



**PLANNING AND GOVERNING
METROPOLITAN REGIONS AND
CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

ICLRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dates: 24-25 October 2024

Venue: Belfast Harbour



**Faculty of Computing,
Engineering and the
Built Environment**



**Social
Sciences
Institute**



Thursday, 24th October

Study Tours

10.00 - 12noon	Option	Lead
1.	Regenerating Belfast's Waterfront - A Story of Innovation, Placemaking and Growth	Ms. Kerrie Sweeney, Chief Executive, Maritime Belfast / Prof. Diana Fitzsimons, Belfast Harbour Commissioner and Chair, ICLRD Research Forum
2.	Housing - Considering Innovations, Challenges and Solutions in Northern Ireland	Ms. Anita Conway, Director of Development, Radius Housing Association/ Ms. Elma Newberry, Director of Regional Services, NIHE and Member, ICLRD Advisory Board
3.	Planning, Place-Making and Regeneration - The Priorities for Belfast City Council	Mr. Dermot O'Kane, Acting Planning Manager/ Ms. Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development, Belfast City Council

12.00 Light Lunch - **Belfast Harbour**

Thank you to our Study Tours Sponsors:
Maritime Belfast Trust, Belfast Harbour, NIHE, Radius Housing and Belfast City Council.

Programme Day 1

PLANNING AND GOVERNING METROPOLITAN REGIONS AND CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Barnett Room Belfast Harbour, Corporation Square Belfast, BT1 3AL

Thursday, 24th October

11.45 Registration
Light Lunch

12.45 Welcome Address
Ms. Mary MacIntyre, Chair, ICLRD & Mr. Graeme Johnson, Director of Property and Place, Belfast Harbour

Welcome Address: Mr. John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure

13.15 Session 1: The Post-Pandemic City: Building the Sustainable City of the Future
Chair: Mr. Pádraig Maguire, Director of Services - Planning & Strategic Projects, Meath County Council & ICLRD Executive Board

13.25 Keynote Address: "We need to talk about cities." Giving Shape to the Dynamic City of the Future
Ms. Alice Charles, Director for Cities, Planning & Design, Arup & Member of ICLRD Advisory Board



Programme Day 1

PLANNING AND GOVERNING METROPOLITAN REGIONS AND CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Barnett Room Belfast Harbour, Corporation Square Belfast, BT1 3AL

14.00 A Policy Response:

Mr. Alistair Beggs, Chief Planner & Director of Strategic Planning Directorate, Department for Infrastructure

Ms. Claragh Mulhern, Chief Planner - Ireland, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Other City Perspectives:

14.30 Hamburg - Living in a 15-Minute City

Dr. Cormac Walsh, Senior Research Fellow, ICLRD and Lecturer and Researcher at Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany

14.45 Aalborg - The Green, Sustainable City:

Dr. Carsten Jahn Hansen, University of Aalborg

15.00 Cork - The Healthy City

Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald, Cork Healthy City and Chair, Political Vision Group - WHO European Healthy Cities

15.15 Q&A

15.30 Refreshments and Networking

16.00 Session 2: The State of our Cities and Regions - Challenges and Opportunities

Chair: Mr. Tom Reid, Deputy Secretary, Intergovernmental and International Relations, The Executive Office

16.10 Keynote Address: The State of our Cities and Regions - What Next for Metropolitan Planning and Governance?

Mr. Andrew Carter, Chief Executive, Centre for Cities

16.30 Placemaking and Collaborative Urban

Innovation - The Belfast Journey to Date
Mr. Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place and the Economy, Belfast City Council

Other Planning and Governance Perspectives:

16.50 The Role of Planning and Governance in Achieving Social Equity in the Metropolitan Region

Prof. Kathryn Howell, Director, National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education & Associate Professor, Urban Studies & Planning Programme, University of Maryland

17.10 Where we Live v. Where we Work - New Challenges for Planning and Governance (InPLACE Study)

Dr. Karen Keaveney, Head of Subject for Rural Development, School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin & Senior Research Associate, ICLRD

