



**Comhairle Cathrach
Luimnigh**

**Limerick
City Council**

Áras na Cathrach
Luimneach
Telefón: 061 · 407100
Fax: 061 · 415266
Email: info@limerickcity.ie
Website: www.limerickcity.ie

City Hall
Limerick
Telephone: 061 · 407100
Fax: 061 · 415266
Email: info@limerickcity.ie
Website: www.limerickcity.ie

Mr. John Gormley, T.D.,
Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government,
Office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

Date
14th October, 2010

Your reference

Our reference

Re: Renewing Local Government in Limerick – Report of the Limerick Local Government Committee

Dear Minister,

Limerick City Council met on Monday last, 11th October, 2010, to consider the Brosnan Report on Local Government in Limerick. It was the strong and unanimous view of the elected Members that the abolition of Limerick City Council should be rejected outright. As a proud and historic city with over 800 years of city governance, we are at a total loss to understand why the City Council's abolition and the subsequent amalgamation of our City with a rural County Council could ever be countenanced.

We have consistently sought the strengthening of our City by the extension of the City boundary to include the full urban area of Limerick. This is accepted best international practice. Indeed the recent Danish review of Local Government came to the obvious and clear decision that metropolitan/urban areas need metropolitan/urban governance.

It now appears that Ireland uniquely is coming to the opposite view that Limerick City is best managed by taking 29 rural Councillors and putting them into a Council chamber with the 17 City Councillors and that somehow this will result in 'renewing local governance in Limerick'.

It is clear to the City Council, and should be clear to anyone with a passing knowledge of local government, that an amalgamation of a rural authority with Limerick City will result in a complete lack of focus on the City's problems and constant squabbling, long into the future, on the dissipation of resources to the rural parts of Limerick County.

The Brosnan Report accepts that Limerick City's boundary needs to be extended to incorporate the full urban area. Minister, you have the power to grant such an extension. We urge you to do so as a matter of urgency, as the problems of Limerick cannot wait for the drafting of primary legislation which will attempt to implement a proposal which is patently unworkable.



The reasons advanced in the Report for not opting for the boundary extension for Limerick City Council do not stand up to critical evaluation. (A detailed review is appended).

It has become apparent from public presentation locally that the Brosnan Report sought to find a politically acceptable solution that was in accord with national emerging policies in relation to cost savings and amalgamation. Regrettably this has resulted in the wrong recommendation for Limerick City.

The model of governance proposed by Limerick City Council is tried and tested and operates successfully throughout the developed world. The only reason why it was not progressed earlier is that there was no political will at national level to address the thorny issue of a boundary alteration. Unfortunately the delay in addressing the governance issue over the last thirty years has created the current situation whereby the competing interests of three local authorities has caused the Gateway City to underperform on a number of fronts (socially, economically, and culturally). Not alone has this affected the citizens of Limerick but also the region as a whole.

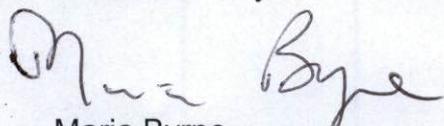
Urban governance for urban areas is best international practise. The boundary extension remains the best option to strengthen the City and the Mid-West Region for the following reasons:

- Strong cities make strong regions
- City Governmance should be unitary and representative
- Cities should enjoy joined-up service provision
- City resources should be reinvested in the City

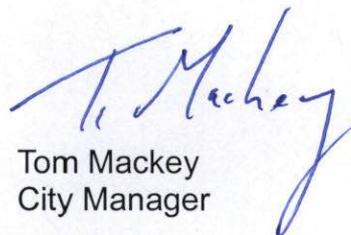
There has never been a more pressing need for clear decisive action to be taken. The best option for the governance of Metropolitan Limerick is a City Council with responsibility for a united Limerick City. Any solution that lacks this focus and clarity of responsibility is clearly second best for Limerick City and the Region.

The City Council, therefore, calls on Minister Gormley to extend the City now under existing legislation as this is the best and quickest solution to the problems facing Limerick City and the Mid-West Region.

Yours sincerely,



Maria Byrne,
Mayor of Limerick



Tom Mackey
City Manager

cc Ms. Geraldine Tallon, Secretary General