory fashion. The failure to extend the Cork city boundary incrementally over the past fifty years has seriously damaged the international status of Ireland's second city. Now, after fifty years, it would be unwise not to tackle first the long overdue question of a boundary extension for Cork City.

Despite the failure to extend its boundaries since the early 1960s, Cork City has enjoyed autonomy over its affairs while working within a very restricted Irish local government system. The threat to that autonomy galvanised support from 18 Lords Mayor of the city in August 2015. In a strongly-worded statement (included in Appendix three), on 4 August 2015, opposing amalgamation, they classified such an action as being 'preposterous.' The statement argues: 'The idea that Cork city, the country's second city, should be divested of its essential powers to self-govern, to run its own affairs, to set its own budgets and to strategise for the future is an extraordinary proposal.' The Lords Mayor said that Cork city would be relegated in a merger to 'divisional status' within a single county authority, a type of municipal district with the same standing as a county town: 'this is beyond belief and is now a distinct possibility. When the Irish State was founded in 1922 Cork city already had 737 years of self-governance under its belt. The city has been the driver of regional economic development for centuries.' <http://www.eveningecho.ie/cork-news/18-former-lords-mayors-say-city-county-merger-is-preposterous/>

and see *Cork Independent*

<http://www.corkindependent.com/20150806/news/crucial-boundary-report-is-on-track-for-september-deadline-S110136.html>

Political support for a boundary extension, the committee found, was strong. Cork City Council provided a submission to the committee and, at a special council meeting on 23 March 2015, the elected members voted unanimously in favour of a boundary extension for the city of Cork. Many, but not all, of the elected representatives who engaged with the committee, from local and national politics, supported a boundary extension. Those in favour of a boundary extension include TDs: Jerry Buttimer (Fine Gael), Ciaran Lynch (Labour), Minister Kathleen Lynch (Labour) Michéal Martin (leader of Fianna Fáil), Michael Moynihan (Fianna Fáil), Senator Colm Burke (Fine Gael) and all elected representatives of Sinn Féin in Cork (including TDs Jonathan O'Brien and Sandra McLellan). A boundary extension was also supported by many organisations, including IBEC, Cork Business Association and prominent figures from the local business community and Claire Nash (current President of Cork Business Association). All of the academic specialists from the School of Geography, Department of Government and the Centre for Planning Education and Research at UCC who met with the committee favoured a boundary extension for Cork city.

Frank McDonald, the former Environment Correspondent for *The Irish Times*, agreed strongly with the views of the 18 Lords Mayor, noting: 'All cities are engines of economic development for their regions (not the other way around) and Cork city has been performing this role in the southwest "for centuries", they [the 18 Lords Mayor] pointed out, arguing that only an "enlarged Cork city, with a full range of powers" had the potential to be a "counter-magnet to the ever-increasing pull of Dublin.'" Unfortunately, as the former mayors noted, Cork County Council had "steadfastly resisted the expansion of Cork city for 50 years", with the result that much of metropolitan Cork is located in the county area. This has artificially reduced the size of the city, such that its paltry population of 119,000 puts it in 584th place among European cities.' Mr McDonald challenges the position taken by the executive of Cork Chamber of Commerce: 'Yet Cork Chamber of Commerce has come out in favour of the so-called "super council" idea, which the county council (not surprisingly) is backing. What the chamber wants is a "single unified authority, with a strong metropolitan division at its core, as the optimal solution for Cork" on the basis that this would promote economic development. The chamber's submission asserts that "few countries have explicit policies for second-tier cities and regions" without providing any evidence to back this up. It

mentions the UK example of developing Manchester as a counter-pole to London, but nobody in their right mind would advocate that Manchester City Council should be abolished.’

Mr McDonald also quotes the President of the Cork Business Association as being – together with her members made up of city centre retailers – ‘emphatically against merging Cork city and county councils.[Ms Nash] fears that “we are now sleepwalking into radical new governance arrangements that will emasculate the city, dilute its status, and grievously affect the dynamic that drives economic development”.’ She branded the notion that the city should become, he wrote, “some sort of municipal district, a subset of a single authority” as bizarre and even offensive. “I’ve had my moments with the elected members of Cork City Council but at least I know who they are, what they stand for and where to find them,” she said, adding: “Businesses in the city better wise up to the reality that unless the idea of a single authority is binned, they are facing a future with a plethora of elected representatives and impenetrable bureaucracy..” Ms Nash said merger was ‘a horror story in the making’. Mr McDonald agreed: ‘Claire Nash is right, and so are Cork’s former mayors. Given that Cork’s governance as a city dates back to the 12th century, it would be an act of folly of historic proportions for the Smiddy committee to recommend amalgamation of the city and county. That would simply seal its fate as an underperforming, second-tier city, compared to Dublin.’ (See Frank McDonald, ‘Why Cork should resist attempts to merge councils,’ *The Irish Times*, 17 August 2015: <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/why-cork-should-resist-attempts-to-merge-councils-1.2318725>)

What underpins the statement from the 18 Cork Lords Mayor? It is the fact that *history* matters when a government decision might be taken that would relegate Ireland’s second city to a dependent status and where it could lose its autonomy and budgetary independence. Reading Antóin O’Callaghan’s *The Lord Mayors of Cork 1900 to 2000*, it is not difficult to understand what motivated the unprecedented statements by 18 holders of that office. The history of the city of Cork provides a potent argument in favour of the continued autonomy of the city. In summary, we agree with the historical argument provided by the Lords Mayor quoted above. Cork city should, after 50 years of stasis, be given an expanded boundary.

- The city boundary is currently irreconcilable with the reality of Cork city for its citizens and businesses and it presents an incoherent framework within which the city must be managed. The technical term used to describe the contemporary Cork city, is, as stated earlier, *under-bounded*; the city is larger than its existing administrative boundary. The CSO estimates that Cork city and its suburbs currently has a population of just under 200,000 while the administrative territory of Cork city includes just 120,000 citizens.
- The long delay in arriving at an effort to address the administrative demarcation of the city is deeply regrettable and has led to sub-optimal outcomes for the citizens of Cork and created an illogical situation in both the administration of the city and the contiguous urban areas in the county.

This position is supported by the balance of political, business, trade union and specialist opinion as will be seen below.

International Evidence and the Criteria for Determining a City Boundary

The balance of political, business and specialist opinion favoured a boundary extension for the city. However, there were varying viewpoints about where the new boundary should be placed. Urban and rural planning and governance materials and advice were provided by staff from the UCC Centre for Planning Education and Research¹. These were used to develop an evidence based framework to adjudicate on where the new boundary should be located. A fifty year time frame was discussed by many of those who engaged with the committee and this informed the decision on how the new boundary might be chosen.

The primary focus of planning literature is on cities and large urban areas. Urbanisation, and the complexity of urban governance, mean this trend is likely to continue. The international research on under-bounded cities recommends that housing, jobs, transport and the environment be considered, under the umbrella of strategic planning (see RTPI, 2015), when making decisions on changing urban governance boundaries. Economic, social and environmental sustainability are seen as key to the development of cities. The OECD Report from 2006, *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy*, argued very strongly that cities suffer from a series of problems which include congestion, poor environment, housing shortages and the formation of ghettos. Effective city planning means that cities must have the space and strategic vision to address these problems. Vibrant cities require space to grow and, within their boundaries, there must be planning for housing, recreational areas, retail and business zones and industrial locations should those be required. Tosics (2011), in his international review of urban governance, discusses how, across Europe, the economic city is no longer the administrative city and that urban governance arrangements need urgent attention.

Criteria for determining a new boundary

Drawing from the available international evidence, the decision on drawing the city boundary in Cork should take account of the following:

¹ We are especially grateful to Will Brady, Brendan O'Sullivan and Jonathan Hall for their generous engagements with the committee and most especially to Will Brady for his provision of extensive research materials and advice on urban and rural planning and governance.

1. An analysis of the economic inter-relationships in the region, known in the literature as the Morphological Urban Area (MUA)
2. Evidence on patterns of living by citizens in the immediate and wider urban areas; analysis which is referred to in the literature as consideration of the Functional Urban Area (FUA)
3. Requirement for nodes of development for housing, business, retail, light industry and heavy industry (if appropriate)
4. Environmental considerations including reference to flood plains, drainage, green space, topography, *etc*
5. Planned infrastructural developments
6. Existing transport links with contiguous areas of the city

A New Boundary for Cork City

Using MUA and/or FUA criteria, a greatly enlarged Cork city should be established. Please see Map One for a conceptual overview of where we suggest the new city boundary should be drawn.

On the basis of both an MUA and FUA evaluation, the existing satellite towns of Carrigaline, Blarney, Ballincollig and Glanmire should be integrated within the city boundary. This expansion is consistent with each of the points 1-6 above.

These areas are existing nodes of development and including them within the city boundary will deliver coherent social and economic development with is also consistent with environmental sustainability requirements. The data presented in Table 1 was provided by Cork City Council and derived from CSO data. The data reinforces the point that many of the settlements on the periphery of the current Cork city boundary lie within the economic dependence zone of Cork city.

Table 1: Percentage of Workers Commuting to Cork City Daily

Settlement Name	% of Workers Commuting to Cork City Daily
Blarney	38%
Tower	38%
Carrigtwohill	33%
Carrigaline *	30%

*large numbers of Carrigaline residents also commute to Ringaskiddy which ought to also fall within the remit of the extended city boundary.

A large territorial expansion is required, because of the specific environmental requirements caused by development along the River Lee, as well as the complicated topographical conditions which arise when expansion is planned in some directions out of the city. It is also important because it will facilitate preservation of the green belt (now often described as the green lungs of the city) which encircles the city. Planning experts from UCC who met the committee pointed out that a large extension would take development pressure away from important green spaces while a small extension would increase pressure on existing green space by limiting the space available to meet growth pressures which are already presenting.

Planned infrastructural and transport developments will link these areas more closely, efficiently, and effectively with the city centre. The development of the North Ring Road and possible extension at Monard along the rail line make expansion North of the city critical. The weak socio-economic profile of major parts of the North side of the city means that expansion in this direction should be prioritised.

There are extensive bus transport links to the satellite towns, some even have city bus routes that service their location. But, at present, public transport users in these areas face different ticket costs and options to city users. This undermines policies to promote wider public transport use.

Owing to the extensive commuting links between Carrigaline and Ringaskiddy and the advanced planning for the movement of Cork city port to Ringaskiddy, it is essential for strategic planning that Ringaskiddy be incorporated within Cork city. These areas are already functionally within the urban area.

While some existing agricultural space will need to be brought into the city, to ensure coherence in the city boundaries, some of the territory in contiguous areas of existing urban Cork (for example SAP units marked as 242, 283, 248 and 235 on the map in Appendix two) should not be included. The map was provided by Cork City Council and uses CSO SAP divisions so as to provide accurate population data. However, the red line should be used as a

line in principle, rather than a line in practice. The final boundary should be drawn inside the red line and placed in a manner that is consistent with existing townlands and infrastructure (*ie* roads). This will result in a population under the 235,000 suggested on the map but an area with a population of no less than 230,000 should be finalised.

Owing to the high cost associated with developing entire new communities, it is likely that economic and social developments will be concentrated around existing nodes of development and we believe that the boundary extension we have suggested will facilitate this while also providing essential green space on the edge of the city, a critical requirement in terms of ensuring environmental considerations are met.

Cobh and Carrigtwohill were described as rail towns in the evidence provided to the committee by UCC planning specialists. Cobh is physically separated from the city by a water boundary, operates as an independent economic centre and the larger part of what is called Great Island is more rural than urban. Consequently, our suggestion is that it should not be integrated into the city area. Spike Island has transport links to Cobh and its economic and especially its tourist focus are in that direction. As a result, it should also remain in the county council jurisdiction.

Carrigtwohill is quite different. It operates as a commuter town to Cork city and is less functionally independent from an economic standpoint. It should be included in an expanded Cork city.

Cork County

Some of the distinctions between Cork City, Metro Cork and Cork Metropolitan Area seem quite arbitrary. It is clear that there is a large hinterland for the city but some areas within this hinterland (which is sometimes discussed as the CASP area) are clearly more closely connected to, if not indeed already part of, Cork city. Others are not and should not be diminished in their scale and possibility as hinterlands of Cork city.

