

Submission to National Planning Framework

31-03-2017

Much of industrial growth and population growth is occurring in and around Dublin, and this growth is outstripping large parts of the Country. This has put huge pressure on house prices and land in the Greater Dublin area, and many of its suburban areas are at saturation point in terms of Housing.

Not only this but this is contributing to the increasing drift in population from Rural Areas, smaller towns, and even the smaller cities to Dublin, creating unbalanced Industrial Development and population growth. This is in neither Dublin's interest, nor the rest of the Country.

Opening up alternative centres for Growth is essential for ensuring more balanced and sustainable population growth and industrial development.

The Need for Cork to grow, and its strength as an urban Centre

Cork is the second largest City in the state, and the wider region has already seen considerable growth, particularly in the Metropolitan Area. The areas has already seen very considerable growth in recent years, and with well over half a million people, it is a region in and of itself.

At its heart is the City and Metropolitan Area, and this offers great capacity to meet some of the states need for balanced population growth. It is an area with a strong profile in terms of foreign direct investment, as well as having natural advantages such as an Internationally significant Port and Harbour and proximity to a strong agricultural and food producing area.

The presence of the UCC and CIT campuses, as well as a world class network of Maritime Education Institutes in Ringaskiddy, means it is very much an educational Hub also.

The Need for Infrastructure

The key element of achieving this objective are ensuring good streams of inward investment, making the region attractive as a package to investors, and also offering enough Local Autonomy in order to be able to drive such a project.

Government policy could aid this objective through

- prioritising key infrastructural projects such as;
 - N20 Cork to Limerick
 - N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy
 - N22 Northern Ring Road
 - Dunkettle Exchange Upgrade
 - N25 Upgrade
 - Redevelopment of Port of Cork
 - Improving Public Transport Links, quicker and more frequent Trains and Buses.
 - The possibility of Light Rail in Cork must be considered
 - A focused approach to attracting new flights to Cork & Shannon
 - Devolution of Powers to City/Metropolitan Councils, including Directly Elected Mayors
 - Ensuring Speedy roll out of high quality Fibre, future proofed Broadband
 - Maximising potential space for Urban Regeneration in Cork (Docklands, Tivoli)

- Focused development of Key Industries such as Pharmaceuticals, but also Agri Food, and ensuring projects like the Curraheen Science Park reach their full potential
- A specific IDA approach focused on attracting Industry not only to the specific Cities and Towns, but to the Region, to a linked up Network, and on promoting indigenous startups in the Region
- Identification of specific nodes of Development along and near this network which could benefit from, and add to, this network,
- Potential new towns, or significantly expanded Towns along this network, to facilitate population growth (EG Monard, Cork)

The Need for Strong Local Government

It is my firm view, that even aside from the Regional situation – this plan requires strengthened Local Government. Not only strengthened as regards powers held by National Government vis a vis Local Government, but also as between Cllrs and the executive. We have an imbalanced, and weak form of Local Government.

Even a very strong NPF will struggle to be implemented, unless Local Government has the autonomy and strength to deliver upon elements of this.

In Cork, it is my firm view, that Cork City, in order to develop, grow and thrive, requires Strong Local Government of its own, and that proposals for a merger are the wrong approach. Though measures for improved cooperation is worth considering.

We have engaged with that particular process in full, and I include the Sinn Féin submission to that process as an appendix to this document.

Harnessing connections between Major Southern Cities

The fact that there are three major urban centres in Munster should also be considered and harnessed. A Network, centred on the three major Cities of Munster, but also taking in the key towns in those vicinities, could be a part of allowing Ireland to manage its population growth in a more sustainable way, and allow the state to thrive in to the future. This is not just an issue of Urban Spatial Strategy. It also has enormous potential benefits for Rural Areas, Small towns and Villages near this network. Key towns Could be identified (Eg Charleville, Mallow, Adare, Dungarvan) as nodes along this network, easily accesible from the Network, and being part of the strategy for population growth

How could this be achieved.

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Language Planning

The NPF should have regard to the fact that geographic based planning, in relation to the Irish Language, is also taking place under the 2012 Gaeltacht act, with three different categorisations of planning areas (Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta, Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta, Líonraí Gaeilge). These are within and without the traditional Gaeltachtaí. It would be perverse for a national Planning Framework not to include and have regard to these processes, and indeed, to build on them for future language planning, particularly in urban areas.