17.30 Q&A

17.45 End Day 1

19.00 Drinks Reception

AC Marriot Hotel, Donegall Quay, Belfast BT1 3FE

19.30 Conference Dinner

AC Marriot Hotel, Donegall Quay, Belfast BT1 3FE

MC for the Evening:

Prof. Diana Fitzsimons, Chair, ICLRD Research Forum

Welcome Remarks

- Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr. Micky Murray &
- Prof. Colin Turner, Pro Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean for Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment, Ulster University

Programme Day 2



PLANNING AND GOVERNING METROPOLITAN REGIONS AND CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Barnett Room Belfast Harbour, Corporation Square Belfast, BT1 3AL

Friday, 25th October

**08.45 Registration
Refreshments**

**09.30 Session 3: Leadership in the City
Region**

*Chair: Dr. Bríd Quinn, Formerly
University of Limerick and Member
of the Council of Europe Group of
Independent Experts*

**09.40 Keynote Address: Leadership in
the City: The Ingredients for a Thriving
Metropolitan Area**

Mr. John Moran, Directly Elected Mayor
of Limerick

**10.00 A Fireside Chat: Metropolitan
Governance in the 21st Century?**

Dr. Tim O'Connor, Chair of Government
Implementation Group on Limerick's
DEM

Mr. John Moran, Mayor of Limerick

10.45 Q&A

11.00 Refreshments & Networking

**11.30 Session 4: Planning and Governing
Metropolitan Regions and Cities in
the 21st Century: Learnings from
Elsewhere**

*Chair: Mr. Niall Cussen, Planning
Regulator, Office of the Planning
Regulator*

**11.40 Keynote Address: Achieving
Balanced Regional Attractiveness in
Metropolitan Regions and Cities**

Mr. Michael Flood, Policy Analyst, OECD
Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs,
Regions and Cities

Metropolitan Region and City Perspectives

12.00 *The North West City Region: Reflecting
on Ten Years Past and Future*

Mr. John Kelpie, Chief Executive, Derry
City and Strabane District Council

12.15 *Metropolitan Sustainability Planning in
the United States: What have we
learned?*

Prof. Gerrit Knaap, National Center for
Smart Growth, University of Maryland

12.30 *The Suburbanisation Challenge of
the Brno Metropolitan Area: Utilising ITI
in Strategic Planning*

Ms. Soňa Raszková, Head of Foreign
Cooperation, Department of ITI
Management and Metropolitan
Cooperation, Brno City Municipality

12.45 Q&A

Session 5: CLOSING SESSION

**13.00 Key Takeaways from Two Days of
Discussion and Debate**

Ms. Mary MacIntyre, Chair, ICLRD

**13.30 Conference Close
Light Lunch**

Speakers

Kerrie Sweeney

Chief Executive, Maritime Belfast Trust. Kerrie joined Maritime Belfast in March 2013 and has over 20 years' experience working in the tourism sector including 10 years between Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, where she was a member of the team that put together the plans for the Titanic Signature Project. Kerrie's experience is in product and destination development, capital projects and partnership initiatives.



Since joining Maritime Belfast, Kerrie has led a series of key successes: the award of a £5million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Enterprise Programme towards the former Harland & Wolff Drawing Offices, to restore them and develop the building into a four-star boutique hotel; the acquisition of Titanic's little sister the SS Nomadic; and the relocation and restoration of the Great Light. Maritime Belfast's current focus is the development of the Maritime Mile - an award-winning initiative that aims to connect the waterfront physically, recognising that the sum of its parts is much greater than the individual components, and influencing the development the public realm as a seamless, vibrant, connected experience.

Prof. Diana Fitzsimons

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Anita Conway

Director of Development. Anita joined Radius in 2011. Anita graduated from Hallam University, Sheffield in Property Management and completed her MSc in UUU in Property Development and Research. Anita has over twenty five years' experience working in the property sector in the UK and Northern Ireland, within property development and housing management fields. Prior to joining Radius Anita worked in the private construction sector for five years as Commercial Director,



working throughout Europe and has extensive experience in residential, hospitality and commercial property development and construction.

