



**NOAC**  
Good Practice in Local Government  
Tuesday 9th November 2021 | Kilkenny Castle



*“Improving efficiency in the delivery of services to the citizen, the regeneration of urban and rural areas, and implementing measures tackling the increasing demands of the climate action and carbon agenda”*

## Foreword

Local authorities in Ireland continuously strive to deliver excellent services to citizens. The local government sector’s ability to adapt to the evolving needs of citizens and policy priorities of national and local government, reflects the agility and commitment of the elected members and staff of City and County Councils throughout Ireland.

This Good Practice Seminar is organised by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), in partnership with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and is an opportunity for local authorities to showcase examples of solutions-oriented approaches to providing better public services.

The case studies that will be presented today illustrate the sector’s commitment to improving efficiency in the delivery of services to the citizen, regeneration of urban and rural areas, and measures tackling the increasing demands of the climate action and carbon agenda. The objective of the seminar is to provide local authorities with an opportunity to learn from each other and build on innovative approaches to service delivery. The case studies that are being presented here today are a sample of the many equally impressive and important methods being adopted by local authorities to achieve their objectives. It is the intention of NOAC, the LGMA and the CCMA to continue to showcase good practice to build on successful initiatives and ensure that the local government sector is recognised as the most innovative public service in Ireland.

Michael McCarthy  
Chair NOAC

Brendan McGrath  
Chair CCMA

## Meet the Speakers



**Cllr Fidelis Doherty**  
**Cathaoirleach, Kilkenny County Council**

In June, 2021, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty was elected Cathaoirleach, or First Citizen, of Kilkenny County Council. It is just the sixth time a woman has worn the chain of office in Kilkenny, in over 120 years. Cllr. Doherty, when first elected to Kilkenny County Council in 2009, followed in her grandfather's footsteps. Fidelis represents the Piltown Municipal District and lives in Glenmore with her husband and their three children. Fidelis's greatest motivation is the love she has for her work. The many years she has worked as a Councillor has taught her a lot, but the greatest piece of advice she would give to anyone entering political life would be to learn how to actively listen to others, and to understand another person's point of view.



**Minister Peter Burke, TD**  
**Minister of State for Planning and Local Government**

Peter Burke was appointed Minister of State for Planning and Local Government in July 2020. He hails from Mullingar and was elected to the Dáil in 2016, having been involved in electoral politics since 2009 when he was first elected to Westmeath County Council.

He is a Chartered Accountant by profession with ten years' private sector experience. Before being appointed to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Peter sat on the Oireachtas Finance and Public Accounts Committees and has been a frequent media commentator on tax and financial issues. He went to school in CBS Mullingar before attending NUI Galway to study Commerce.



**Michael McCarthy**  
**Chair NOAC**

Michael is the Director of Cloud Infrastructure Ireland. He was appointed as Chair of the National Oversight and Audit Commission in September 2018. He was an elected TD for the Cork South-West constituency from 2011 to 2016. He is a former member of the Dáil Public Accounts Committee. He was elected to Seanad Éireann, for the period 2002-2011. Michael was an elected member of Cork County Council from 1999 to 2003.



**Brendan McGrath**  
**Chief Executive Galway City & Chair CCMA**

Brendan McGrath is a native of Clonmel in Co Tipperary, who has been Chief Executive of Galway City Council since June 2013 to date. Prior to his current posting Brendan was a Director of Service in Meath County Council over a period of 12 years in the areas of Community & Enterprise, Economic Development, Housing, Transport, Water Services, Planning, Environment, Climate Action and Recreation, Amenity & Leisure. In 2012, he was temporary County Manager in Meath for 12 months, immediately prior to assuming his position in Galway.

Throughout his 45 year local authority career, Brendan has also worked in a myriad of positions and roles in various local authorities, including Meath (3 occasions), Wexford, Roscommon, Galway County and Kildare.

Brendan holds an M.A. Degree from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. His other interests include all sports, reading, music and cinema. He is married to Rose for 38 years, has 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

# Programme

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### Introduction

<b>Hosts:</b>	Noeleen McHugh, LGMA Claire Gavin, NOAC
<b>10:00</b>	<b>Welcome</b> Cllr Fidelis Doherty, Cathaoirleach Kilkenny County Council
<b>10:05</b>	Peter Burke TD Minister of State for Planning and Local Government
<b>10:10</b>	Michael McCarthy, Chair National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

### Session One

<b>Chair:</b>	Philomena Poole, NOAC Board member
<b>10:15</b>	<b>Weather Impact Register App (WIRE)</b> David Mellett, Mayo County Council
<b>10:30</b>	<b>URDF: A Journey Through Collaboration</b> Brian Barrett, Galway City Council
<b>10:45</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Goals at Local Level</b> Dara McGowan, Meath County Council
<b>11.00</b>	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>
<b>11.15</b>	<b>Comfort Break</b>

### Session Two

<b>Chair:</b>	Colette Byrne, Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council
<b>11.30</b>	<b>Virtual Development Plan</b> Louise McGauran Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
<b>11.45</b>	<b>Rural Working Hubs</b> Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive Longford County Council
<b>12.00</b>	<b>Streetscape Development</b> John Hayes, Cork City Council
<b>12.15</b>	<b>COVID Chatbot</b> Dominic Byrne, Fingal County Council
<b>12.30</b>	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>
<b>12.50</b>	<b>Closing Address</b> Brendan McGrath, Chair County and City Management Association (CCMA)



## CASE STUDY 1

# Mayo County Council - Weather Impact Register App (WIRE)

**David Mellett**

Regional Coordinator CARO

The local authority adaptation strategies identified the need to gather and organise data on the impacts of weather events locally in order to inform climate adaptation planning into the future. The Weather Impact Register, or WIRE App, was developed by CARO and supported by the Public Sector Innovation Fund to help meet this need.