Using the morphological and functional criteria outlined in the earlier section, we can see that Midleton is an example of a town within a 30-40 minute drive of Cork city which is both economically and socially independent from Cork city. It is a market town which acts as the economic and social lynchpin for citizens of East Cork. Cork city and Midleton are interdependent, they are connected by rail and there are obvious economic flows. However, many of the residents of Midleton carry out their employment, retail and leisure activities in the Midleton area. The commuter numbers to Cork city are lower than those for the satellite towns of Cork city, such as Glanmire and Carrigaline. Furthermore, the main industrial focus in Midleton is agribusiness. It does not have a strong foreign direct investment (FDI) focus and, partly as a result, the economic profile data indicates that employment levels and unemployment levels have remained more stable in Midleton than in the satellite towns.

It is not coherent to argue that large independent towns are part of a metropolitan area. It is an exercise in numerical manipulation to suggest that the city and metropolitan area dominate the wider county. Functionally and morphologically, areas such as Midleton and Cobh are not part of metropolitan Cork. Even with the generous boundary extension suggested in this report, the city of Cork will have a population of approximately 230,000 while the county of Cork will have a population just over 290,000. The network of large towns across Cork county are vibrant economic and social centres. They benefit from spill-over economic and social effects from the city but future planning for Cork should ensure that they are not subsumed by the city.

Medium Term

A requirement for regular review should be set down in the by-laws of each council as should the principle that the boundary can change in two directions, outwards and inwards, on the basis of the available evidence.

Long Term

The proposals for regular boundary review included in John Gormley's 2008 Green Paper should also be given serious consideration and an agreed legally binding national structure should be put in place to deal with the issue of local authority boundary demarcations. The experience of history demonstrates that it cannot be left to the *ad hoc* attention of Ministers for the Environment and the Department of the Environment. While considerable effort has been put into local government reform over the course of the current government's term, this is the exception rather than the rule. A lasting contribution to long term change would be to embed a permanent mechanism for addressing boundary revision on the statute books.

This report continues by providing evidence to support a boundary extension for Cork City Council and the retention of two local authorities in Cork. The material is presented in accordance with the criteria agreed by the Cork Local Government Review and derived from the terms of reference. They are as follows:

Economic and Social Development

Local Democracy, Governance and Accountability

Service Delivery

Financial Impact and Complexity

Efficiency.

Documenting the Evidence for a Boundary Revision

Economic and Social Development

The balance of international evidence from the OECD, contained in various academic papers, has underlined the critical role that cities will play in economic development in the Twenty First Century (OECD, 2006; Janssen-Jansen and Hutton, 2011; Tosics, 2011; Rodriguez-Pose, 2008). The OECD Report on Global Cities makes it clear that cities and metro areas are the essential drivers of growth in the present century. In the discussion on the governance arrangements of cities and metro areas, the OECD report comments that the most successful cities are those that have extensive co-operation with the neighbouring authorities. This is not an argument for amalgamation, it is an argument for shared governance and the creativity required to manage urban areas in the Twenty First Century. Tosics (2011: 10) documents the particular problems which emerge in urban areas when cities are under-bounded, he draws attention to the inequities in the availability of services to citizens who are often contributing equally to national resources.

Janssen-Jansen and Hutton (2011) discuss questions of capacity and scale in urban regions. They speak of fuzzy boundaries and the need to configure governance structures to address the complex policy challenges of 21st century settlement patterns. The clear focus of their work is on urban areas, the complexity of managing large multi-cultural human settlements and delivering environmental sustainability. The literature speaks to the unique challenges of city regions. Cities must have functional capacity, this means they need to be capable of making decisions in relation to finance, investment, planning and economic development. One of the reasons for the slow development of central areas of Cork city is the high cost of the development of brown field sites. The local authority needs to provide initial investment support, to secure high quality and coherent development. To do this, the city needs to have substantial financial autonomy. It should not be embedded in an institutional structure which would entrench competition for resources across a large geographical area with competing priorities and challenges. An independent city is the only way of guaranteeing optimum investment in urban economic development and infrastructure.

Economic development and social development cannot be separated. A vibrant city, with a strong community, must be based on prosperity. Economic development is often the main focus of the research but social policy is also critical to developing stable, responsive and sustainable cities. Professor John Fitzgerald, writing in the *Irish Times* on July 21st, discussed the need for cities to provide vibrant living spaces with diverse cultural opportunities for its citizens. In his argument, economic and social developments are interdependent and there is an important role for cities to develop a dynamic cultural environment. This can be achieved through social and cultural initiatives which build on existing infrastructure and which leverage urban scale to deliver new and innovative opportunities.

As well as many social and cultural opportunities, cities come with a particular set of social problems. Tosics (2011) pays particular attention to the types of social interventions which must be made in urban areas. He documents the challenges of deprivation and urban decay and lists a series of social interventions which can be led at local level. Many of the problems and solutions are specific to urban settings. Specialised management responses are required and these are best delivered within a focused organisation.

The population of Cork city and county is predicted to grow significantly by the CSO up to 2050, with projections that there may be as many as 800,000 citizens in Cork by that point. An important factor to include in the projections of population growth is the enormous migratory pressures which Europe as a whole faces at present. There are 232 million 'international migrants' in the world. This mass migration from East to West and from South to North is likely to become the most significant population shift in Europe since World War Two (Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014). In 2014, more than 170,000 migrants arrived in Italy, one of the largest influxes into one country in the history of the EU, according to the BBC. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-32912867> Arriving in groups of three to four hundred, the UN estimated that nearly 300,000 people had crossed the Mediterranean by the end of August 2015, 181,500 to Greece and 108,500 to Italy. In the summer months of 2015, there were 3,000 per day arriving in southern Europe. About 140,000 migrants had reached Hungary in 2015 and both Macedonia and Hungary have become flashpoints of conflict. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/25/migrant-crisis-eu-united-nations-europe-hungary>

Mr Peter Sutherland, the former EU Commissioner and currently the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for International Migration, correctly stated that ‘at the moment there are a small number of countries who are doing all of the heavy lifting when it comes to refugees who are escaping persecution.’ He supports a voluntary, but proportionate, distribution of migrants across the 28 EU countries, a balanced participation by all member states. Ireland faces the challenge of having to take large numbers of refugees, by the historical standards set by the precedents during various humanitarian crises since the end of World War Two. The government agreed in July 2015 to accept 600 refugees, mainly from Syria and Eritrea, in 2015/6. But the EU share out of people reaching southern Europe is likely to require a much more generous response. Arriving migrants gravitate to large urban areas (Martin, Weerasinghe and Taylor, 2014) and Cork City, in response to such a humanitarian crisis, will be called upon to play its role in sharing the challenge of providing homes, livelihoods and education for some of those arriving in Southern Europe in such large numbers.

Cork is a second tier city, *ie* it is the second largest city in the state. Across Europe, second tier cities have independent, autonomous governance structures and there is a major impetus to develop these further as concerns grow about diseconomies of scale in European capitals. A 2013 report for the European Commission demonstrated that second tier cities and city regions can make enormous contributions to both the national and the European economy. Specifically, it found that investment in second tier cities has the potential to yield a greater return than capital city investments. From 2000 to 2007, GDP growth in Cork (city and county) outpaced national growth and growth in Dublin (SGPTD, 2013), indicating that there is a considerable potential base from which Cork can compete both nationally and internationally.

Research conducted for the committee by Dr Richard Boyle of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) documented the governance arrangements of second cities across Europe. He identified international evidence that shows that second cities across Europe all

have independent and autonomous governance arrangements. In some instances, there are multiple layers of governance for the city. While many countries are pursuing policies to bring efficiencies and coherence to their local governance structures, few plan to leave their second largest city with no budgetary powers or capacity to deliver independent, autonomous governance. The inability of the city to have independent control of its own finances and budget is a major drawback of amalgamation. Belfast city was treated differently in the recent wave of reforms in Northern Ireland so as to ensure that it can position itself to compete strongly both on the island of Ireland and within the UK. Spain provides specific legal guarantees for its largest cities (Madrid and Barcelona) so as to guarantee their independence and effectiveness within overall governance structures.

Belfast is a particularly important case in an Irish context. It is not a second city but it does act as a regional capital and its recent boundary extension increased the population of Belfast City Council from 270,000 to 335,000. Belfast was kept apart from the wave of council amalgamations in Northern Ireland, because of its strategic importance as a regional capital and its need to lead economic growth. The peace dividend and strategic economic developments in Northern Ireland mean that Belfast will increasingly challenge cities in the Republic for inward investment.

The SGPTD (2013) report includes an extensive list of recommendations but importantly, in the area of governance, it argues that national governments should adopt policies which create strategic governance capacity within cities. The impetus across Europe is to empower cities to compete at national and global level. Critically, the evidence also points to the leadership role that cities play within regions. Policies are not about allowing rural areas to atrophy but there is a recognition that cities drive regions and not the other way around. Therefore, policies must empower cities so that they can deliver for their region and the wider national system.

Amalgamating the local authorities of Cork city and county would be going against the trends and governance arrangements that are in place across Europe. Cork city is of critical importance for spatial planning in Ireland. The National Spatial Strategy and successive development plans have singled out Cork city as providing a vital counterbalance to the growth of Dublin and the Eastern region. If balanced national development is to be achieved, Cork city must grow rapidly in the coming decades (as must Cork county). As we have documented, cities lead development and Cork city must be empowered to provide leadership and vision.

All of the economic and social evidence points towards the need for a strong and vibrant city region. Consequently, the conclusion we must draw is that Cork city must be positioned as an independent, autonomous city, with a local authority that has the capacity to deliver specialised and focused services for its citizens, businesses and for the future.

The last few years have seen a reduction in the number of autonomous city councils in Ireland but the evidence suggests that city councils in Ireland function quite well. Robbins, Turley, McNena (2014) demonstrate that city councils outperform all other council types. Furthermore, the evidence they presented in their research underlines the points made earlier in this section. City councils and county councils are different. Their differing *foci* are evident from the spending practices of different council types. The data in Table 2 indicates that city councils spend one quarter of their budget on Housing and Building whereas county councils spend 15 per cent on the same item. The largest item of expenditure for county councils is Road Transport & Safety. They spend 22 per cent of their budget on this item whereas city councils spend only 12 per cent of their budget on the same. However, densely populated urban areas provide challenges and 21 per cent of total spending in city councils goes on environmental services. Reflecting the objective of delivering vibrant urban life, city councils spend more on recreation and amenity. The end point is that cities are dissimilar to largely rural areas and city councils operate differently.

Table 2: Proportion of Expenditure in Each Expenditure Division by County Council, City Councils – 2014

	County %	City %
Housing and Building	15	25
Road Transport & Safety	22	12
Water Services	18	16
Development Management	8	5
Environmental Services	14	21
Recreational and Amenity	8	11
Agri, Educ, Health & Welfare	4	1
Miscellaneous	11	10

Source: Local Authority Budgets 2014; Considine and Reidy, 2015

It is not possible to speak of the boundary of Cork city without addressing the county of Cork. They are interdependent. Ireland retains a large rural population and that is especially the case in the county of Cork. While the national trend is towards urbanisation, rural and small urban communities must be sustained, developed and expanded, to create a vibrant state and one in which there is regional balance. Economic and social development of rural Ireland has become a major political issue in the last two years and it is one that presents particular challenges, no less important or challenging than those of urban areas but they are different. Rural infrastructure is difficult to develop, as the business plan underpinning development may be complex. A longer term focus may often be required. Environmental protection is vital but the focus of policy in county councils must take account of the realities of agriculture, small rural business and dispersed, low density, housing settlements. Policies must support existing communities, while providing for long term sustainability. The housing needs of rural communities are different and social problems such as rural isolation require tailored and targeted responses. The specialised knowledge and teams working on these issues already exist in Cork County Council. They should not be dislocated. They should be

given administrative certainty about their work and facilitated in expanding and developing their programmes to be more focused and effective.

Owing to the under-bounding of Cork city, Cork County Council has had to dilute its focus and provide programmes and services on the edges of Cork city. Currently, the CSO provides a population figure of 198,582 for Cork city and its suburbs. This means that close to 80,000 people actually live in Cork city but, for administrative purposes, they reside in the territory of Cork County Council. In submissions to the committee, it was mentioned that the services provided to citizens in the Cork county area of Cork city were of a lower standard than those provided within the city. Impressions cannot be used to make decisions but the financial evidence speaks to lower levels of investment by the county council *per capita* and this is the case on the edges of the city more so than in other areas of the county. This is an inequity which should not continue.

