

AILG

Association of Irish Local Government
Aontas Rialtas Áitiúil na hÉireann



AILG ELECTED MEMBER INDUCTION TRAINING PROGRAMME

Local Government in Ireland

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Topics Today

- ▶ **Broad introduction to local government**
- ▶ **The key facets of the system, especially the role of the Elected Members, Chief Executives/Director General**
- ▶ **Local/National Policies**
- ▶ **Role of Government Departments especially Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**
- ▶ **Associated bodies**
- ▶ **Time for questions**

Public Sector Employment

<i>Sector</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2021</i>
Civil Service	38,200	36,200	45,636
Education	90,456	91,900	117,048
Health	110,600	102,100	132,322 (171,900 across all Health in 2022)
Local Government	34,987	30,000	30,998
Policing and Justice	14,827	13,400	14,584
State bodies-non commercial	11,798	10,600	15,824
Defence	11,263	10,200	8,848
Total	313,131	294,400	365,264

Local Government in EU/UK

Country	Population (000s) 2016	No. of Local Councils	Avg pop per council
France	66,858	35,357	1,891
Austria	8,740	2,098	4,166
Sweden	9,923	290	34,217
Germany	82,342	11,054	7,449
Finland	5,495	311	17,669
Italy	60,628	7,960	7,616
Spain	46,468	8,124	5,720
Belgium	11,295	589	19,177
Denmark	5,729	98	58,459
Netherlands	17,030	380	44,816
Ireland 2016	4,683	31	150,968
Ireland 2022	5,200	31	167,742
UK*	65,548*	11,821*	5,545*
UK*	65,548*	326*	201,067*

The History bit...

- 1840 Municipal Government
- 1898 County Government
- 1916-1922 the Irish Wars
- 1925 Local Government Act
- 1929-1940 Management System
- 1977-1982 Rates “reforms”
- 1995-2000 Institutional Reform?
- Local Government Act, 2001
- 2011-IMF/ECB/EC Package
- 2012 Action Plan
- 2013 Local Government Bill
- 2014 Local Government Act

Results Votes	
Yes 1,024,850	77.83%
No 291,965	22.17%

The Constitution: Article 28A states:

- ▶ The State recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of local communities, in exercising and performing at local level powers and functions conferred by law and in promoting by its initiatives the interests of such communities.
- ▶ There shall be such directly elected local authorities as may be determined by law and their powers and functions shall, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, be so determined and shall be exercised and performed in accordance with law.
- ▶ Elections for members of such local authorities shall be held in accordance with law not later than the end of the fifth year after the year in which they were last held.
- ▶ Every citizen who has the right to vote at an election for members of Dáil Éireann and such other persons as may be determined by law shall have the right to vote at an election for members of such of the local authorities referred to in section 2 of this Article as shall be determined by law.
- ▶ Casual vacancies in the membership of local authorities referred to in section 2 of this Article shall be filled in accordance with law

How we organise ourselves (1)

- **18 Government Departments**
- **130 State Companies**
- **200 plus arm's length agencies**
- **1 National Police Force**
- **1 Defence Force**
- **Decentralised Education System**
- **A National Health System**

How we organise ourselves (2)

Statutory Local Government

- ✓ 31 county/city and county and city councils
- ✓ Municipal Districts/Area Committees
- ✓ CPGs/SPCs
- ✓ LCDC Local Community Development Committee
- ✓ ...and then...
- ✓ Public Participation Network (PPN)
- ✓ 3 Regional Assemblies
- ✓ Local Development Companies

Other key Bodies

- × AILG
- × LAMA
- × CCMA/LGMA
- × National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
- × Local Government Audit Service/Audit Committee
- × 16 regional education and training boards
- × Oireachtas Committee
- × Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)
- × Committee of the Regions-Irish Regions Office Brussels
- × Congress of Local and regional Authorities of Europe-
Charter for Local Self-Government

What does Local Government Do? (1)

- ❑ Local democratic framework and through it an entry to national politics
- ❑ Local representational role and underpins local identity
- ❑ Direct public services to residents, visitors and investors within a local context
- ❑ Delivers on an agency basis for the State, national services more appropriately delivered at a local level
- ❑ Facilitates public and private investment