Cork Sinn Féin submission to Cork Local Government Review

Summary

- An enhanced system of a Regional Authority with a dual Metropolitan and County Council for Cork.
- Two Separate, and economically viable Local Authorities, with two separate elected bodies, and two separate executives
- An expanded metropolitan Cork, focused on the development of a vibrant, modern City region
- Retention of a separate and strong County Council, with a strong focus on rural development and industry in the County towns
- Retention of the office and role of the Ardmhéara of Cork

- A Permanent means of equalisation between the two Councils, in order to ensure that Cork County Council remains financially viable, and in a position to deliver an appropriate level of service
- Directly Elected Mayor, with Executive Powers
- A plebiscite – a referendum to be put to the people of Cork, City and County, on the various options, with the Minister selecting the most preferred option.
- A Cork Strategic Authority above the two Councils, with responsibility for Regional Strategic Planning, Economic Development, Environment, and for developing joint City and County Strategies.
- Sinn Féin advocates democratising Local Government by removing power from City & County Managers and giving it to elected representatives. This will require legislation and we
- are pressing the Minister to introduce this legislation as soon as possible.

"It is very unfortunate that, even allowing for an extension of a week, that the consultation period has been so short. This is a matter of great complexity, involving numerous actors, with potentially enormous and far reaching implications for the people of Cork. It is also a debate which has been going on for many years now. In such a timeframe it has been difficult for all stakeholders to develop a comprehensive submission with full detail. As a party we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with the committee Further with a view to developing upon the points made therein.

In addition, and quite aside from the challenges facing civil society bodies, political parties local authorities and lobby groups in developing submissions, it is also unfair in the public. At this point in time the public is only beginning to get engaged with the debate, but the consultation period will have been done as the debate expands. There is a need for the committee to consider extending the consultation period further, not only foray missions, but the committee should also get out in to communities and engage, in all parts of the city and county to hear the publics its, their visions, their concerns, their hopes. Town hall meetings and consultations days should be organised, this is a matter which could shape the future of Cork for the next half century, but at the very least the submission period should be extended"

A Blueprint for Cork's future.

Sinn Féin believes that there is a need for significant and far reaching reforms in Local Government in Cork. We propose one Regional Authority with a dual Metropolitan and County Council as the optimum solution.

The reforms proposed in this document, will radically reshape local authorities and

go some way towards creating a real republican system of government that citizens can have faith in.

A core element of Republicanism is maximising democratic rights.

The approach of the current and previous Governments has been all about minimising democratic rights by hollowing out local Government and handing powers to unelected officials or to central government.

Sinn Féin has a radically different view. We favour promoting meaningful local democracy and full accountability in public service provision. Instead we believe a sustainable funding model needs to be put in place to fund local authorities and local services.

The establishment of this Committee this year marks a considerable challenge, both for the members of the Committee, but also for the stakeholders, including the people of Cork, Industrial Educational and Business Bodies, Labour, and Local Government. However, while there are undoubtedly challenges, there are also opportunities. We believe that this has the potential to mark a new departure for Cork as a region, as a City and County, and in terms of Local Government Structure.

Cork is a unique County, in terms of the sheer scale of the County and population spread, but also in its diversity, from seaside towns and fishing villages such as Youghal and Castletownbere, to Market towns such as Mitchelstown near the Golden Vale, to the City and its outlying commuter towns. It requires a solution which is tailored to Cork's unique circumstances.

The terms of reference offers the following question;

“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

or

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

In the first instance, we believe that as wide a possible a reading should be given to the last sentence. We should not seek to tinker at the edges, and find solutions which are merely temporary in nature or which fail to address the major challenges facing Local Government in Cork. We call on the Committee to be creative, imaginative, and ambitious. We believe that our proposals represent such an approach.

The first option regards an expansion of the City boundaries. The case for this, frankly, is unanswerable. Recently Cork City Council launched a report on the Socio Economic profile of the City, within its current boundaries.

This report was a very interesting document, highlighting and reflecting much of what we know anecdotally that there are sharp contrasts and divisions within the City, and considerable pockets of disadvantage. It also underlined many of the serious economic, social and healthcare considerations facing Cork as a community.