Following the boundary extension proposed in this section of the report, Cork County Council would have a population of 290,000 people. It would remain one of the largest local authorities in the country. The economic and social development of Cork county should be based on its national leadership in agri-business, tourism and its strong network of large towns, with an important balancing focus on its rural hinterlands. The focus of the county council is different. There is a much stronger rural dimension and policies specific to rural requirements must be prioritised. It is inequitable to diminish the economic and social needs of such a large county by diluting its objectives.

A boundary extension is not without challenges for both the city and the county and the specific elements are discussed under the complexity heading later in this report.

Local democracy, governance and accountability

Local Democracy

The principle of subsidiarity provides that decisions should be taken at the closest level to the citizen that is practicable. Subsidiarity is a fundamental principle underpinning the concept of local government and is fundamental to policies which promote decentralisation. Local decision making and local service delivery flow from the principle of subsidiarity. Ireland is a signatory to the 1985 Council of Europe Charter of Local Self Government which places subsidiarity at its core. There is cross party support for the principle and devolution of powers to local government and structural reforms designed to enhance subsidiarity appear regularly in the pages of party manifestoes, although enthusiasm for implementation frequently wanes once parties get into government.

Local government is the closest level of decision making to the citizen in Ireland and the size of local authorities is already quite large when the population per local authority is considered. Research from 2012 showed that Irish local authorities have an average population of 123,624 per local authority (Oireachtas Library Service, 2012). This figure will have risen, as amalgamations have been completed in Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary. The 2012 paper also provided comparative data for several other small EU member states. In Finland the average population per local authority is 11,500, it is 18,000 in Belgium, 36,600 in the Netherlands and 51,000 in Denmark. Council average populations are much larger in the UK but, equally, it is one of the countries which shares the structural and functional weakness of local government that are often identified as problematic in Ireland.

It is true to say that the overall trend in European countries is towards larger local government units but this point must be made within the context of the far smaller units which exist at local government level in a great many countries. France, Germany and Spain are large geographically and culturally diverse states and their governance arrangements are not an ideal comparator for Ireland but it is worth noting that the average population of local authorities in these countries is, respectively, 1,600, 5,629 and 4,900.² Ireland also has a

² All data is taken from Oireachtas Library Service (2012) Spotlight: Local Government Reform.

small number of local authority units at just 31, while Finland has 336, the Netherlands 441 and Belgium 589.

It is intended that municipal districts, which were established under the Local Government (Reform) Act (2014), will become a local decision making entity. The municipal districts have many advantages over the old system of town councils, not least that they uniformly cover the entire county. But, at present, these structures are evolutionary and, fundamentally, it is not intended that they will ever have budgetary powers. As a consequence, any intention that they become a substantive agent of local government lacks the understanding that decision making, without financial powers, is a sub-optimal scenario. As noted in the Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report (2013), in most cases, the boundaries of municipal districts are tied to electoral districts and consequently may change over time. This will also make it more difficult for municipal districts to develop and become embedded as permanent structures in the local government system.

Broadly, there is one councillor for every 5,000-6,000 citizens in Ireland. There is much ill-informed public commentary about the excessive number of politicians in Ireland. In reality, the representation ratios are about average for OECD countries (see Oireachtas Library Service, 2012) and significantly above levels in many EU states. For example, after extensive reform of local government arrangements in Denmark in recent years, the Oireachtas Library Service research reports that the ratio of population to public representative has now reached 1:1200. The figures are far lower in many EU countries. In France the ratio is 1:400, Finland 1:410 and the Netherlands 1:1700.

An enlarged Cork city boundary will result in a requirement to increase the number of political representatives on Cork City Council so as to maintain political equity. Taking a ratio close to the upper limit of 1:6,000 would require that Cork city council should have 39 councillors. Correspondingly, the electoral requirements of Cork County Council would be reduced and 45 councillors would be necessary. The increased size of Cork City Council and the reduced scale of Cork County Council will require that both councils consider their current political arrangements. The city has indicated in its contribution that their preferred

option is to move to a geographically based divisional structure, similar to that operated in Cork County Council. In the case of Cork County Council, the evidence presented demonstrated that the divisional approach was efficient and effective. However, a strong argument can be made that the geographic scale and diversity of county Cork is such that a somewhat higher number of political representatives might be needed to cover the territory than the calculation of 45 above. Using the lower population ratio of 5,000 would deliver a council of 54 members. Some accommodation between the two figures of 45 – 54 should be considered by the next boundary committee.

The positions of Cathaoirleach of Cork County Council and Lord Mayor of Cork City are important symbolic roles. They provide political leadership within their respective councils and are important political figureheads for citizens. Specifically, the position of Lord Mayor was mentioned by both political and commercial sector representatives who engaged with the committee. It is a political position which has existed for eight hundred years and it should be valued and protected for future generations of citizens of Cork city. The positions of Lord Mayor and Cathaoirleach of Cork County Council are guaranteed, if two local authorities are maintained. Indeed, it is hard to see a coherent logic for retaining both leadership positions in an amalgamated authority. Furthermore, a Local Government Review Group has already been established which has political leadership and, specifically, arrangements relating to mayors in amalgamated councils on its agenda.

Local government units are already quite large by European standards and, equally, the ratio of population to public representative is high. The economic crisis in Ireland precipitated a crisis of governance. Political and administrative structures were challenged by the scale of the economic crisis and a broad based political reform movement, which included political parties, civil society advocates, business representatives and academics, presented detailed plans for political and administrative renewal. All plans recommended greater devolution of powers to local authorities, enhanced financial autonomy and stronger political accountability. The crisis narrative included considerable criticism of the overlapping and small scale of political elites and there were recommendations that the base of decision making needed to be broadened. Amalgamation does nothing to deliver on any of these objectives. It will reduce the number of institutional structures, most likely the number of

elected representatives and it will concentrate more decision making power in a smaller group of people. Amalgamation may well compound existing weaknesses.

Governance and Accountability

The OECD Report on Global Cities makes it clear that cities and metro areas are the essential drivers of growth in the Twenty First Century. In the extensive discussion on the governance arrangements of cities and metro areas, the report comments that the most successful cities are those which have extensive cooperation with the neighbouring authorities. This is not an argument for amalgamation, it is an argument for shared governance and the creativity required to manage urban areas in the present century. It is essential to evaluate the consequences of institutional changes on the effectiveness and performance of local government. Kuhlman (2010) uses three categories which have been adapted from Pollitt and Bouckaert and from Wollmann (Kuhlmann, 2010: 229). These are: operational results; co-ordination capacities and political accountability; and democratic control. We now turn to these elements.

The current structure of governance arrangements in local government tilts the balance of decision making towards the CEO (formerly Manager) and the management team. This has resulted in poor local accountability (Oireachtas Library Service, 2013). Local government reforms in 2012 were designed to address some of this imbalance but it is questionable how far this has been achieved. Some of the contributions from political representatives during the consultation process attested to this point and indicated that, in recently amalgamated local authorities, political division had led to an increase in the power of the CEO.

Amalgamation of local authorities in Ireland is partly informed by a centralising logic which presumes that vertical co-ordination is enhanced by reducing the number of units involved in the governance system. Vertical co-ordination may come at the expense of subsidiarity and may also undermine the capacity of local government to be both responsive to citizens and accountable to them.

Governance arrangements at local government level do need substantial updating in Cork. There is a manifest case for greatly enhanced horizontal co-operation across the two local authorities. Cross regional co-operation in governance and joint administration of some services will deliver greater policy coherence and optimize efficiencies in service delivery. Local government arrangements in Manchester were suggested as a model by the Cork Chamber of Commerce during the Committee's public consultation phase. It is a useful model and has much to recommend it. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was established in 2010 and emerged from co-operation across the local authorities which began in the 1980s. The focus of the cross authority co-operation was initially in economic development and transport but, since the formation of the GMCA, collaboration has extended into a much wider array of policy areas including planning and social policy. The GMCA is a shared governance model which covers ten local authorities. The authority exists as a separate governance layer above the existing councils and each council nominates a representative to the GMCA. There are many models of co-operation which could be adopted and Tosics (2011) provides an evaluation of the best models of horizontal governance collaboration in metropolitan areas. The work has considerable relevance not just for the question of local government structures in Cork but much more broadly across local government in Ireland.

It is vital that co-operation in economic development, strategic planning, external relations and transport is mandated between Cork City Council and Cork County Council. Quite like Manchester, there is a strong history of co-operation between the two councils in Cork. The problem of tax competition on commercial rates, which was so problematic in Waterford and Limerick, is not present in Cork. Development and transport plans such as the Land Use and Transport Study (LUTS) and the jointly agreed Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) speak to the depth of the co-operation while initiatives such as the Smart Cities scheme demonstrate that collaboration is spread across the service areas of the two local authorities.

Service delivery

There are important differences in the service needs of urban, small urban and rural areas. Under reforms included in the Local Government (Reform) Act (2014), local authorities will produce detailed service plans and priorities. At present, one way of detecting the priorities of local authorities is to look at where they spend their resources. The differing *foci* of city councils and county councils were documented in an earlier section. Here we provide a comparison of the existing spending patterns of Cork County Council and Cork City Council.

Table 3: Percentage Total Expenditure Planned by Function – 2015

	Cork County %	Cork City %
Housing and Building	14	28
Road Transport & Safety	26	16
Water Services	15	8
Development Management	9	6
Environmental Services	13	20
Recreation and Amenity	7	14
Agri, Educ, Health & Welfare	2	1
Miscellaneous	13	8

Source: Local Authority Budgets 2015 (Cork County Council and Cork City Council)

A very similar pattern to the national expenditure trend for local authorities outlined in Table 2 emerges when you look at the detail for local authorities in Cork. Housing and Building is a much greater priority in the city, while Road Transport and Safety gets a larger share of the overall budget in the county. As a percentage of its budget, the city spends twice as much as the county on Recreation and Amenity, with Environmental Services also taking a larger share in the city. These figures speak to the different needs of cities and counties.

There is also evidence from the international literature that large local authorities are less responsive to their citizens (Callanan, Murphy and Quinlivan, 2014). One of the concerns raised by the elected representatives of Cork City Council, in their meeting with the Committee, was that an amalgamated authority for Cork would have 500,000 citizens and nearly 100 councillors. They argued this would lead to a huge bureaucracy and complexity in decision making and the distance between the citizen and the local authority would be increased. They were of the view that this would intensify the social dislocation experienced by disadvantaged communities in the city.

Financial Impact and Complexity

While there is an overwhelming case that the boundary of Cork city needs to be extended, it would be gravely misleading to suggest that this is an easy solution to local government arrangements in Cork. The situation has been exacerbated by the failure of successive governments to act, until Minister Kelly set up the CLGR committee in January 2015 to tackle a long-standing question. A boundary extension presents complex challenges, in terms of both the financial and staffing changes which will need to be implemented. But such complexity must be addressed. A bad situation has been made progressively worse, due to neglect and a failure to confront what was required for nearly 50 years – a boundary extension for Cork. Amalgamation of Cork city and county provides a simple solution, to resolve the problems and the anomalies created by years of neglect and government irresponsibility. But simple solutions are rarely prudent or productive. Only a boundary extension will right the disregard of Cork city during the past decades.

Finance

The financial estimates received from Cork County Council suggest that the annual financial net loss for Cork County Council from a boundary extension of the scale suggested here is between 35 and 40 million euro. In its original submission to the Local Government Review Committee, Cork County Council sought payment in perpetuity for the loss of revenue and return on the investment it has made in the Cork city urban areas currently under its responsibility. Cork City Council agreed to the payment in perpetuity in its submission.

Due to factors outside the control of the committee, it has not been possible to conduct a due diligence on the figures which have been provided but a number of points can be advanced based on the contributions made to the committee and international practice on these matters. Compensation has been a feature of boundary extensions in Ireland but no compensation of the scale discussed in the Cork City Council and Cork County Council submissions has ever been implemented. Payment in perpetuity is uncommon internationally, indeed in some cases (including the most recent adjustments to the boundary in Belfast) there was no compensation paid.