What does Local Government Do? (2)

- Provides the spatial planning context
- Provides the local platform through which social and cultural diversity is facilitated and nurtured
- Regulates in instances economic and environmental issues as well as providing local consumer protection
- Facilitates, on behalf of the State, the co-ordination of local, rural and community development

Services structured on the basis of 8 Broad Policy Sectors



Housing



Road Transportation and Safety



Water Supply and Sewerage (Water Services)



Planning and Development



Environmental Protection



Recreation and Amenity



Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare



Miscellaneous

Local Plans and Policies

- **Local Statutory Plans** (Corporate Plans/ County Development Plan/ Local and Economic Community / Annual Service Delivery Plan
- **Local Plans:** Litter Plan, Arts Plan, Traveller Accommodation Plan, Homeless Action Plan, Water Quality Plan
- **Policies:** Scheme of letting priorities, Anti-Social Behaviour
- **Adoption of Bye Laws:** Beach, control of horses, Traffic and Parking

Current Elected People in the Council

- ▶ Mayor or Cathaoirleach, other than Limerick, elected yearly, honorary paid position
- ▶ Chair Meetings of the Councils/ceremonial
- ▶ 949 Councillors-5 year electoral cycle
- ▶ Part-time/full time
- ▶ Local Ombudsman
- ▶ Social Partners through Strategic Policy Committees and LCDC
- ▶ Public Participation Network

Reserved and Executive Functions

- ▶ Reserved functions for elected members
- ▶ Primarily policy focused
- ▶ Executive functions, primarily Chief Executive/Director General or other designated officers
- ▶ Primarily day to day matters
- ▶ Part-time vs Professional
- ▶ Power to direct-Section 140 LG Act 2001

Chief Executives and Management

- ▶ Full time chief executives/Director General
- ▶ Introduced 1929-1940
- ▶ 7 Year Contracts with possible 3-year extension
- ▶ Reports monthly to Council and on preparation of policies
- ▶ Directors of Service/Head of Finance
- ▶ Indoor/outdoor staff
- ▶ Link to national body: CCMA
- ▶ Supported by LGMA