However, the conclusions of the report are hampered by the unrealistic nature of the City Boundaries. This is not a criticism of those who compiled an excellent and interesting document, their remit was restricted to the City Council area, however, it did mean that we do not get the full picture.

The population is said to be 119,230, down marginally (0.16%) on the previous census, despite significant growth of 8.2% nationally in the same period. In 1979 the population was 138,267. Outwardly, and to those unfamiliar with Cork, reading about this report, perhaps including potential investors, this evokes an image of a struggling City, in long term decline.

I believe this is unfortunate, and unhelpful, given the reality is quite different. Cork is a vibrant, thriving growing City, with a growing population, much of it contained within the 10% growth reported for Cork County.

What has happened is that young families, like in any city, are buying Houses in the newer suburbs on the edge of the City, in Grange, Rochestown, Douglas, and Lehenaghmore. If you suggested to people in these neighbourhoods that they were not living in the City, they would be rather surprised.

The reality is that the population of the City, properly so called, is probably far closer to 200,000. This is important, because the image Cork projects externally is a factor in any major decision affecting investment, and infrastructure in Cork.

The population would increase further still if Commuter Towns within touching distance of the City such as Glanmire, Ballincollig and Carrigaline, which would likely bring the population above a quarter of a Million.

We cannot base our policies, and envision a future for Cork City, based on boundaries from 1965, from a time when Togher was a Rural area beyond the Lough, and Rochestown was a village on the road to Passage.

Sinn Féin supports the extension of the Cork City Boundaries and the establishment of a broad Metropolitan area Council with strong regard to the importance of the Harbour to Cork's economic development in the future. It would be short termist, and short sighted to expand the boundaries merely to reflect the expansion of the City's fringes.

It would ultimately hamper proper strategic development of the Metropolitan area, as a modern European City, whether in terms of industrial development, housing and population strategies, or transport planning, and planning properly for the commuter towns which are closely linked to the City.

At the outer fringes of the CASP area, consultation with Local residents is vital to ascertain the wishes of those communities. This is essential, and should not be considered a luxury. Ultimately due to the short time frame of approximately a month for submissions, it has not been possible for any body, much less a political party, to engage in full blooded consultation with numerous communities of significant population.

However, we urge the Committee to participate in that, and to use the resources of the Local Authorities to do so. This is a decision which will have enormous implications for the towns and districts affected, for generations. Such decisions should be made on the back of good knowledge of Local Community feeling. Discussion with communities is key, and lines should not be drawn on maps blindly.

In addition, there are areas within the CASP area that are essentially rural in nature, beyond the Commuter towns, and it is likely debatable whether they would be better served within or without the Metropolitan Boundary.

The second option appears to concern a merger.

The bottom line is that Cork is too large for a single Local Authority. There is a population of 518,128, and in the context of Irish Local Government, that would make it not only the largest, but might also find itself the most populous before very long.

As is, Cork County Council finds it difficult to administer the many diverse areas which it has responsibility for, from Castletownbere to Youghal, with large towns and rural areas in between, but also the commuter belt, and parts of what could, in effect, be considered Cork City. This administratively is a difficult task.

To give one Local Authority responsibility for not only this, but also for the administration of the State's second largest City would not only be problematic from an administrative and Governance point of view, but would make have serious implications for democratic structures.

Against a Crude Merger

To give an example, Cork County Council recently received an excellent report on the potential for Cork to become an international Dairy Hub, an exciting and potentially lucrative prospect for Cork. The report focused on what challenges a number of actors, including Cork County Council, would have to deal with if this was to be achieved, in terms of services, roads, and so on, I believe it is debatable whether a single Local Authority could bring the level of focus a massive challenge such as this requires.

We would also be concerned as regards democratic representation, and provision of service. As it is, a County Councillor can bring the Council's attention to issues of concern to small rural communities, such as, for example, Goleen, or Dromhane, and will get a good hearing as all, or at least most, Cllrs represent districts which contain such communities. In the event of a single local authority, potentially dominated by a Metropolitan area, we cannot be sure that the same interest shall be shown in such issues.

In addition, we have a very serious concern that a merger will lead to a diminution of services, that a merger would be a cover for spending less, and ultimately peripheral areas in particular having to function with less staffing and poorer services. That would be utterly unacceptable, and would represent a further attack on Rural Ireland, and put these communities under further pressure.