A balance must be struck. Cork County Council has responsibly administered the areas under discussion over many decades. There were opportunity costs for the county in relation to the investments made in urban Cork and this must be acknowledged. However, the areas under discussion do not belong to local authorities. They are sovereign territory and administered on behalf of citizens by local authorities.

Compensation should be paid at the amount agreed, after due diligence, to Cork County Council for the period of a full electoral cycle. This will give Cork County Council a period of time to adjust its financial position, develop new sources of income, reduce costs and transfer staff where necessary. After five years (one electoral cycle), compensation should be reduced on a sliding scale to zero over a period of a further ten years. At that point, payments should cease.

All debts held by Cork County Council and associated with lands, housing developments and infrastructure in the changed boundary area should transfer to Cork City Council.

The scale of the financial changes involved is very significant. The fifty year time lapse from the last boundary revision in Cork has created an especially complex and challenging situation. Urbanisation is a global phenomenon and Irish cities have been growing at a rapid rate since the 1990s. Failure to address urban governance has resulted in the creation of a requirement for huge financial transfers between the two local authorities. Central government has an obligation to delay no further and provide a coherent framework of governance in Cork. Delayed implementation will only serve to increase the end cost, as local authority budgets grow, property tax revenues increase and the commercial rates base recovers.

The tentative economic recovery may provide some small space for financial support from central government but much of the adjustment should be addressed at local level to ensure financial responsibility and accountability to the citizens of Cork.

The two local authorities in Cork are amongst the financially strongest and most viable in the country. This does not mean that the financial position will be easy to determine in any new arrangement but there is scope for an agreement to be achieved.

Staffing

Local authorities have had a dramatic reduction in overall staff numbers over the course of the economic crisis and staff levels are close to one quarter lower than they were in 2008. This means that the numbers involved in a staff transfer across the local authorities are at their lowest number in a great many years.

Data provided to the committee suggests that between 200 and 300 staff may need to transfer to Cork City Council from Cork County Council. These staff are involved in the management and delivery of services in the extended boundary area. A larger number of staff carry out part of their work in the territory that will be transferred and the extension will allow for some reorganisation of the responsibilities of these staff in Cork County Council. This will create an opportunity for extension of services by the County Council.

The staff transfer will require detailed examination and should be managed within agreed public service industrial relations frameworks. It is also vital to mention at this point that local authorities urgently need to recruit new staff, if they are to maintain current service delivery levels and quality.

Efficiency

An important point which was made in submissions to the committee, in relation to service provision, is that too much is made of the duplication of service provision. It is not useful to think of local authorities as providing duplicated services. Local authorities provide the same services but in different geographical areas. This point is fundamental to understanding why amalgamations in many jurisdictions have not delivered the financial savings which have often been projected.

There is a weak history of amalgamations delivering efficiencies, or indeed service delivery improvements in Irish governance. There is no clear evidence to demonstrate that the amalgamations in Waterford and Limerick have delivered efficiencies or resulted in greater effectiveness. The early reports document mixed outcomes, some positive, some negative.

Conclusion

Cities drive economic growth. Across Europe, second tier cities are having their strategic governance capacity strengthened to position them to compete internationally. Cork City Council needs a large boundary extension to consolidate its position as the second largest city in the state and to allow it to achieve its potential as a major driver of economic activity in the South of Ireland.

Government policy on local government has prioritised the role that local authorities must play in economic development and this was reflected in the 2014 legislation. *Putting People First* did not anticipate amalgamation of local authorities in Cork. Furthermore, national spatial policy also envisages that Cork city is a major driver of economic activity. Local government structures must align with policy objectives.

Urban and Rural areas have distinctive economic and social needs which require policy specialisation and clear operational boundaries. Diversity of settlement patterns must be maintained and rural and small urban communities must see investment and have policies which are tailored to their specific needs. City Councils and County Councils have different priorities and must continue to meet the differing, but equal, needs of their populations. Two councils in Cork which would both be very large, by national standards, are best placed to deliver efficient and effective services. Cork City Council and Cork County Council have separate, but complementary, objectives and these objectives are best met with two local authorities focused on delivering for their respective communities.

Administering a boundary extension will be complex but no more so than amalgamating two very large councils. It is fifty years since Cork city had a boundary extension. It is time that administrative policy caught up with the lives of the citizens of Cork city and county.

Recommendations

1. There should be a substantial boundary extension for Cork city.
2. Preparations for the boundary extension should begin immediately, with an implementation date to coincide with the local elections in 2019.
3. A permanent, legally binding, mechanism for addressing the boundaries of all local authorities should be put in place.
4. This report has recommended a boundary in principle and a city of the scale of no less than 230,000 citizens but the precise positioning of the boundary should be agreed by the two local authorities with reference to existing infrastructure and townlands. Should the Minister direct a boundary extension be implemented, agreement on the precise boundary should be reached within three months of the ministerial decision.
5. Mindful of the fact that migration to Europe from East to West and from South to North may pose a challenge for many Irish cities in the immediate future, Cork City should be prepared to accept larger numbers of refugees than it has experienced since the foundation of the state. This will push up the figures of those living in the city.
6. There are financial implications of a considerable scale involved in the boundary extension. Due diligence will be required to arrive at precise figures but the following principles are recommended to guide the process. The boundary extension should be implemented in 2019. An agreed package of compensation should be paid for a five year period (one electoral cycle) to facilitate transition. A reduced compensation package should be put in place for a further ten years (two electoral cycles) with the amount being paid declining to zero over the ten year period.
7. Some transfer of staff will be required. Figures provided to the committee would need to be independently evaluated but the staff transfer should take place during the period from 2019 – 2024 and should be conducted in accordance with the industrial relations protocols of the public service.
8. The electoral divisions for the extended Cork city will need to be agreed and an independent committee should be tasked with this work.

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Appendix One

Terms of Reference of the Cork Local Government Review

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government hereby establishes the Cork Local Government Committee under section 28 of the Local Government Act 1991, hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”.

The following persons are hereby appointed as members of the Committee: -

- Mr Alf Smiddy (Chair)
- Mr Tom Curran
- Professor Dermot Keogh
- Mr John Lucey, S.C.
- Dr Theresa Reidy.

The Committee shall be independent in the performance of its functions and shall stand dissolved on submission of its final report to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

In accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Act 1991, the Committee is hereby required to carry out an objective review of local government arrangements in Cork city and county, including the boundary of Cork city, the local government areas and the local authorities for such areas, and to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to:

whether the boundary of Cork city should be altered and if so,
recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary

or

whether Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified

and

any further related matters on which the Minister may request the Committee to make recommendations during the course of its review.

In the event of a recommendation that the boundary of Cork city should be altered or that Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified, the report shall contain relevant supporting information, analysis and rationale relating to or arising from such recommendation, including the following matters:

The financial and other relevant implications of the options at 4(a) and 4(b), including the potential outcomes to be achieved, and likely benefits and costs

The actions and arrangements that should be implemented in order to maximise savings, efficiency and effectiveness and to support key requirements of local government, particularly effective, accountable representation and governance, and efficient performance of functions and delivery of services

Any significant issues that are considered likely to arise in the implementation of revised arrangements and how these should be addressed

Measures that should be taken consequential to or in the context of the recommended arrangements, including any measures in relation to financial arrangements

In the event of a recommendation that Cork City Council and Cork County Council should be unified:

the most appropriate arrangement of municipal districts within the unified city and county, including designation of a metropolitan district in respect of Cork city

any changes which should be made in the allocation of reserved functions, or in governance arrangements generally, as between the local authority for the overall city and county and the municipal or

metropolitan district members, having regard particularly to the extent of area and population in Cork city and county

In the event of a recommendation that the boundary of Cork city should be altered, any matters in relation to which provision should be made in a primary order or a supplementary order (providing for matters arising from, in consequence of, or related to, the boundary extension) within the meaning of section 34 of the Local Government Act 1991, including any financial adjustments required

Any interim measures which should be taken in advance of, or in preparation for, the full implementation of the recommendations

The appropriate timescale for implementation of recommendations, including any interim measures

In carrying out its review and formulating its recommendations, the Committee shall address the following matters in particular:

The need to take full account of:

experience to date of local authority merger in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, including the type of administrative streamlining, efficiencies and economies of scale achieved, and non-financial benefits arising from unification

current demographic and relevant spatial and socio-economic factors, including settlement and employment patterns

detailed information to be provided by the relevant local authorities in relation to their structure, services, finances and operations or other matters relevant to the Committee's functions

Government policy in relation to local government as set out in the Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First, and in relation to the public service and the public finances

any relevant analysis or recommendations in reports or studies relating to local government, to the Cork area, or to any of the Committee's functions

The relative degree of complexity that would be likely to arise in organisational, financial or other administrative aspects of different options or arrangements considered, or in the implementation of, or transition to, such arrangements

The need to maximise efficiency and value for money in local government/li>

The need to ensure that Cork city and county is served by viable and effective local government, including any arrangements considered necessary to strengthen local government and enhance the effectiveness of democratic representation and accountability

The need to ensure that the future local government arrangements recommended are financially sustainable and will not result in an ongoing additional cost to central Government through increased subvention

Staffing, organisational, representational, financial, service delivery and other relevant requirements

The need to maximise the capacity of local government to promote the economic and social development of Cork city and county and the wider region in the context of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines, and of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and Local Economic and Community Plan, to be drawn up under the Planning and Local Government Acts, respectively

The need to maximise the capacity of the Cork metropolitan area, in particular, to act as a strong and dynamic focus and generator of growth for the wider hinterland, and that of other urban and rural areas to contribute in that regard in the context of balanced development

Any weaknesses in current local authority arrangements or operations that need to be addressed.

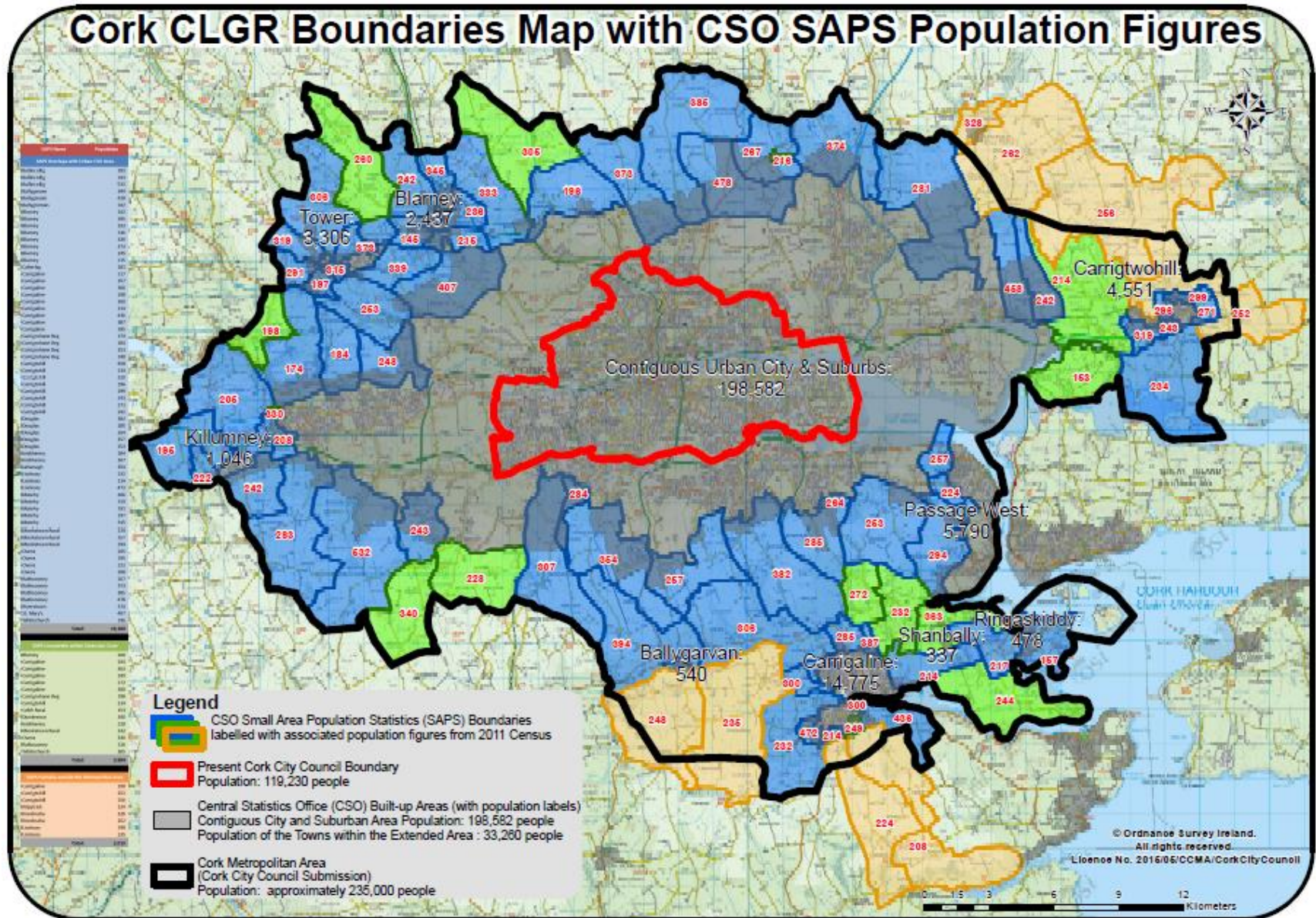
Any additional matters that the Minister may specify