Elma Newberry MBE

Elma has worked in public housing for 41 years and is currently the Director of Strategic Housing Authority for N Ireland within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Her career as a practitioner within public housing ranges from housing management, homelessness, estate based strategies to leading the organisation post the Good Friday Agreement, its Good Relations Strategy and establishing the first Shared Future Housing scheme and Re-imaging programmes. As Director of Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, she leads the NIHE within Community Planning and housing led-regeneration, working in partnership to bring forward place-making solutions and supporting people programmes to build sustainable communities.



Dermot O'Kane

Dermot is a chartered town planner and currently has a lead role in bringing forward the new Belfast Local Development Plan 2035, the first part of which, the Plan Strategy was adopted in May 2023. Dermot has a comprehensive understanding of all stages of the planning process including development management and planning enforcement and he has in-depth knowledge of the realities of policy development for Northern Ireland's largest council and the region's economic driver. He brings a focused and passionate leadership style with a strong emphasis on team working and communication. He has worked on a number of research projects including with Queen's University Belfast and the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná Curitiba Brazil into the effects of accessibility on disadvantaged groups. He was a member of the Housing Market Symposium lead by the Department for Communities examining constraints to housing development in Northern Ireland. He is an external examiner of the planning degree programmes at Queen's.



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He is currently working in an advisory role on a research project with the University of Glasgow and University of Ulster examining sustainability in planning policy which includes exploring the challenges and solutions that planning can offer to the threats posed by climate change.

Cathy Reynolds

Cathy is Director of City Regeneration & Development for Belfast City Council. She is a Chartered Surveyor by profession and has over 25 years' experience in development, regeneration and strategic asset management.



Working with stakeholders across the public and private sectors Cathy is responsible from a Council perspective for leading on city regeneration and development to drive delivery of physical, social and economic outcomes for Belfast. This includes supporting the physical built environment by ensuring vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, accessible and connected city spaces and places. Cathy previously worked within the Property & Projects department of Belfast City Council, delivering on a number of physical projects across the city. She headed up the Asset Management service within the Council and led on the delivery of a number of property and development projects and initiatives, working with a range of stakeholders across the public and private sectors.

Mary MacIntyre

Mary is Chair of the ICLR. She is a Chartered Town Planner who has had a lengthy career in the public and private sectors in England and Ireland. The majority of her career was spent in the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, where she held the post of Chief Planner before her retirement. She has been an active member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, is a trustee of Maritime Belfast and an honorary member of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects. She was awarded



the OBE in 2014 for services to planning and charity.

Graeme Johnson

Graeme joined Belfast Harbour in 2007 having held a number of senior positions in the Banking and Retail sectors. Graeme is a qualified Chartered Surveyor and Chartered Project Management Surveyor and was previously Property Director for the Henderson Group and was all-Ireland Property Manager for Ulster Bank. Graeme has extensive property sector experience in Ireland and the UK including roles in property & business acquisition, construction, development, and asset management.



John O'Dowd MLA

John is Minister for Infrastructure, he took up his post on 3 February 2024. He previously served as Minister in the Department for Infrastructure during 2022. He has also served as Minister for Education between 2011 and 2016 and as deputy First Minister for a short time. John has also been a member of various committees including the Committee for Finance and the Committee for the Economy and was chair of the Public Accounts Committee and the Audit Committee. John was first elected to the Assembly in 2003.



Pádraig Maguire

Pádraig is current Director of Services for Planning, Building Control, Strategic Projects, Heritage and Conservation within Meath County Council (MCC). Previously he was Senior Planner for Planning and Economic Development in MCC and was in post for 4.5 years. Prior to that he was Senior Executive Planner in MCC where he led the Economic and Development Management Division with responsibility for all new large and small scale developments throughout County Meath. He previously worked within a number of Local Authorities in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and in one of his previous roles, was Regional Planner responsible for the project management and implementation of the



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Regional Planning Guidelines in the Border Region. He is also a current member of the Executive Board of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD).