However, not only do we believe that a merger would be bad for the County areas, we also believe that a merger would also be detrimental to the City.

As stated above, the priorities will necessarily be different, particularly in terms of the specific challenges facing Cork in terms of Housing, Services, planning for Urban areas, and retail, including delivering a strong healthy, vibrant City Centre, matched with well laid out, and well serviced commuter towns and suburbs. This is no easy task, and focus on this could, potentially, be lost in a larger merged authority.

Finally, we would also challenge the view which appears to be prevailing in a number of areas, that a merger would result in 'Economies of Scale' of savings, and reduced costs. We do not necessarily agree that this would be the case. The philosophy of 'Bigger is Better' is simplistic, and it is Sinn Féin's position that Local Government should work in as much as possible on the basis of decisions being made at the most local level possible.

According to UK's leading experts on local government, Peter John and Colin Copus, 2 British academics on Local Government "common folklore in local government is that big is better and more efficient, a conclusion not borne out by research". This was based on evidence for more than 400 Local Government cases over 40 years. There is potential for savings as regards shared services and collaborative practices, but this can be, and has been done, between separate Local Authorities. However, a blunt merger, we believe would simply mean local Government operating further away from communities, and very likely reduced services under the cloak of 'savings and efficiencies.'

Furthermore, it would likely be a harmful trend in terms of Local Democracy. It is clear that a merger of the two Councils would be a further example of the damaging trend of centralisation of Local Government Structures which has been the hallmark of changes in Local Government in recent years. Sinn Féin opposed the abolition of Town Councils, as it brought Local Government further away from local communities. Similarly we opposed the merger of Limerick City and County Councils, Waterford City and County Councils, and South Tipperary and North Tipperary County Councils, as we were of the view that it was a cover for reductions in services, and cutbacks, and also brought local Government structures away from the people, centralising power.

Here in Cork, we saw a reduction from 14 Local Authorities to merely two. The Municipal District structures which have been brought in have not worked, and consequently has led to a very significant loss of representation for many local communities, particularly in peripheral areas in West Cork and North Cork. The areas are simply too large to cover. Sinn Féin support strong City, County and Municipal District Councils, but they need more substantial devolved powers, need to be democratically accountable and be in a position deliver local services in an efficient cost effective way.

Sinn Féin agreed that the Town Council structure was in need of reform. The structures of Town Councils had been made unsustainable by the actions of consecutive governments. They had few powers and functions.

Currently 86% of the state territory has no sub county tier of local government. We support the creation of Municipal District councils which incorporate the relevant hinterland and replace the old Area Committees.

Sinn Fein advocates the maximum possible decision making power being decentralised to the Municipal District Council level.

Municipal District Councils should also be given powers to hold referenda on issues of serious importance to local citizens.

We believe that the Government should consider how Local Government at the grassroots level can be reintroduced, however, in the interim, we firmly are of the

view that it is not acceptable to continue to reduce representation and centralise, and it is our view that a single Local Authority for the whole of County Cork would continue in that trend, of taking Local Government Further away from Local Communities.

Two Local Authorities

It is our firm view that Cork requires two Local Authorities. The needs of Cork County, and Cork City and the broader metropolitan areas, are too different to be well served by a single Local Authority.

While financial implications for City and County have to be taken in to account, it is Sinn Féin's view that when formulating proposals for the future of our Local Government Structures, that we should start from the position of what we believe would be the best structures for Local Government in Cork.

Cork needs two Local Authorities, with two separate executives, and two separate elected bodies, in order to be in a position to provide services to a satisfactory standard, and to focus on the differing priorities of City, and County.

We believe that we need a separate County Council based on core rural areas, the large County towns and market towns, with a strong focus on Agriculture/Agri-food, Fisheries, rural development and Tourism. It goes without saying that the focus and priorities of the County will be different to that of metropolitan Cork.

We believe that there is a need for a separate, strong Metropolitan Council, with considerable focus on Industry, Investment, Urban services, transport for commuting, and a strong strategy for support of commuter belt. This will also need a joined up strategy for retail and commerce, and ensuring that there is a balance between adequate provision for industry and retail on the fringes of Cork City, and on the other hand protecting and reinvigorating the City Centre, which is a priority for all parties – our City Centre is a valuable, and prized possession. A strong focused Metropolitan Council is the best vehicle to deliver this.