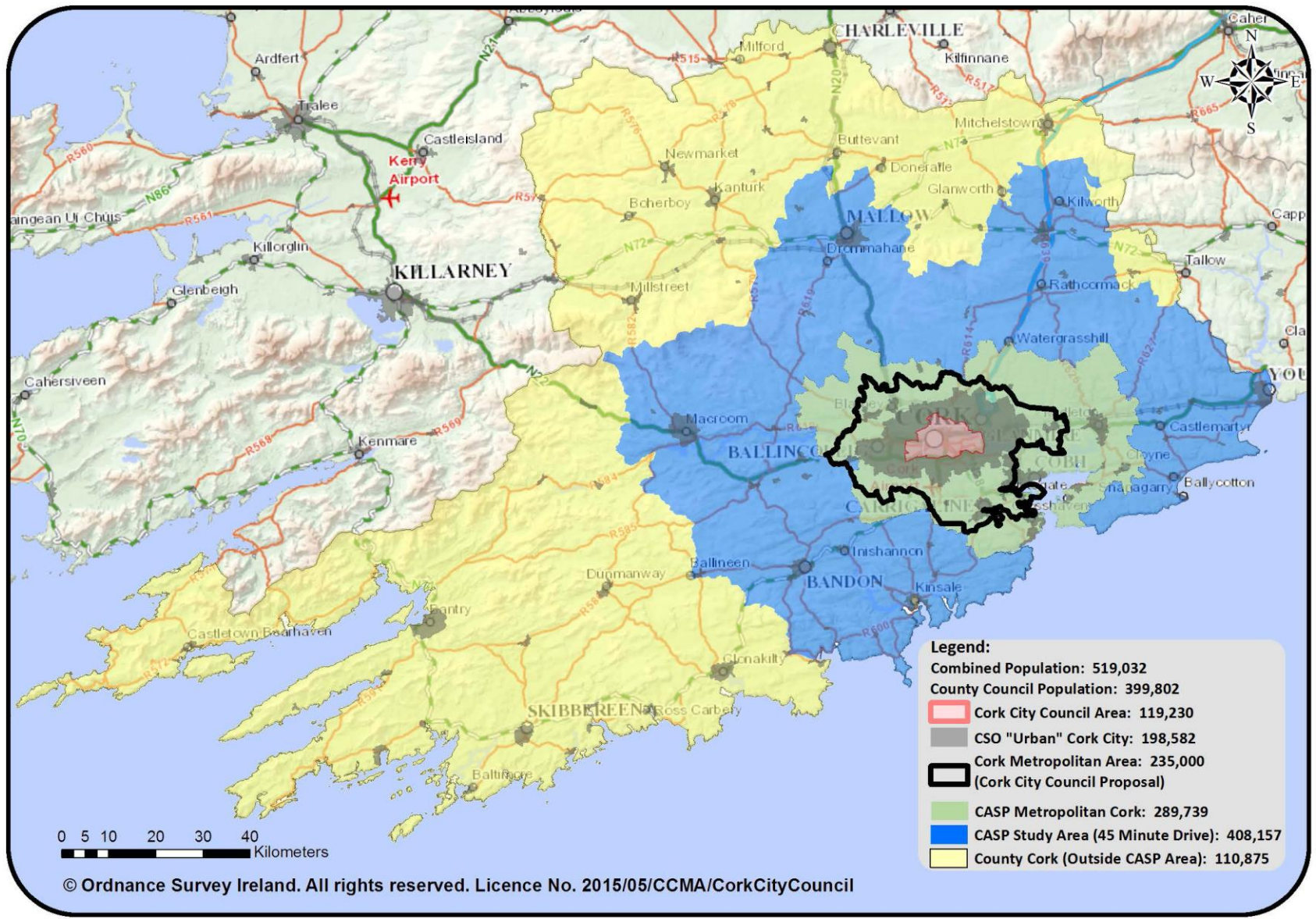
The Committee shall make such recommendations with respect to the requirements at (4) and (5) and (6) as it considers necessary in the interests of effective, efficient and innovative local government. It shall prepare and furnish to the Minister, no later than nine months after the commencement of the review, a report, in writing, of its review and recommendations, which the Minister shall publish.

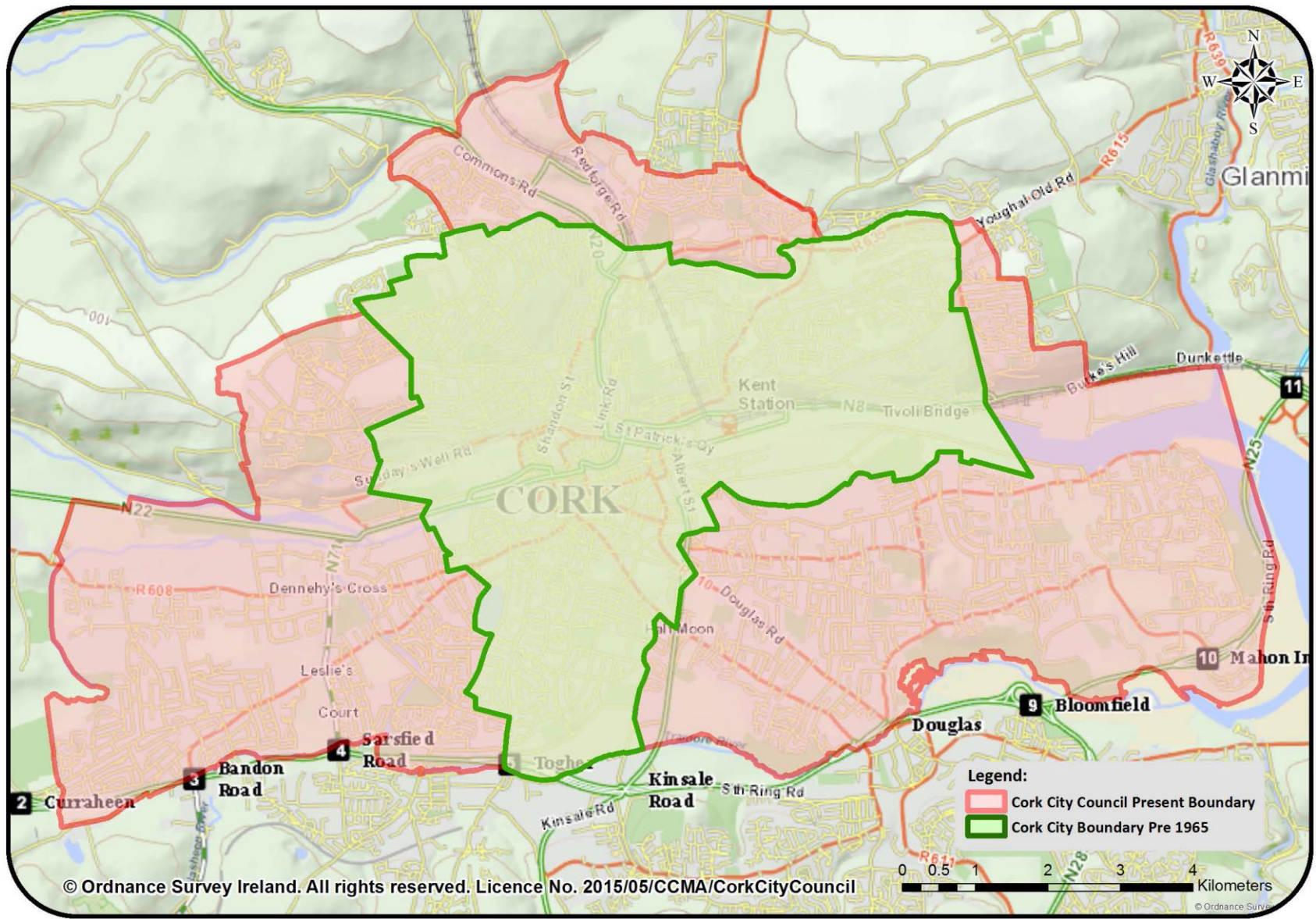
January 2015

Appendix Two

Cork CLGR Boundaries Map with CSO SAPS Population Figures

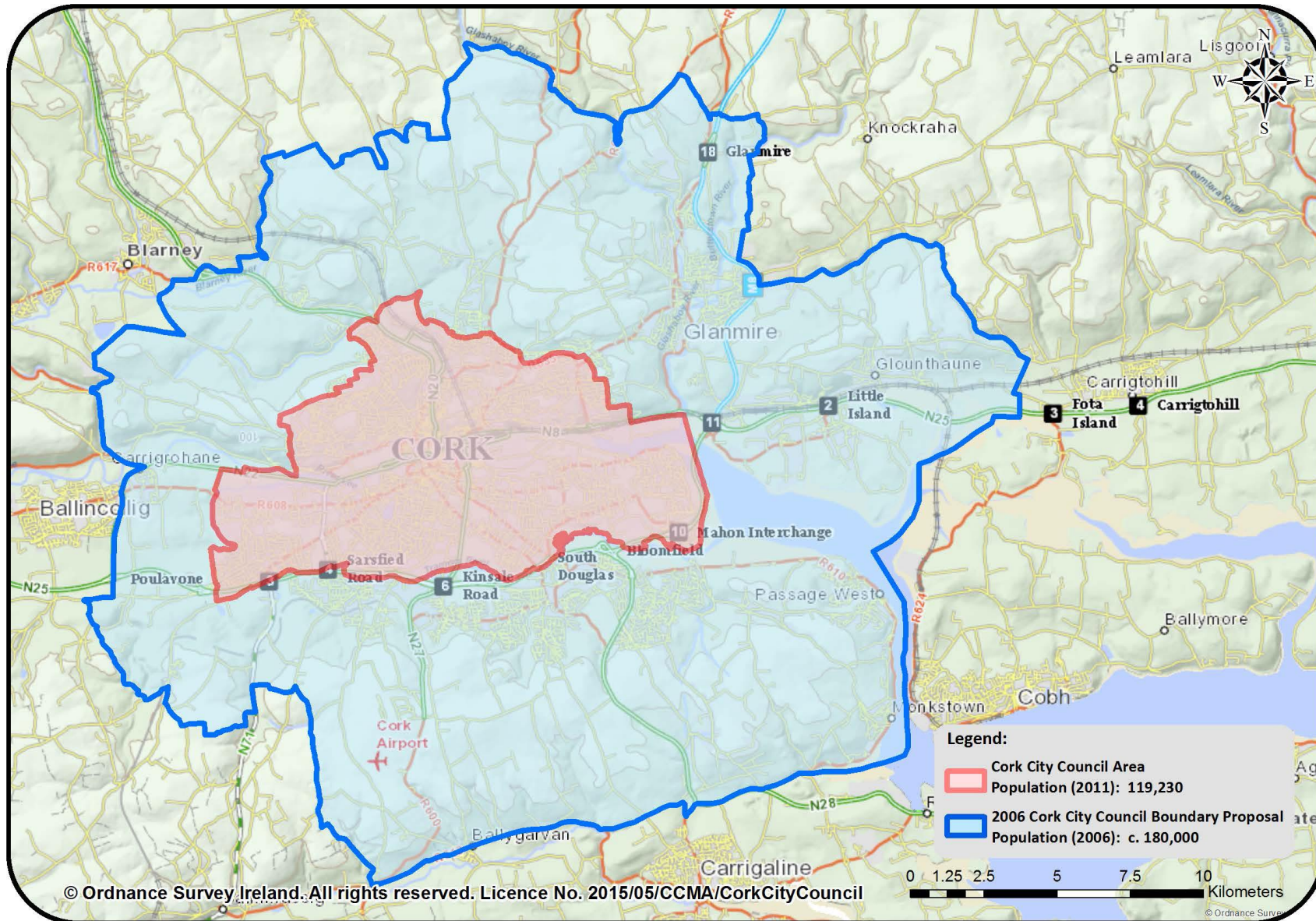






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Appendix Three

The Boundary Extension, Part II: Arbitration and Compensation

By Dr. Paul Loftus

The major issue facing Michael Conlon upon his return to Cork in 1964 - just as it had been when he first became County Manager - was the boundary extension for Cork Corporation. Back on 31 August 1964, as his tenure at the Pigs and Bacon Commission drew to a close, the Minister for Local Government, Neil Blaney, despatched a letter to Cork County Council formally setting out his decision to grant an extension to the corporation. What he proposed would bring the total area of the city from 3,346 to 12,936 acres (without tidal waters). Given that the existing boundary had been fixed in 1840 and an additional 856 acres had been added in 1955, Blaney expressed his satisfaction at how developments over the past twenty-five years had strengthened the case for an extension. A falling city centre population and the growth of the suburbs meant that this 'peripheral development represents the natural and inevitable growth of the city complex':