Alice Charles

Alice has more than 20 years' experience working for the private & public sector in the areas of city & urban planning, real estate, urban development & regeneration, construction, infrastructure, transport, energy, climate change globally. She is currently a Director for Cities, Planning & Design in Arup, which is a leading global sustainable development professional services company. She focuses on cross cutting urban strategies (sustainability, climate change, resilience, mobility) in Europe & globally. She is also the Global Leader for Arup's Global Strategic Partnerships with a number of international organisations, Mayoral Networks and Foundations including the World Economic Forum, UN High Level Champions, UN Global Compact, C40, Resilient Cities Network, World Green Building Council, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Earthshot, Stockholm International Water Institute and Resilience Rising. She also sits on a number of Advisory Boards including the UN Habitat Executive Directors Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, she is a member of the SDSN Global Commission on Urban SDG Finance and Chairs its Private Sector Taskforce, she is a Member of the European Commission 100 Intelligent Cities Advisory Board, a Member of the International Telecommunications Union Focus Group on Environmental Efficiency for Artificial Intelligence and other Emerging Technologies and a Member of the World Economic Forum G20 Smart Cities Alliance. She previously led the World Economic Forum's cities & real estate work streams, the production of all city and urban development related content and curation of events at World Economic Forum summits. She was an External Member of the Board, National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) Planning



Advisory Committee, Ireland. She has a Master's in Global Leadership, World Economic Forum, in conjunction with the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Cornell Tech, INSEAD, London Business School and the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS); Master's in Business Administration (MBA), University College Dublin; Postgraduate Diploma in Town and Country Planning, Queens University Belfast; and First class Hons Degree in Environmental Planning, Queen's University Belfast. She was a recipient of the Irish Echo Irish 40-under-40 Award 2017 for Irish and Irish Americans who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields of work before the age of 40.

Alistair Beggs BSc MSc MRTPI

Chief Planner & Director of Strategic Planning Directorate, DfI. Alistair's Directorate is responsible for processing planning applications deemed to be of regional significance or those which may be 'called in' from the local councils. In addition, the Directorate is responsible for developing regional planning policy and carrying out a local development plan scrutiny role as part of the two-tier planning system. It also oversees the regeneration of Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast. A graduate of Dundee University, Alistair is a Chartered Town Planner with over 30 years' experience working in a wide range of planning posts, including 13 years with the Planning Appeals and Water Appeals Commissions. Prior to that he worked with Dundee City Council, Angus Council and Fife Council. Alistair is a director of Belfast Healthy Cities, an independent partnership organisation with a specific remit to deliver the priority themes of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network within the local context.



Claragh Mulhern

Claragh is the Acting Principal Adviser in the Planning Division at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, where she has worked since 2019. Previously Claragh worked in the local government sector in the U.K. for 15 years, including 11 years working



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for Westminster City Council in Central London on a range of planning projects. In her current role, Claragh has responsibility for the preparation of national planning policy including the National Planning Framework and the development of related planning policy measures, oversight of the implementation of national policy through the regional strategies and local authority development plans through liaison with the Office of the Planning Regulator, the development of land activation and active land management measures and the provision of professional planning advice in support of Government policy including in relation to housing and renewable energy development. Claragh graduated with a Masters Degree in Regional and Urban Planning from University College Dublin in 2003 and is a Member of the Irish Planning Institute.

Dr. Cormac Walsh

Cormac is a senior research associate with the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). He is an independent researcher and consultant, based in Hamburg, Germany (<https://cormacwalsh-consult.eu/>) and is also employed as a researcher at the University of Oldenburg Germany, working on environmental governance topics. He received his PhD from the School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy, University College Dublin in 2010 and has since then gained expertise on a range of issues in both an academic and applied research capacity, including urban and regional planning, climate adaptation, marine spatial planning, coastal management and transboundary cooperation.



Carsten Jahn Hansen

Carsten (PhD, MSc) is Associate Professor in spatial development and planning at Aalborg University, Denmark. His work is focused on sustainable 'place-making' and innovation in development of appropriate governance



and planning spaces in both urban and rural contexts. Carsten is also the ESPON Contact Point (ECP) for Denmark.

Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald

Tony was first elected to Cork City Council in May 2004 representing the Fianna Fail party in the Northwest area of Cork City Ireland. Tony has a strong track record in issues such as crime prevention, health and wellbeing projects for young and old. He has a keen interest in early interventions for children. In 2009 he was appointed by Cork City Council as the political representative for Cork Healthy Cities and promoted the political agenda of the network among his colleagues. He is a member of the Irish National Healthy Cities and County network. In 2017 he was elected Lord Mayor of Cork for one year and oversaw the Copenhagen Mayors agreement in 2018. In 2021, Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe WHO European Healthy Cities Network appointed Cllr. Fitzgerald to the European Political Committee and he has been very active in this role since. This year 2024 he was again elected to Cork City Council and is currently the chair of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee and the Corporate Policy Committee.



Tom Reid

Tom is the Deputy Secretary in the Executive Office with responsibility for Intergovernmental and International Relations. In this role Tom has responsibility for the North South Ministerial Council, the Northern Ireland Executive's overseas offices in Brussels, Washington and Beijing and the Northern Ireland Executives International Relations strategy. Since joining the Executive Office in 2020 Tom also led on co-ordinating the Executive's preparations for and subsequent response to the UK's exit from the European Union, including on the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, Windsor Framework and future relations. Prior to joining the Executive Office in 2020, Tom has worked across a range of roles in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including Health, Social policy and the Executive's Programme for Government.



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Between 2009 to 2020 he worked for the Department of Infrastructure, where he spent 11 years working across sustainable transport, regional development, transport planning, public transport governance EU funding and engagement, including the department's preparations for EU Exit. He has also worked in the community development and voluntary sector, and started his career teaching in Higher Education.

Andrew Carter

Andrew is the Chief Executive of the Centre and before that he was the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Research. Andrew has nearly 25 years of experience working on urban economic policy working for public and private development agencies, consultants and research institutes. He has also spent time in the US as part of the Churchill Foundation's Fellowship Programme reviewing urban economic development policy and practice in American cities including New York, Washington DC, Boston and Chicago.



Damien Martin

As Strategic Director, Place and Economy Belfast City Council Damien is responsible for driving the future growth and regeneration of the city, creating a sustainable, attractive, unique and dynamic place to live, visit and invest. Prior to his recent appointment, Damien previously led the development and delivery of the £1billion Belfast Region City Deal, supporting the partners to deliver more than 20 major projects and programmes that will help to achieve their ambitions for inclusive economic growth across the Belfast Region. Damien was previously the Clerk Assistant at the Northern Ireland Assembly for seven years. In this role he was responsible for the strategic management of the Assembly's Committee System. Damien was also the Speaker's principal adviser on the legislative procedures, with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the legislative programme.



Kathryn Howell

Kathryn is the Director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education and an Associate Professor, Urban Studies & Planning Program at the University of Maryland - College Park.



Dr. Howell's research unpacks concepts of physical and cultural displacement and power in changing communities and investigates ways that policy and planning can be used to address these issues. Specifically, she researches the policies, governance structures and roles of tenants and advocacy in the redevelopment efforts. Before coming to the University of Maryland, she co-founded and co-directed the RVA Eviction Lab, a community-responsive data initiative at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she was also a professor of Urban Planning. Before pursuing a Ph.D., Dr. Howell worked for the state of Maryland and Washington, DC governments at housing and community development agencies where she focused on affordable housing preservation, state program monitoring and inclusionary zoning programs.

Karen Keaveney

Karen is Associate Professor and Head of Subject for Rural Development in University College Dublin, and a Senior Research Associate of ICLR. She is a founding member of the UCD Centre for Irish Towns (CfIT). Karen is Principal Investigator for the Irish Research Council (IRC) funded project: 'Citizen Rural: Digital Data for Participatory Democracy in Remote Places' which is examining data and evidence for bottom-up decision-making in rural localities. She was also a collaborator on 'InPLACE - Investigating Place, Planning and Commuting' which examined post-covid commuting impacts on rural towns on the island of Ireland. Previously, Karen was a Lecturer in Rural Spatial Planning in Queen's University Belfast. She has held a number of visiting appointments internationally, including Visiting Research Fellow in the Joint Centre for Housing Studies, Harvard University, and Visiting Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto.