A Strategic Authority for Cork

Irish Local Government is unusual for it's very flat nature, there is but one tier. While Sinn Féin would be of the view that there is a need for further development at the bottom tier, we also note that there is very little by way of Regional Governance in the state.

This can mean that, regionally, there is limited focus on strategic planning by any of the key actors. This is vitally important, because there are aspects of our local economy, transport infrastructure, employment, and land use & population growth which are of concern and interest to us all. For example, the future of Cork Airport matters to us all, and we will all benefit from the Port of Cork reaching its full potential, and the Cork-Limerick Motorway will have implications for the City and for North Cork.

Therefore, we believe there is a need for a strategic County-wide, regional approach to strategic planning, and development.

Sinn Féin proposes a County Wide, 'Cork Strategic Authority', above the two County and City Councils.

This would be given executive responsibility for areas such as

- Regional Strategic Planning
- Spatial planning,
- Environmental protection
- Co-ordination of cross county local services.
- Infrastructural Planning
- Economic Development
- Tourism

Core functions such as Housing, Roads/Transport, Planning more generally, Urban development and Retail Strategy, Recreation, Arts, Social Inclusion and Community Support, would remain as functions of the two Local Authorities

Such an authority would be made up of representatives of the City, and County Councillors, (25 from each, nominated by Parties/Groups on the basis of the D'Hondt method, ensuring it is not dominated by either City or County) and both CEOs, and meet 6-8 times a year. Areas of cooperation between Councils on other functions, collaborative practices and shared services could also be discussed at this level. This essentially is about the creation of a system of local government to develop closer policy and working practices with both local authorities.

A Cork Strategic Authority would be a new start for Local Government in Cork, it would ensure two Local Authorities not in competition with each other, but entering in to a new area of cooperation, ensuring minimising of duplication, while retaining distinct identities, while ensuring two financially sustainable entities. The benefits of a merger, without the loss of identity, or reduction in Democratic Representation, loss of focus, and reductions in services we fear a merger would mean.

Furthermore, we believe that it would set an example which could be followed in other Parts of the Country, and would be a potential solution to many challenges facing other Local Authorities.

Economic Development:

The Regional Authority to take the lead with both Metropolitan and County Council take responsibility to delivery in local economic development and job creation

including co-ordinating the work of IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Údarás and the new Local Enterprise Offices and other economic development bodies.

Sinn Féin is supportive of a review of commercial rates across the State which is currently underway.

This should be a cost-neutral reallocation exercise. We believe businesses should pay rates for the services provided by the state but that rates should be reflective of the size and scale of a business and should be affordable – not designed to plug the gap in Government

funding for local authorities. This would be an enormous exercise that would require the co-operation of all the local authorities. It would be carried out under the aegis of the Department of the Environment.

Economic development plans must target areas of high unemployment. We believe there should be the flexibility to discount rates to particular sectors or for businesses employing long term unemployed in an effort to stimulate the economy.

Local businesses are the back bone of local growth. However many are penalised by an unfair rates system that favour the bigger multinationals. To assist in the economic development of local businesses Sinn Féin would support the introduce progressive rates. Progressive rates will take into account profit and turnover of larger companies. We will also introduce other measure to stimulate the local economy such as the setting aside of a component of rates against an investment to enhance premises and in particular shop frontage. This would take the form of matching funding where business could claim

25% of costs of investment against rates.

We would ensure that rates are not passed onto start-up businesses that have been accumulated during periods of a premises being vacant.

Sinn Féin would also give small business a break by legislating to end the practise of ‘upwardly only rent reviews’.

Financially Viable Councils

While we have endeavoured to discuss the best Local Government Structures which could exist in Cork , and to use this as our starting point regardless of financial implications, it is important that this is considered at some level. Clearly an expansion of the City will have considerable implication for the County given some 60% of rates generated in the County Council areas are from areas near the City.

This needs to be faced and resolved if the City is to expand. Suggestions of compensation measures for the County are insulting, and in any event, likely temporary. This will not do, particularly given that the balance of population is likely to swing further in favour of the Metropolitan area in coming years in any event, likely seeing further loss of revenue and services to the County Areas.