The suburban areas are a continuation of the town areas of the city and are not distinguishable visually from the adjoining built-up areas within the boundary which has lost any real significance and is now merely an administrative anomaly. This is particularly the case in such matters as planning for traffic, for housing, and for economic and industrial development. The Minister acknowledges that the suburbs are part of the city environment and that the city influences many aspects of the lives of suburban dwellers who should have a say in the government of the city.

In so many words he had really indicated that priority should be given to developing facilities and services in the city rather than in the suburbs themselves, an idea which Conlon had already formed a strong opinion against because of ribbon development, and this factor Blaney would allude to in his next point when he believed an extension could not be

warranted along the lines proposed by the corporation. Suburban development had left, so he believed, large tracts of undeveloped hinterland in its wake.³ In taking the decision, the minister has thus provided the backdrop for another bitter battle between the two local authorities in Cork over the boundary.

Conlon's first act upon resuming his duties was to refer the letter to the County Solicitor, Jeremiah Hickey. His opinion was definite: the minister's decision could not be challenged and advised against initiating legal proceedings because of the difficulty in how the council's case could be presented. There were, he further felt, forces already at work for the corporation before the inquiry had even begun: the Town Planning Section of the Department of Local Government had been wooed and won over long before the application had been made (it would have been preferable had the inspector at the inquiry not been from the Customs House, Hickey believed); and then, during the course of the inquiry, 'the Press, Radio and Television commented favourably on the Corporation's case, especially in regard to housing, and emphasised the need for building sites.' What he had alluded to here is interesting for the difficulties Conlon and his team had in framing an appropriate argument to resist the extension. They had to come at it from negative point of view, and this had appeared to foster an impression in the media that the council were against any sort of development for the city. Conlon was now advised to first make representations to the Department of Local Government, putting a strong case based on facts and figures 'to bring it to home to the Minister that this is indeed a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul" in a big way to appease the greed of a valuation devouring octopus.' An important principle to embrace was compromise, and in a public sense, change the perception to where the council were the ones who would be seriously affected by the changes:

³ CCCA, CC/CA/Files/2010/52(ii), Letter, Lawlor to Secretary, CCC, 31 August 1964; the extension granted was mostly along the lines of what had been proposed by the City Architect and Town Planning Officer to Cork Corporation 1958, with some points in the 1961 application included. The area encompassed: eastwards to the townlands of Ballinamought East and Lotabeg; all land lying between the Rivers Lee and Douglas, southwards to the lands north of Tramore and Glasheen Rivers; it would go westwards to take in most of the townlands of Ballinaspig, Inchigaggin and Knockaheeny; and northwards to include most of Commons Kilnap and portions of Kilbarry and Ballyvalone. The land beyond Douglas had not been included because the minister did not believe it essential that entire built-up area should be within the boundary, with account also having to be taken of the independent historical development of the likes of Douglas and Donnybrook.

... the best interests of the Council would be served by endeavouring to establish that the Minister's proposals are so outlandish that they outstep the bounds of reason and that the aim should be to prove to him on paper that some of the proposed extension should be abandoned. ... No purpose will be served at this stage by adopting a "not an inch" attitude. That stage has now passed. In writing as he did I consider the Minister was seeking the local reaction to his proposals and his final decision will depend on the case now made and the strength of the protest he received.⁴

Already, the mood amongst the council had returned to a level similar to when the corporation had first made its application. At a special meeting on 18 December 1964, a letter of 27 November from the Customs House had been read out rejecting the council's demand for an audience with Blaney because an inquiry had already been held. The response could be as good as expected given the sensitivity of the matter: Councillor Michael Pat Murphy suggested the minister 'was adopting a dictatorial attitude', while his fellow member, Dennis J. O'Sullivan labelled the decision 'an income grab' in what he claimed to be an attempt to create a perception of an impoverished city and affluent county area. Conlon remained adamant of the council's right to see the minister believing they were entitled to this right by law after appearing at the enquiry as objectors. On that advice the council authorised him to reply to the department insisting that a deputation be granted.⁵

The minister's refusal to meet had started to create a sense of unease and uncertainty at the beginning of 1965, especially when the time arrived for Conlon to strike a rate for the year ahead. He told the first estimates meeting on 28 January of the receipt of another letter from Blaney repeating his refusal to receive a deputation. 'Its implications', Conlon duly told the council, 'were very serious and it required very full and careful consideration.' Some alarming figures were now being suggested: if the council received no compensation that year, there would be an increase of 13/- in South Cork and 10/- in North and West Cork, although Conlon did admit that not all these calculations could be attributed to the extension.⁶ They still reflected a tendency on his part to now make the most alarming case possible so as

⁴ Ibid, 49(v), Letter, Hickey to Conlon, 29 October 1964.

⁵ CCCA, CCCM, 1964, 18 December 1964.

⁶ Ibid, 1965, 28 January 1965.

convey the effect of the extension. The meeting agreed to defer to a special meeting on 4 February at which the latest department letter would be discussed.

That letter from Blaney, dated 22 January, once more stood by the decision granted in relation of the extension, and wrote of economies, especially in relation to the corporation-council relationship, in that 'it will reduce the extent to which such co-operation is necessary in relation to services which are best administered on a unified basis in a built up area.'⁷ Now the council sought to increase its resolve. With Blaney unreachable by telephone, a proposal was put forward to send a telegram to Dublin announcing that a deputation would travel to meet the minister whether they would be received or not. In this they had Conlon's support as he insisted that as the 'injured party', the council had a right to be received by the minister.⁸

Once more Blaney resisted the council's advances, and in his next letter urged for the two councils to enter negotiations with himself being prepared to intervene should they be unable to come to an agreement. There were more developments within this message: the minister offered to discuss the financial implications in a joint meeting with members from both authorities and he urged for arrangements to be made to help the council meet the extra rate burden until compensation had been settled. A more notable matter arising from the letter concerned the council's public campaign, noting a spate of recent press reports alluding to a possible large rate increase. The minister now demanded a full breakdown of the figures.⁹ Playing up the sense of grievance had done little for the council's case within the Department of Local Government and heightened the need for some sort of settlement. When the council asked for Conlon's views at a special meeting on 22 February, he left no illusions as to the extent of the increase: the overall burden would rise by £350,000, and that alone would only be enough to avoid raising the rates; as a consequence, rates would rise from 40/- to 60/-; the cost of covering the health services would also go up by £500,000 to £1.5 million; and to those figures he added that if they were to come into effect from 1 April 1965 (the date of the minister's order), 'there was a great need for adequate and immediate compensation'.¹⁰ 'The

⁷ Ibid, 4 February 1965, Letter from Department of Local Government, 22 January 1965.

⁸ Ibid, 4 February 1965.

⁹ Ibid, 22 February 1965, Letter from Department of Local Government, 17 February 1965.

¹⁰ Ibid, 22 February 1965.

Manager is painting the bleakest picture', Senator Healy said in reply to those figures. 'I painted the factual figure', so came the terse reply from Conlon.¹¹

Both men were right, but for different purposes. Accurate as those figures were as regards the potential impact, Conlon had merely acted upon Hickey's counsel and decided to play on the council being a victim. When speaking of these figures, he had in effect acknowledged a willingness to accept compensation by setting out a first bargaining position. Healy was, as ever, trying to play the role of self-appointed conciliator given his position as both a councillor and a corporation member (he also held the mayoral chains for Cork City at this time). In situations like this, Martin Corry - a man who had a 'thing for the City' to quote one former council official - would direct his ire towards Healy. 'You can't ride two horses at the same time', he would say to the senator. Ever the man for a colourful quote, there would never be anything personal in such comments. Healy became an outlet through which the Glounthane man expressed his anger towards the system, and what he felt to be the unfair treatment shown towards the county instead of the city.¹²

Blaney received a joint deputation of corporation and county council members (who all represented Cork in the Oireachtas) and officials on 25 February at which he attempted to gently nudge the two sides towards sorting the issue between themselves. Conlon and MacEvilly were present, and among those who spoke were the old sparring partners from the council chamber, Corry and Healy. In his role as Lord Mayor of Cork, Healy insisted that 'the Corporation would "Lean over backwards" to meet the County Council' which would include adjusting the Health charges.' Corry looked for a payment fifteen times the annual increase in burden as had been agreed between the two Dublin authorities in 1955. Blaney then proposed for Cork Corporation to make an interim payment; but should it not be sufficient to 'close the gap' fully, it should borrow money to meet what was left so the overall cost could be taken into account when the final compensation amount 'should be determined within a year.' To achieve that end the minister stated his willingness to grant a fifteen year purchase if the corporation officials agreed. His suggestion had only provided a framework

¹¹ *The Cork Examiner*, 16 February 1965, p.11.

¹² Interview with Tadhg O'Murchu, 31 January 2012.

with which to work, and both sides indicated a willingness to meet and settle the terms, with Blaney concluding the meeting by encouraging them in this direction.¹³

Conlon did not now wish to lose any momentum and addressed a letter to City Hall demanding that payment be received immediately for the equivalent sum to the increased burden which would fall on the county rates as well as an exemption for the proposed new county offices on the Carrigrohane Road (which would now fall under the corporation's remit after the extension). Discussions and conferences took place without achieving any progress before City Hall sent a letter to the Courthouse offering to pay £100,000 in respect of the health services estimate and £250,000 in total compensation. If the letter had shown a degree of compromise over the health burden, none would be forthcoming about granting an exemption for the council's new offices.¹⁴ Many points and issues remained to be sorted and at this point, as the confirmation order for the extension reached the *Seanad*, had to be delayed for the general election due that April. The order, which provided for ten times the increase in the annual burden, passed into law that June meaning the extension came into effect from July. Conlon remained anxious to maintain good relations in working matters with the corporation. By 29 June, with no communication from the Department of Local Government as to whether the extension would become a reality from 1 July, Conlon, having noticed McEvelly's anxiousness for facilitation from the council, sent a circular to his officers ordering them to continue all relevant services in the affected areas until further notice.¹⁵

This also gave Conlon an opportunity to press the matter again and in a letter of 9 July for McEvelly he demanded to know what type of payment the council would receive: either a once-off lump sum or annual ones for a number of years. He left his city counterpart in no doubt of the preference for a final agreement as opposed to a compulsory adjustment. Corporation officials did not share Conlon's sense of urgency and replied three days later to say the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of councillors and they would thus

¹³ CCCA, CC/CA/Files/2010/49(v), 'Meeting with the Minister for Local Government in Leinster House, Dublin, on Thursday, 25th February at 12 noon regarding proposed Cork Borough Boundary Extension'.

¹⁴ CCCA, CCM, 1965, 15 March 1965.