The system provides a GIS based tool to local authorities to help record and review the impacts of weather events and climate trends in their areas.

An App was developed to assist in gathering weather impact information and targeted at those local authority staff that will be on the ground responding to these events as part of the emergency response teams.

The dataset generated can be examined on an associated mapviewer that provides a spatial distribution of these impacts to assist in identifying areas of increasing climate risk and support evidence-based decision making and investment.

## CASE STUDY 2

# Galway City Council - URDF: A Journey through Collaboration

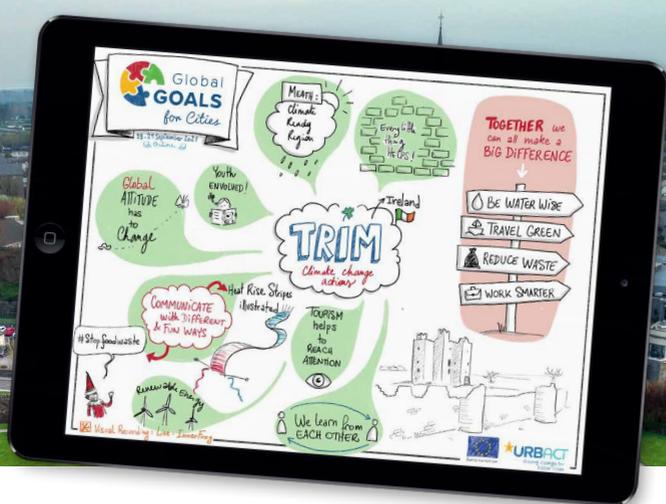
**Brian Barrett**

Director of Services

In January 2020, a second call for proposals under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) was opened. In response, Galway City Council engaged in a consultative dialogue with potential project partners in the City, including NUIG, GMIT, Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, ESB, IDA, Galway Port Company and community organisations amongst others.

From this process a number of key connected and interlinked project proposals were developed by the City Council and its partners which resulted in the City securing a successful funding allocation of €53 million under the URDF programme.

This presentation outlines how through extensive collaboration, independent projects from various stakeholders were refined and woven together by Galway City Council to form a cohesive proposal for investment in compact growth in the City of Galway that will unlock and support a further €4 billion of public and private investment. This initiative will fast track the integrated sustainable growth of the City core.



### CASE STUDY 3

## Meath County Council - Sustainable Development Goals at Local Level

**Dara McGowan**  
Director of Services

Meath County Council started on the Sustainable Development Goals (the Goals) journey on the fifth anniversary of the Goals on the 25th September 2020. This involved an awareness programme, linking the Goals to services, initiatives and projects undertaken by the Council and publicising this on social media.

In December 2020, the Council were invited to make an application to join an URBACT project to localise the Goals, funded by the EU. The Council nominated Trim to work with 18 other locations across Europe in this pilot project. The project involves working with an URBACT Local Group (ULG) consisting of active citizens from Trim who are involved in volunteerism and community work, to feed local information and ideas into the project. The ultimate goal is to achieve an Integrated Action Plan (IAP). It is anticipated, if the project is successful, it could be replicated in other towns or scaled up to a county level.

### CASE STUDY 4

## Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council - Virtual Development Plan

**Louise McGauran**  
Senior Planner & Development Plan Lead

The Virtual Room was an online consultation set up to allow access to a virtual consultation of the DLR Draft County Development Plan 2022-2028. The initiative provided an opportunity for individuals and groups who could not view the plan in person due to the COVID restrictions, to view the plan in a similar layout to what would be provided in a physical display.

The Virtual Room was conceived out of a desire to engage members of the community and encourage them to get involved in the plan making process. The room was the number one way in which people interacted with the Draft County Development Plan and allowed interaction across the entire County and beyond. The Virtual Room had a total of 4,280 visits, significantly more than a more traditional display would get. A total of 1,258 submissions were received on the Draft Plan, an increase of 70% from the previous Plan.



### CASE STUDY 5

## Longford County Council - Rural Working Hubs

**Paddy Mahon**  
Chief Executive

Remote working is becoming increasingly popular and it creates many positive opportunities for employers, employees and the communities in which they are based.

Longford County Council sees the provision of remote working hubs as a key component in creating sustainable and vibrant rural communities in the County.

Through the help of work completed by the Western Development Commission, Longford County Council has adopted a cross departmental approach to the development of rural working hubs, identifying the Regeneration Department as the primary contact in the development of hubs with the IT Section playing a key collaboration role also through its implementation of the County Digital Strategy. The County Digital Strategy sees Infrastructure and Connectivity as one of four key pillars placing the provision and promotion of Broadband Connection Points at the heart of creating sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

Creating two strategies, implementing them together, Longford has created a platform to rejuvenate its communities.

### CASE STUDY 6

## Cork City Council - Streetscape Development

**John Hayes**  
City Centre Coordinator

Cork City Council made permanent changes to the City Centre and suburbs during COVID-19. Using the existing partnership structures that include transport, Gardaí, elected members and business representative organisations, Cork City Council agreed a suite of initiatives to ensure that the City Centre was adapted to meet the needs of businesses and communities in the centre during the pandemic. This was based on agreed principles such that accommodated risk taking and making mistakes. The City Council also required that interventions would be agreed by all stakeholders on the street.

The Council was criticised for a short period of consultation, but this meant that possible unintended consequences were avoided. As a result 17 streets are permanently pedestrianised, 4.7km cycling routes were permanently installed and the City Centre, and suburbs, are more appealing to visit.