Role of the Chief Executive/Director General



DAY TO DAY
MANAGEMENT OF THE
COUNCIL



EMPLOYEE OF THE
COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS



DELEGATION OF
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS



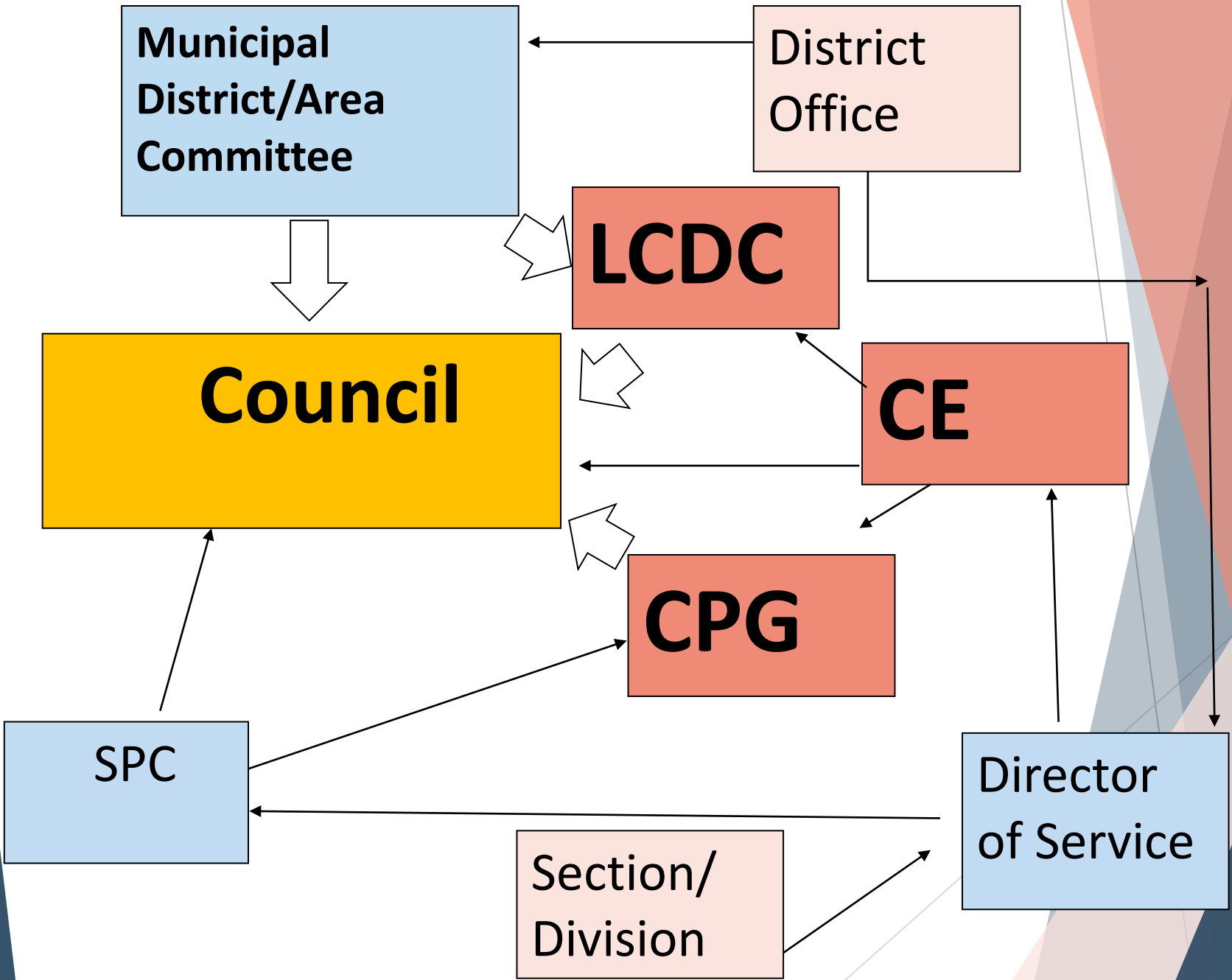
CARRY INTO EFFECT ALL
LAWFUL DECISIONS OF
THE ELECTED COUNCIL



IMPLEMENTATION OF
POLICY



ADVISE AND ASSIST THE
ELECTED COUNCIL, CPG,
SPC'S AND LCDC



The Councillor

- At the heart of local government
- Schedule 3 of Local Government Reform Act 2014
- Limited powers focused on policy adoption, operation oversight and budget setting
- Critical link between the citizens/residents and the Councils
- Twin roles on Municipal Districts and Area Committees/Councils
- Inputs into other local bodies/national layers on behalf of the full Council

Revenue/Capital Expenditure 2024

Revenue	7.4 Billion
Capital	6.4 Billion
Total	13.8 Billion

Own 2024

Commercial Rates	1,838,424,159
Local Property Tax	503,620,501
Provision for Debit/Credit Balances	-39,124,104

Revenue Income 2024

Housing and Building	2,739,973,917	2,570,573,089
Road Transportation & Safety	1,351,552,586	825,948,883
Water Services	424,608,695	371,790,837
Development Management	696,147,342	301,142,072
Environmental Services	889,063,230	234,983,857
Recreation and Amenity	636,498,359	77,836,457
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	55,311,630	24,797,324
Miscellaneous Services	470,591,555	475,506,031

The Challenges

- ▶ A re-orientation in focus from the national to local?
- ▶ A reduction in local elected councillors?
- ▶ Introduction of compliance obligations for public bodies?
- ▶ With greater powers will come greater expectation of the application of responsible policy development and decision-making at local level?
- ▶ Power to raise local finance?
- ▶ Levels of accountability and external scrutiny will be a feature of the reformed system?
- ▶ The need for a fully trained body of elected representatives will be important and the ad hoc approach to the provision of training is being confronted thanks to the AILG?

But its important to know..

- Local government in relative terms performs better than in many other OECD Countries
- It is now seen as a critical partner by other public bodies and, critically, by the wider community
- Surveys regularly place local government highly
- Local government has seen critical expansion of its role in areas such as economic development, climate action and community resilience
- It is the only democratic voice at local level
- That voice needs to be a part of the national policy process if the national process is to meet expectations