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Her publications and research include the areas of policy responses to rural change, cross-border and inter-jurisdictional planning, and rural development on the island of Ireland. In 2023, she was appointed by the European Commission as the Irish member of the EU Rural Pact Coordination Group.

Diana Fitzsimons

As of February 2023, Diana MA (Econ) MSc (TP) FRICS FRTPI FloD has been Chair of the ICLR Research Forum. Diana is a Chartered Town Planner and Chartered Planning and Development Surveyor whose career has spanned central government, academia, the voluntary sector and the private sector in Northern Ireland. She is currently a Belfast Harbour Commissioner and Chair of Belfast Harbour's Property and Place Committee. She is also a Visiting Professor in the Built Environment at Ulster University and a former Chair of the housing association, Radius (formerly Fold). She is currently a member of the Department for Infrastructure Regional Planning Commission, Lloyds Bank "Forum for a Better Housing Market" and a Board member of MLK Development Corporation.



Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr. Micky Murray

The current Lord Mayor of Belfast, Micky took up office on 3 June 2024. He is the first openly gay Lord Mayor of Belfast. A member of the Alliance Party, Micky was initially co-opted onto Belfast City Council in May 2022, and retained his seat in the local government election of May 2023. His background before politics was in the community and voluntary sector, where he worked helping homeless people and those with addiction challenges. Micky is committed to using his year in office to furthering the goal of making Belfast an inclusive and compassionate city.



Professor Colin Turner

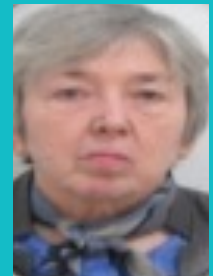
Colin is Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for the Faculty of Computing,

Engineering and the Built Environment at Ulster University. Colin's discipline research began in the field of topology in pure mathematics, but has more recently been focused on the mathematics, engineering and software applied to cardiovascular medicine. His learning and teaching expertise is in mathematics and software for engineers along with systems approaches to improving the student experience and student outcomes.



Dr Brid Quinn

Formerly, a member of the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick, Brís carries out consultancy and voluntary work in Ireland and abroad for state bodies, development organisations, community groups and international organisations. She has a particular interest in local and regional governance, EU territorial policies and public management reform. Bríd contributes to a range of organisations observing elections and monitoring local government systems. She was a member of the Expert Advisory Group for the Dublin Citizens' Assembly (2022) and served as Chairperson of *Steering Group* for the AILG/MU research project on *The 21st Century Councillor in Irish Local Government*. She currently serves as Ireland's representative on the Council of Europe/*CLRAE Group of Independent Experts* on Local Government and is a member of Limerick City and County Council Audit and Risk Committee.



Mayor of Limerick, John Moran

John is Ireland's first Directly Elected Mayor. Throughout his career, John has achieved numerous milestones, including being one of New York's youngest ever lawyers, setting up a bank for Zurich Financial Services, recapitalising the Irish banking sector after the crash, negotiating the sale of Bank of Ireland and Irish Life for Ireland, and securing over €1 billion per annum in EIB funding for Ireland, including key projects in Limerick like a €100 million loan to the University of Limerick and €75 million for the Opera Centre. He



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also played a pivotal role in attracting jobs to Limerick, including the establishment of Uber's operations, and helping steer the growth of companies such as Grid Finance, Takumi and Mannok. As Chair of the SME Recovery campaign, he successfully led the lobbying of government to deliver billions of supports for small businesses during the COVID crisis.

Niall Cussen

Niall is the Chief Executive and Planning Regulator at the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) established by Government in April 2019. The OPR's functions are to oversee the effective delivery of planning services of Ireland's 31 local authorities and An Bord Pleanála, including implementation of national and regional policies and to conduct research and public awareness programmes in relation to planning. Prior to his appointment Niall was Chief Planner at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government from July 2014 and he worked in the Department from January 2000 prior to that. Prior to joining the Department in 2000, Niall had an extensive planning career working for local authorities in Clare, Meath and Dublin City Council and An Bord Pleanála. Niall holds qualifications in economics and geography, regional and urban planning and environmental engineering from Maynooth University, University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin respectively and is both a member and a past President of the Irish Planning Institute.