¹⁵ CCCA, CC/CA/Files2010/49(v), Circular, Conlon to County Secretary, County Solicitor, County Accountant, County Librarian, County Engineer, County Architect, Chief Assistant County Engineer (Sanitary), Staff Officers, General Office, Rates, Motor Taxation, Father Matthew Quay, Engineering, Planning and Roads Department; Chief Veterinary Officer, 29 June 1965.

inform him of what they would be prepared to say. Conlon had been anticipating another round of negotiations and at the council meeting of 21 July received approval to lead a council team comprising of the County Secretary and Accountant.¹⁶

From September onwards the discussions began again, and both sides used the health estimate to find common cause with an agreement to meet the expense of the CHA on a shared population basis from 1 July. There were hopes that this might lead to an agreement which would suit the respective interests of each side: for the corporation that it might lead the council to mollify their demands; and for the council that it might result in the compensation that they had looked for. Both sides were to be disappointed as it soon became clear the extent to which they differed on what adequate compensation should be throughout another lengthy correspondence which culminated in a meeting on 17 December. Cork Corporation offered £400,800, a long way from what the confirmation order had provided for in terms of the council's burden. For the year 1965 to 1966 alone, the increase had amounted to £192,382. A memorandum drawn up by Cork County Council thus concluded that 'it was decided that no useful purpose would be served by further meetings ... and it was decided to refer the matter to arbitration.'¹⁷

This process brought with it more protracted delays as both councils began compiling and researching facts and figures for their presentation. Although the arguments had to put on paper instead of in person, Conlon remained determined to publicly argue the council's case, and he did not disappoint those who wanted a news story at the council's annual estimates

¹⁶ CCCA, CCM, 1965, 21 July 1965.

¹⁷ CCCA, CC/CA/Files/2010/54(i), Memorandum, 'Comments of Cork County Council on Offer of Compensation made by Cork Corporation'. Cork Corporation had calculated the rate, based on a preliminary estimate for 1965-66 as follows:

1. Rate from income for added area other than Health Services - £237,964
2. It then deducted its preliminary estimate for providing these services in added area - £197,884.
3. The remainder taken as increase in burden and multiplied by ten - £40,080.

The memorandum wryly noted that the multiplying by ten the difference between the rate income for added area and the net expenditure was the only thing the two councils could agree on.

meeting. Describing what lay ahead as 'frightening', he declared that the product of a penny in the pound in the county at large had decreased by £566 leading to a 20 per cent decrease in South Cork and 10 per cent overall in the county. Put another way, even if the council's finances remained static, there would still be a 'substantial increase' in the rate in the pound. 'The position had indeed been reached', declared Conlon, 'where the Council may have to seriously consider abandoning some proposed projects which have not yet commenced'. Despite reporting that progress had been made in the arbitration proceedings, Conlon also had news of an offer of compensation of £250,000 from Cork Corporation - payable in twelve monthly instalments - which was quickly dismissed: it represented, so he believed, approximately one-fifth of increase in burden meaning that 'at this stage, I have found that it would be impossible for me to endeavour to decide what portion of this sum should be set aside for relief of rates in the current year.' There remained too the fact that there would be little buoyancy of revenue from a compensation which had been subjected to a ten-year limit.¹⁸

Communications between the two councils tended to become more difficult in times such as this. Agreeing on the membership of the arbitration panel board provided one such instance that July when Conlon tried to contact MacEvilly by telephone, but 'failed to breach the iron curtain' as he made a point of stressing when he had to opt instead for the more old-fashioned method of putting pen to paper. He proposed to his onetime boss for the council and corporation to draw their respective nominees from the pool of City and County managers 'not on the basis of representing any one of us but purely on the basis of being independent unbiased arbitrators.'¹⁹ MacEvilly agreed with the idea and yet the final nominees tended to reflect their mindset that both men had to come from in approaching the case: the Dublin City Manager, M. Macken would represent the corporation; the council secured the services of the Clare County Manager, Joe Boland; while they had to only look down the Western Road for their Chairman: Professor David O'Mahony from the Economics Department in UCC.

The arbitrators had a difficult job ahead of them for a return to negotiations brought nothing but claims and counter-claims amid the old bitterness which came with the city-county

¹⁸ CCCA, CCM, 1966, 4 March 1966.

¹⁹ CCCA, CC/CO/MA/CORR, Letter, Conlon to MacEvilly, 5 July 1966.

divide. Part of the corporation's case included a claim for the rate collected by the council for the land within the new areas for the year ending 31 March 1966. On the opening day of proceedings, Conlon indicated to the arbitrators that there would be no difficulty in granting three-fourths of that rate. A meeting took place between the managers and their officers some days later to discuss a number of issues and Conlon said the amount involved would be between £140-175,000. At this stage, mid-October 1966, MacEvelly stated this fact in a letter to the arbitrators and Conlon followed suit declaring an agreement had been reached 'in principle'. One month on, however, the corporation, with some surprise, read another letter from Conlon reneging on the proposal because of the 'attitude now being adopted by the Corporation and its unhelpful and unrealistic attitude towards meeting the just claims of the County Council'. He had, so he insisted, only being prepared to consider such a settlement provided the council received the full compensation it had looked for. Conlon now rejected the proposed settlement of £188,279 leading the corporation to declare that this 'is a clear repudiation of an absolutely unqualified agreement' in a memorandum narrating the course of these discussions.²⁰

How had it come to such a point again? It can have said to have started with the claim filed by the council for while Conlon may have approached the corporation's claims with a willingness to compromise, it would only be after his council received its due. The total claim amounted to £2,505,320 (£74,286 for county-at-large services; £113,266 for county rural services; and £62,971 for South Cork, with the final tally being multiplied by times ten).²¹ Conlon received the corporation's answer in the middle of the November council meeting and before he issued a formal reply, he saw fit, with some righteous indignation, to write to the arbitrators about the tone of how its argument had been put. 'The whole case', he was adamant, 'is so littered with insinuations, innuendos, mis-statements, inaccuracies and contradictions that it is very difficult to have the case studied by officers of the Council and at the same time control their natural and righteous indignation.' He highlighted one quote in blue ink from page three of the submission to underscore what he felt to be the unduly

²⁰ CCCA, CC/CA/Files/2010/52(ii), Memorandum by Cork Corporation, 'Financial adjustments following the extension of the Borough Boundary: Claim by Corporation for proportionate share of rate collectable by the County Council in respect of property in the added area for the year ended 31st March, 1966', 12 January 1967.

²¹ A full breakdown of the figures is provided in Edward Marnane, *Cork County Council: The First One Hundred Years* (Cork County Council, Cork, 1999), pp.336-37.

provocative nature of the corporation's presentation: 'the nonsense of the process employed by the County Council'.²²

Privately Conlon's feelings were of a similar nature. In a letter to the council's Senior Counsel, Richard Cooke, he wrote of how the 'language alone seems indicative of panic but it only bears out what we said at the arbitration that the whole object was to unload the rates burden of the city from the merchants to the people who live in the suburbs and that the application had been made without any enquiry as to what the consequence could be.' With some irony he alluded to a possible conspiracy with MacEvelly's appointment to the arbitration board: 'The real difficulty facing the Council is that the "poor mouth" manner of the City Manager may well strike a sympathetic chord with Macken, who inspired MacEvelly to work for it.' His feelings about a bias in the Dublin City Manager's case appeared to be linked to an argument put forward by the corporation that the council's claim was out of proportion compared to what had been awarded during the Limerick and Dublin extensions. Conlon dismissed that argument because his job involved governing the largest county in the country. If 'Cork acquired an area twice that of the County Borough, added more than 50% to its population and almost 50% to its valuation - what profit does the Corporation expect to make on it? What would an equitable price for that profit be?'²³

When Conlon had to convey those feelings in a more formal manner, his argument was more restrained, but astutely developed. He used the opportunity to discuss long-held ideas about the role of the county town and what it might contribute to the city economy:

The Council has never said that services must be on an equal level throughout the whole County. The Council has always stated that some relative comparison must be maintained between the services provided in the urbanised areas and the rural areas. That raises questions of priorities. It is only equitable social justice that an authority would provide basic or primary services in the area which already have the primary services It is now accepted Social Policy to provide the rural areas with as many as possible of the services provided in the urbanised areas. The Corporation are

²² CCA, CC/CA/Files/2010/54(ii), Letter, Conlon to Arbitrators (O'Mahony, Boland and Macken), 22 November 1966.

²³ Ibid, 53(vii), Letter, Conlon to Cooke, 23 November 1966.

now suggesting that secondary services ... should be provided by the County Council in the Added Area before primary basic services, such as a piped water supply had been provided for many parts of the Rural County.²⁴

On paper it offered an alternative to consider beyond the process of arbitration, and in doing so, Conlon also had also put on record the council's ability to approach the ever-increasing overlap between city and county services from a more positive mindset. For all the displays of indignation and disagreement, Conlon was also a realist and had a good sense of what way the hearing might go. As the panel completed the process of arbitration and deliberated over an outcome, Conlon told a committee meeting of councillors in January 1967 that the 'Council would get a favourable hearing and in the final analysis would be much better than if the matter were referred to an official of the Department of Local Government.'²⁵ His anticipation of the likely outcome proved to be a shrewd one when the panel announced in early March that the council should be awarded compensation of £1,550,000.²⁶ Yet the contrast between the public and private reaction of Conlon offers an interesting glimpse at how a local government manager must keep one's sense of diplomacy in a sensitive area such as a city-county relationship. Conlon told councillors the award 'was very fair', but that at the next council meeting 'he would like as little discussion as possible on this matter as it was significant that the Corporation had not yet made any statement on or about the award.'²⁷ Privately the reaction was slightly more euphoric if also regretful at how the long the process had taken. He wrote to Professor O'Mahony to thank him for his services on the board and remarked that: 'I can assure you that it is far less than I would have liked to pay if we had a completely free hand in the matter. It is also far less than it would have cost either of our Councils if we had to obtain the services of some of the legal "luminaries" we are wont to employ.'²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, 54(ii), Memorandum by Cork County Council, 'Cork City Boundary Extension: Comments of County Council on Memorandum of Evidence to be given by City Manager'.

²⁵ CCCA, CCCM, GPC, 1967, 12 January 1967.

²⁶ *The Southern Star*, 4 March 1967, p.1.

²⁷ CCCA, CCCM, GPC, 1967, 10 March 1967.

²⁸ Ibid, CC/CO/MA/CORR, Letter, Conlon to O'Mahony, 26 June 1967.

The story of the boundary extension does not quite end there. When Cooke filed for his fees, he believed it to be 'a splendid achievement to get such a high proportion of the amount claimed.' 'I hope', he then added, 'the tears shed in the City Hall don't cause another flood.'²⁹ There now remained the problem of how payment would be made which perhaps explains Conlon's reluctance for the councillors to gloat in public. Another letter was sent to City Hall on 6 June looking for a first of £140,000, and the Assistant Town Clerk replied a week later to suggest that the amount might be treated as a loan from Cork County Council, repayable on a long-term basis - possibly fifty years - with a variable rate of interest determined by the banks. At a General Purposes Committee (GPC) meeting, Conlon deemed the offer 'unacceptable' and countered with a suggestion of legal action to finally force a settlement.³⁰ The two sides eventually came together to resolve the situation at a meeting on 7 September. The GPC had decided to look for one payment with a specific rather than variable rate. At 3 p.m. that day the same committee met one from the corporation led by the Lord Mayor, Stephen Barrett. He dismissed paying such a large sum, insisting it was not even possible for the corporation to have the sufficient resources on hand to settle up, before adding 'that it should be possible to compromise between one payment and payment over 50 years.' After what is described in the council's minute books as a 'detailed discussion' with 'many counter offers', an agreement was reached where repayment would be made over fifteen years at a rate of 6.5 per cent.³¹ A long-running saga eventually concluded in 1982 with receipt of the final payment from the corporation, but at that point the shape of Cork -and, indeed, Conlon's career - would be very different from what could have been envisioned, even in early 1967.

The saga of the extension - which had run now for seven years - revealed, with an age of development upon the country, an increasing necessity for cooperation between the two councils for the greater benefit of Cork. That December Conlon wrote to MacEvelly about the problems he faced with implementing the County Development Plan, and especially 'the question of dealing with applications for development contiguous to Cork City.' He proposed for the establishment of a joint committee to tackle common matters of interest.³² It was a logical idea, typical of Conlon's energy in seeking problems rather than allowing them to come to him, but remained a concept which many within both councils could not yet bring

²⁹ Ibid, CC/CA/Files/2010/52(i), Letter, Cooke to Hickey, 2 March 1967.

