

CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

PROPOSAL TO CORK CITY COUNCIL TO EXTEND THE BOUNDARY OF ITS FUNCTIONAL AREA

4TH AUGUST 2017

Both Cork City Council and Cork County Council have over the past 2 years put forward differing proposals on how local government in Cork should be reorganised. There has been a significant level of analysis and debate which is clearly understandable when a matter of such significance is before both Councils, particularly as the outcome has impacts on the communities we both serve and the future arrangements for the delivery of growth of all of Cork.

Following the publication of the “Smiddy Report” and the “Mackinnon Report” the establishment of by the Minister of Housing, Planning and Local Government of an Implementation Oversight Group (IOG) to oversee further development of local government arrangements for Cork is a clear message to both authorities of Governments intent to bring the matter to a conclusion.

In this regard, the Implementation Oversight Group has been specifically charged with overseeing:

- (a) The development of detailed and comprehensive proposals for the boundary alteration and,
- (b) Their implementation by Cork City Council and Cork County Council

The Implementation Oversight Group has now commenced its work. The Group has however indicated that it is not in a position to accept any alternative proposal that would be regarded as running contrary to the proposed broad boundary adjustment as set out in the “Mackinnon Report”. The Group does however accept that it is a matter for either Council to develop any alternative proposal and progress same for consideration as part of the process, as it sees fit, so as to try to reach agreement between both Councils.

In this regard, Cork County Council has decided by way of formal resolution of Council to develop a proposal to put to the City Council for consideration in an attempt to progress agreement between both authorities on the matter.

This approach to attempting to bring a finalisation of the matter of the boundary reflects the commentary of the previous Minister, Mr. Simon Coveney TD who when launching the “Mackinnon Report”, advised that it would be preferable if both authorities were to agree a way forward. Likewise, the “MacKinnon Report” in paragraph 13.2.27 states as follows:

“In the first instance, the two local authorities should endeavour to negotiate the terms of the boundary change between them and seek to reach a fair and equitable settlement by mutual agreement as far as possible. In the event that the two local authorities cannot reach agreement on certain matters, the Implementation Oversight Body could act as an independent arbitrator and mediate between the two local authorities, or propose terms on these issues to the Minister”

Indeed, Mr, McKinnon effectively confirmed this approach when he attended before a meeting of Cork County Council on 19th July 2017.

PROPOSAL OF CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Background and Context

In the context of the above, Cork County Council has considered its position and is now submitting this proposal for an alteration of the boundaries of the City and County Council for the consideration and agreement of Cork City Council.

There is a strong tradition of integrated strategic economic, land use and transport planning in Cork – LUTS, CASP, CASP Update, the Joint Housing Strategy and Joint Retail Strategy as well as most recently in the form of Cork 2050, a Joint Submission to the National Planning Framework by both Councils.

This approach to the development of growth in Cork has served Cork well and has been recognised as a model for strategic development planning for regions in Ireland. It is fair to say however, and it is recognised by many stakeholders, and indeed by both Cork County Council and Cork City Council that the Cork region has not been enabled to fulfil its true potential.

Both Councils have performed admirably in creating the conditions for growth which now make Cork, in particular Metropolitan Cork, one of the best performing regions of comparable scale in Europe. This is evidenced by indicators which monitor the performance of such regions which are published regularly. In order to enable Cork to deliver on its significant potential to the growth of the Irish economy, there is a need however for a refocusing of national agencies resources and government supported actions on the Cork region.

In this regard, while the National Planning Framework is expected to provide for significant accelerated growth for Cork, the opportunity that will present will not be maximised through a mere altering of the boundaries of the City and County of Cork. Maximising the future growth potential of Cork, particularly from the Metropolitan Cork area, as defined in the joint long term planning strategies and the NPF joint submission, will only arise if there is ongoing commitment to this joint approach. This joint approach has leveraged significant infrastructural funding for Cork and will ensure that both Councils can maximise the opportunity that will arise from the NPF and the Governments Capital Investment Programme.

Cork County Council believes that joint working for all of Cork can and should be enhanced significantly, and put on a statutory basis, so that strategic and economic development planning, infrastructural development planning and its delivery can and should be performed by both authorities working in a collaborative manner and on a more formal and structured basis.

While the current immediate matter to be determined is the respective boundaries of both Councils, the matter of future structures to work and deliver jointly as one for Cork is a matter that Cork County Council will want to address further with the City Council. In particular, as part of a proposal now being put to the City Council for an alteration of significance to its boundary, the matter of future strategic planning for all of Cork, how a successor to the CASP should be progressed including its scope, the development and scope of a new Metropolitan Area Plan for Cork as mentioned in the “Mackinnon Report”, are all matters that Cork Council believes should be agreed between both Councils so that we bring our joint knowledge, expertise and influence to bear on what is the optimum outcome for all of the Cork region.

Proposal Outline

The attached map sets out the proposed alteration of the boundary between both Councils for consideration and agreement.

The following sets out some key matters which underpin this significant increase in the functional area of Cork City Council.

Geographical Area of City Council.

1. The natural extension of the administrative area of Cork City Council into the Cork County Council administrative area would include the established communities of the North and South Environs of the City.
2. The extension also provides for the inclusion of a suite of designated Strategic Land Reserve sites which have now been provided for in the planning strategy of Council in its recently adopted Local Area Plans.
3. This approach will ensure Cork City Council retains an urban-focussed growth strategy centred on brownfield and infill site regeneration while also providing for an additional 1,060 hectares of greenfield development opportunities which have been identified as those been most appropriate and capable to provide for further city growth. This area includes sites contiguous to the North and South environs and the planned Ballyvolane Urban Expansion Area.
4. It represents an 84.5% increase in the area of the existing Cork City Council. Significantly the areas to be transferred will have the benefit of recently adopted Local Area Plans that provide the policy framework to deliver population and economic growth.
5. The Extended Cork City will measure 69.76 sq. Km., comparing favourably, as the second city in the state, to Dublin City Councils Administrative Area which measures 115sqkm.