There is a need for Local Equalisation, on a permanent footing. Sinn Féin is proposing that the rates generated in the former County areas, which might be taken in to the Metropolitan area, would be redistributed on the basis of an equalisation formula, which would taken in to account population, but also the cost of delivering services to the same standard, in different parts of the County, and divided then between City and County Councils. The purpose is to put both municipalities and county councils on an equal footing for the conduct of their activities. The redistribution of resources through the equalisation system makes it possible to establish equal conditions for the provision of services.

This might resemble the Barnett Formula or perhaps the Estonian Local Government Cost Equalisation model. Cost equalisation equalises for costs that the local authority cannot itself influence. Measurable and objective factors are used to calculate a structural measure of the differences in conditions and needs. However, considerable research should be undertaken to evaluate the best form of calculation.

Responsibility for the administration of this formula would rest with the Strategic Authority, who would review it periodically.

This would allow both Councils to set their own Rate of Valuation, taking in to account the differing needs and commercial realities in both authorities, while also ensuring that the County Council remains not only viable but well funded and prosperous, on a permanent basis. We are opposed to temporary compensation measures, which will inevitably be rolled back upon over time, and in any event indicate a superiority of one Local Authority over another. We are opposed to any such hierarchy, and funding solutions will have to be permanent.

Directly Elected Mayor

The Irish system of Local Government is unusual for having no direct elections to executive offices. We believe this is an opportunity to reexamine this matter.

The Government has indicated its desire to consider a directly elected Mayor for County Dublin, taking in the four Local Authorities, with a view to considering other areas, before the issue was halted, for the time being by Fingal County Council. We believe that the scale of Cork County, and it's diverse nature, means that Cork would be an ideal candidate for reexamining this matter, and this committee has the ideal opportunity to consider it. This would not be intended to replace the ceremonial, and highly prestigious and historic roles of the Ardmhéara and County Mayor which would be retained and in the event of Civic functions, the role of the Ardmhéara and the County Mayor should be treated as equal in status.

The powers that such a Mayor would have would not be powers taken from Local Councillors at City or County Level, who in any event have too few powers, but from the Executive of Councils, and from Statutory Executive Bodies. These executive powers should be considered further, but might include Public transport Management, major roads projects, Waste Management and Tourism, with these powers being moved from the NRA, NTA, and Council Managements respectively. This Mayor would not only be directly accountable to the people, at elections approximately every five years, but would also be accountable to the Strategic Authority, made up of the Councillors as outlined above. This Mayor could also be said to be speaking for the people of Cork, and would have a strategic role, in developing strategic policy in partnership with the Strategic Authority. This Mayor would also, with the Strategic Authority, be responsible for the appointment of CEOs, Divisional Managers, and Directors of Services.

Plebiscite

The public deserves the opportunity to discuss these matters in detail, and to cast judgement upon them. Sinn Féin believes that such a fundamental change to Local Government requires a mandate. We believe that the Committee should put this question to the public, in the manner of a referendum, offering a choice, likely between the status quo, a merger, and variations (different maps) on a two local authority solution. No more than four options should be on a ballot paper to avoid confusion, however it is crucial that the Public be given the opportunity to have their say on this matter.

A vision for Cork

Cork people are rightly proud of their county, and want the best for it. The fate of Cork City & its metropolitan area, and of Cork County, are inextricably tied together. Both must function well for either to prosper. There is clearly a need for an overall County-wide view to be taken as regards strategic planning for the region. It is for that reason we have proposed a Cork Strategic Authority, which we believe can herald a new era for Local Government in Cork, and set out a strategic vision for the future of Cork, City and County. However, we fear a merger will lead not only to Local Democracy moving further away from the Public, and a reduction in Local Representation, but will also mean a reduction in Local Services, and a centralisation of power.

Cork is a unique and vibrant County, close to the hearts of Cork people at home and abroad, but it is also a diverse County, with different communities having diverse needs. Such a County, and its City needs two different Local Authorities, tending to

the differing needs of the various Communities, operating not in conflict, but in cooperation, moving forward together, in unison, and under the same strategic vision for Cork, from the Strategic Authority and from the Mayor. This is, we are certain the optimum solution for Local Government Structures in Cork, for industry and employment in Cork, for services in Cork, for representation in Cork, but most importantly, for the people of Cork.