³⁰ Ibid, CCCM, GPC, 1967, 31 July 1967.

³¹ Ibid, 7 September 1967.

³² Ibid, CC/CO/MA/CORR, Letter, Conlon to MacEvelly, 12 December 1967.

themselves to face. His anticipation of the problems which might occur was, as ever, shrewd and two months later - February 1968 - he wrote another letter to MacEvilly referring to the difficulty of water supplies for houses on the Boherboy Road, Mayfield. In situations such as these, an informal arrangement existed where the council supplied the water and the corporation took the sewerage, and an assumption had been made that the arrangement would continue.³³ By writing the letter, though, he had offered another example of what would eventually force the councils to come together and work in collaboration.

The battle for compensation had shown Conlon revelling in his many different functions as manager. In turn he had to be motivator, planner and negotiator. That he could be perform these separately or all at one owed much to his natural ability as an administrator, and yet, he was always seeking to constantly learn and refine his skills and knowledge of local government.³⁴ In April 1966 he accepted an invitation to speak at a conference on 'Science and Management' at the Silver Springs Hotel on the outskirts of Cork City. In writing to accept the invitation he confessed to be 'somewhat intrigued by the title of your Conference ... because some of us have considered for some time to a certain extent anyhow that management is a science.'³⁵ In March 1967 he wrote to the Irish Management Institute to thank them for a recent seminar on 'New Concepts in Management'. 'Incidentally', the letter wrote 'on reflection', 'I find that I do, in fact, do quite a bit of "operating" work.'³⁶ Conlon would need all this knowledge - scientific, operative or otherwise - in dealing with the general affairs of County Cork in a period which provided unprecedented challenges and great opportunities.

³³ Ibid, Letter, Conlon to MacEvilly, 13 February 1968.

³⁴ He also actively encouraged his staff to take courses in management and give lectures should an opportunity arise - Interview with O'Murchu, 31 January 2012.

³⁵ CCCA, CC/CO/MA/CORR, Letter, Conlon to Daly, 7 April 1966.

³⁶ Ibid, Letter, Conlon to Mulcahy, 2 March 1967.

Appendix Four



A STATEMENT FROM FORMER LORDS MAYOR OF CORK CITY

Embargoed 12.05 a.m. Tuesday, August 4 2015.

A City Without Power Is Not A City

As former Lords Mayor of Cork, we feel compelled to raise our profound concern at the possibility that the current Cork Local Government Review Group might recommend the abolition of city governance as we know it through the establishment of a single authority to run Cork city and county.

This notion is simply preposterous. The idea that Cork city, the country's second city, should be divested of its essential powers to self-govern, to run its own affairs, to set its own budgets and to strategise for the future is an extraordinary proposition. Cities have these powers for good reason and we know that strong cities have a degree of autonomy. Under this possible scenario, Cork city, with its rich social and economic history, would be relegated to "divisional status" within a single county authority, a type of municipal district with the same standing as a country town. This is beyond belief and is now a distinct possibility.

A city without power is not a city. Cork city is not some abstract entity. It is a living, breathing, evolving organism that has an urban identity and an urban personality; it has a shape and a soul. That is what makes cities special. It has also a critical, national strategic role. Those who know and respect Cork city have no reason to be modest about its contribution but now have every reason to be fearful for its future.

Cork has been an autonomous and proud self-governing city since medieval times. When the Irish State was founded in 1922, Cork city already had 737 years of self-governance under its belt. The city has been the driver of regional economic development for centuries. The city, with its enlightened and progressive local government and its own empowered Council, pioneered long term strategic planning in Ireland, bringing other stakeholders along with it to create land use and transportation templates that set the bar for the rest of the country.

The future governance of Cork is not a local issue; it is a national issue. For good reason, Cork city is accorded special status in the National Spatial Strategy and indeed in the Government's own Putting People First Policy Document. The importance of the city as a counter balance to Dublin has been embraced by Government Ministers of all hues and by economists and planners throughout the years. And now a proposition exists to stand this sentiment on its head and make it little more than a platitude. Do we know of any other city that would accept this offensive diminution of its claim to function properly as a second city?

Cities across the globe are centres for economic development and planning. An enlarged Cork city, with a full range of powers, has huge potential to be a counter magnet to the ever increasing pull of Dublin. It can become a crucial centre for the investment and job creation for which cities around

the world compete with one another. It is widely recognised that Cork represents Ireland's only real prospect of achieving such a regional balance. It won't achieve this, however, with a powerless and ineffectual local "division" at its heart.

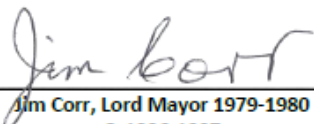
Cork County Council, the proponent of the so-called "Super Council" idea, has steadfastly resisted the expansion of Cork city for fifty years. It has used every stratagem to obstruct the development of the city to a scale commensurate with its position as Ireland's second city. Having now seen that its previous position on a boundary extension is likely to be defeated by the logic that has always existed, the County Council now offers a governance proposal which will, if implemented, have a hugely detrimental effect on the city.

Cork Chamber's recent statement in favour of a single authority is a worry. The Chamber would be quite happy to gerrymander representational rights to achieve the primacy of the city's interests through the disenfranchisement of rural areas. And without any democratic mandate, it demands that business be involved in "decision making" in areas for which it has no remit.

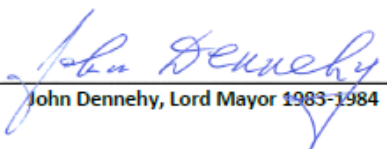
It is surely relevant that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, now points to the elimination of town councils in recent years as a mistake. And an irreversible one at that. It is already clear that the Municipal District model which replaced them creates democratic and service deficits that in some cases are profound. It is only now that people are beginning to fully appreciate the foolishness of abandoning local government and local democracy in our towns and smaller urban centres. Cork could be the next target for this type of dangerous experimentation, based on the same wisdom and wishful thinking that produced corporate entities like the HSE and Irish Water.

Yet, that is what Cork city is being asked to embrace under the proposal that suggests that a single authority can run everything in Cork from its furthest seaboard and village to its city centre.

Such a proposal is unworkable and would seriously damage the interests of Cork city, of the region and the nation.


Jim Corr, Lord Mayor 1979-1980
& 1996-1997



Paud Black, Lord Mayor 1981-1982


John Dennehy, Lord Mayor 1983-1984



Dan Wallace, Lord Mayor 1985-1986

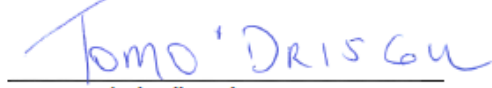

Denis Cregan, Lord Mayor 1991-1992


Micheál Martin, Lord Mayor 1992-1993

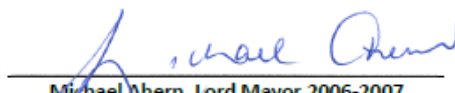

Joe O'Callaghan, Lord Mayor 1995-1996


Damian Wallace, Lord Mayor 1999-2000

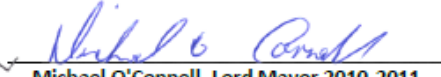

P.J. Hourican, Lord Mayor 2000-2001

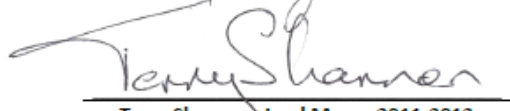

Tom O'Driscoll, Lord Mayor 2001-2002

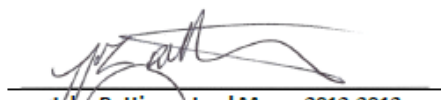

John Kelleher, Lord Mayor 2002-2003

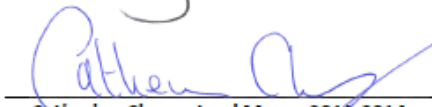

Michael Ahern, Lord Mayor 2006-2007

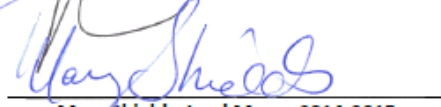

Donal J Counihan, Lord Mayor 2007-2008


Michael O'Connell, Lord Mayor 2010-2011


Terry Shannon, Lord Mayor 2011-2012


John Buttimer, Lord Mayor 2012-2013


Catherine Clancy, Lord Mayor 2013-2014


Mary Shields, Lord Mayor 2014-2015

Appendix Five

Victoria	1900	Daniel J. Hegarty, (knighted)
Edward VII	1901	Edward Fitzgerald
	1902	Edward Fitzgerald
	1903	Sir Edward Fitzgerald (Bt. U.K.)
	1904	Augustine Roche
	1905	Joseph Barrett
	1906	Joseph Barrett
	1907	Richard Cronin
	1908	Thomas Donovan
	1909	Thomas Donovan
George V	1910	Tomas Donovan unseated by Writ of Ouster, 20th. Dec. 1910
	1911	Henry O'Shea, Jan 14-23
	1911	James Simcox
	1912	James Simcox, resigned 12th. April.
	1912	Henry O'Shea
	1913	Henry O'Shea
	1914	Henry O'Shea
	1915	Henry O'Shea (knighted)
	1916	ThomasC. Butterfield
	1917	Thomas C. Butterfield
	1918	Thomas C. Butterfield
	1919	William F. O'Connor
Lord Mayors Dail Eireann	1920	Tomas MacCurtain murdered by British forces - 20/3/1920
	1920	Terence McSwiney died on hunger strike in Brixton Prison, London - 25/10/1920
	1920	Donal O'Callaghan
	1921	Donal O'Callaghan
	1922	Donal O'Callaghan
	1923	Donal O'Callaghan
	1924	Sean French
	1925	Sean French
	1926	Sean French
	1927	Sean French
	1928	Sean French
	1929	Sean French
	1930	Francis J. Daly
	1931	Francis J. Daly
1932	Sean French	

1933	Sean French
1934	Sean French
1935	Sean French
1936	Sean French
1937	Sean French (Died 12th Sept.)
1937	James Hickey (elected 21st. Sept.)
1938	James Hickey
1939	James Hickey
1940	William Desmond
1941	John Horgan
1942	James Allen
1942	Richard S. Anthony, (elected 29th Aug, 1942)
1943	James Hickey
1944	Sean Cronin
1945	Michael Sheehan
1946	Michael Sheehan
1947	Michael Sheehan
1948	Michael Sheehan
1949	Sean MacCarthy
1950	Sean MacCarthy
1951	Walter Furlong
1952	Patrick McGrath
1953	Patrick McGrath
1954	Patrick McGrath
1955	Patrick McGrath
1956	Sean Casey
1957	Richard V. Jago
1958	Sean MacCarthy
1959	Jane Dowdall
1960	Stephen D. Barrett
1961	Anthony Barry
1962	Sean Casey
1963	Sean MacCarthy
1964	Augustine A. Healy
1965	Cornelius Desmond
1966	Sean Casey (died 29/4/1967)
1966	Sean MacCarthy
1967	Pearse Wyse
1968	John Bermingham
1969	Thomas Pearse Leahy
1970	Peter Barry
1971	Timothy J. O'Sullivan
1972	Sean O'Leary

1973	Patrick Kerrigan
1974	Pearse Wyse
1975	Augustine A. Healy
1976	Sean French
1977	Gerald Y. Goldberg
1978	Brian C. Sloane
1979	James A. Corr
1980	Toddy O'Sullivan
1981	Paud Black
1982	Hugh Coveney
1983	John Dennehy
1984	Liam Burke
1985	Dan Wallace
1986	Jerry O'Sullivan
1987	Thomas Brosnan
1988	Bernard Allen
1989	Chrissie Aherne
1990	Frank Nash
1991	Denis Cregan
1992	Micheál Martin
1993	John Murray
1994	Tim Falvey
1995	Joe O'Callaghan
1996	James A. Corr
1997	Dave McCarthy
1998	Joe O'Flynn
1999	Damian Wallace
2000	P.J. Hourican
2001	Tom O'Driscoll
2002	John Kelleher
2003	Colm Burke
2004	Sean Martin
2005	Deirdre Clune
2006	Michael Ahern
2007	Donal Counihan
2008	Brian Bermingham
2009	Dara Murphy
2010	Michael O'Connell
2011	Terry Shannon
2012	John Buttimer