Population and future growth potential.

6. The Extended Cork City as indicated on the attached map will provide for an immediate transfer of an additional 39,258 persons bring the immediate population to 164,915, a 31.2% increase.
7. Significantly, Cork County Council adopted Local Area Plans on 24th July 2017 that will provide the plan-led framework for the delivery of a further increase in population of 43,700 in the contiguous Greenfield areas that it proposes to transfer to the City Council.
8. The Joint submission of City and County to the National Planning Framework proposes growth of an additional 54,000 population within the existing city boundary. However, the outcome of the National Planning Framework, is expected to provide for between 50% - 60% increase in population growth in our principle Cities, thus providing for a targeted increase in population in the existing City Council area of up to 75,000.

9. Overall, the extended city will have the capacity to grow to between 262,615 to 283,615 population as a high density urban city. Importantly, through the NPF it will be supported by Government to achieve this growth level.
10. Arising from the proposed extension, the density of population per sq.km would increase from 3,323 per sq. Km. to 4,065 per sq. Km. While this would still be below the current Dublin City population density of 4,822 per sq. Km., it would be representing a form of urban growth density that reflects the expected aim of the NPF and that of comparator international cities.

Economic Growth

11. Adopting the rule of thumb used by the National Transport Agency (50% jobs per population growth) the Extended Cork City could be expected to deliver at least 50,000 additional employment opportunities within its new boundary.
12. This is evidenced by the City Councils own plans already providing for net jobs growth of approximately 29,000 workers in the North Docks, South Docks and Tivoli. In addition, through government supported investment in increased urbanisation and regeneration of other parts of the city and, the growth that will occur in the extended area now proposed, the expected growth would bring the working population in the city to nearly 130,000 persons from its current level of 78,000.
13. Given the established corridor based employment market is centred on designated Strategic Employment Areas in the County Metropolitan Area and Cork City, it would be anticipated the extended City would deliver more than the 50% jobs per population growth as investment in transport links would facilitate sustainable commuting from satellite towns like Ballinacollig, Carrigaline, Monard, Blarney, Carrigtuohil, Midleton, Cobh as well as the Ring towns of Fermoy, Mallow, Bandon, Youghal and Kinsale.

Commercial rates and Local Property Tax Income

14. The area that the Council is willing to cede to the City Council currently commands a Commercial rates income of approximately €13m per annum and a Local Property Tax income annually of €3m.
15. Based on the projected population growth in the newly extended city from 164,915 to the potential population of 283,615, the additional Local Property Tax income over time is projected at €10.6m per annum at current rates of tax.
16. The additional commercial rates income that is capable of being generated over time from the additional working population base in the city is conservatively projected at €49m per annum at current rate levels.
17. Overall, the growth capacity in the extended city has the potential to ultimately deliver nearly an additional €60m per annum at today's tax rates to the City Council, thus ensuring that the City Council has major capacity to support the growth of service delivery and development of the city.

18. It might be noted that the aforementioned additional annual income projections do not take account of income that would be derived from development contributions from the extensive level of newly constructed residential and office, retail, hotel and other development types in the city.
19. The additional commercial rates, LPT payments and development contributions generated in the extended Cork City would contribute substantially to the cost of investment to deliver the necessary infrastructure required to unlock the Docklands and other areas, drive growth, fund necessary public realm improvements and community facilities.

Concluding Remarks

This proposal deals solely with the substantive issue of the proposed extension of the Cork City Council.

As outlined, Cork County Council is of the view that if accepted by the City Council that it would ensure that Cork would continue to have a governance structure that is solely focused on the significant opportunity that exists to grow Cork City as a city that can develop into a modern European city of scale, within Metropolitan Cork, that is characterised by the urban form of high quality living and working environments in a high density sustainable city.

While there are many aspects of this substantive proposal that would need to be addressed further such as the financial, administrative and service delivery arrangements necessary to conclude an extension of the City Council boundary, Cork County Council is of the view that this proposal reflects an equitable and reasonable proposal that requires serious consideration.

Should the council wish to seek any clarification or elaboration on this proposal, the Mayor and Chief Executive of Cork County Council have been charged by Council with facilitating same and are happy to meet at the convenience of the City Council.

Cork County Council asks that that Cork City Council would give this proposal serious consideration and express a willingness to reach agreement on same at an early date. Early agreement would facilitate joint working on moving the matter forward to implementation.

The Council looks forward to hearing from the City Council in this regard.

Signed on behalf of Cork County Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Declan Hurley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'D' and 'H'.

Mayor of the County of Cork

4th August 2017.

SUMMARY TABLE OF POPULATION, AREA AND DENSITY PROPOSAL.

Existing Cork City Boundary

Population	125,657
Area	37.8 sq. Km.
Density of Population per sq. Km.	3,323

Extended Cork City Boundary

Population	
Cork City Existing	125,657
Extended area existing population	39,258
Capacity to deliver an additional minimum in Extended City	118,700
Total Population of Extended City (capacity to increase pop by +125%)	283,615
Existing Cork City Area	37.81 sq. Km.
Extended Cork City Area (<u>84.5% increase in area</u>)	31.95 sq. km
Total Area	69.76 sq. Km.
Potential Density of Population in Extended City per sq.km.	4,065