Tim O'Connor

Tim is a former Senior Diplomat of the Irish Foreign Service (1979-2007) and a former Secretary General (Chief of Staff) to the President of Ireland (2007-2010). Most of his career was spent working on the Northern Ireland Peace Process. He was a member of the Irish Government Talks Team for



the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and was the inaugural Joint Secretary General (Chief of Staff) of the North South Ministerial Council, established by the Agreement to oversee cross-border co-operation on the island of Ireland, from 1999 to 2005. He was Consul General of Ireland in New York from 2005 to 2007. Since his retirement from the Civil Service in 2010, Tim has combined running his own advisory business with voluntary work (the latter includes membership of the Board of the large Irish NGO, GOAL). He has continued his involvement with the Northern Ireland Peace Process and since 2017 has been Irish Government Representative on the Independent Reporting Commission on Paramilitarism. In 2020, Tim chaired the Irish Government's Implementation Advisory Group tasked with developing a proposed template for the Office of Directly Elected Mayor of Limerick. Tim holds honorary doctorates from Maynooth University (2005), Quinnipiac University (Connecticut, USA) (2007), the University of Ulster (2009) and University College Dublin (2016) and was appointed Honorary Professor of Practice at Queen's University Belfast in 2022.

Michael Flood

Michael is a Policy Analyst at the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities where he works in the Regional Attractiveness and Migrant Integration unit. His recent work with subnational governments far and wide explores topics related to investment and talent attraction and retention, regional well-being, place-based policy design, multi-level governance, industrial policies and regional innovation. In addition to his OECD work, Michael co-teaches a course on Regional Policy in Practice at Paris-Dauphine University. Before relocating to Paris, Michael led a program in Nova Scotia, Canada, to elevate the place of well-being metrics in policy-making and civic discourse. He has a Master's in Social Policy and Social Innovation from SciencesPo, Paris and a Master's in Public Policy from the National University of Singapore.



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John Kelpie

John has been Chief Executive of the Derry City and Strabane District Council since April 2015. He initially led on the establishment of a new Council as a result of a programme of local government reform in Northern Ireland, with a new, larger geographical area and a range of additional powers, functions and responsibilities than its predecessor Councils. John designed an innovative, flexible and responsive staffing structure with a clear vision and purpose to develop a *'thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and Region with equality of opportunity for all'*. John has led on international best practice examples of place-based leadership within the cross-border North West City Region and the establishment of inclusive, strategic growth partnerships and plans. Recently he also led a City Partnership in securing the largest ever government investment package into the City and Region with the circa £293m City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund to drive innovation and regeneration in Derry and Strabane.



Gerrit-Jan Knaap

Gerrit-Jan is Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at the National Center for Smart Growth Research at the University of Maryland. He earned his B.S. from Willamette University, his M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Oregon, and received post-doctoral training at the University of Wisconsin-Madison,

all in economics. Gerrit's research interests include the interactions between housing markets and policy, the economics and politics of land use planning, the efficacy of economic development instruments, and the impacts of environmental policy.

On these subjects, Gerrit has authored or coauthored over 80 articles in peer refereed journals, and coauthored or co-edited ten books. He received the Chester Rapkin award for the best paper published in Volume 10 of the Journal of Planning Education and Research, with Greg Lindsey, he received the 1998 best of ACSP award, and in 2006 he received the Outstanding Planner Award from the Maryland Chapter of the American Planning Association.



Soňa Raszková

Soňa works in the Department of ITI management and Metropolitan Cooperation at the City of Brno. She focus on the strategic development of Brno Metropolitan Area and on cooperation with other municipalities within the metropolitan area covering the issue of Integrated Territorial Investments. She has a degree in Regional Development and Administration. She has been involved in several international projects (ESPON METRO, Functional Area in the EU project etc.). She is part of the Eurocities Working Group Metropolitan Areas. Together with her team, she manages the international project MECOG-CE - Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation and Governance in Central Europe.



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