

ELECTED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE	24 April 2018
COUNCIL MEETING	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Provide Civic Leadership
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services
Cost: (If applicable)	Costs to be met, as detailed below, from Conference Budget (£8,000 allocated proportionally) £200 per Councillor

1. Purpose of report

To inform Councillors about conferences that they may wish to attend.

2. The following is listed for consideration:

2.1 The Parliament Qualification of Women Act 1918-2018: Have Women Qualified?

The conference will take place at An Grianan, ICA Headquarters Termonfeckin, Co Louth on Saturday 5 May 2018.

The conference explores the roles of women in the context of History, Politics and Industry in modern Ireland. Speakers at the conference include;

- Marian Harkin M.E.P
- Emma Pengally M.P
- Sinead McCoolle, Historian

as well as women from many fields on the island of Ireland.

Through a series of lectures and Q+A sessions, those present will evaluate the lessons learned about political parties and the influence of gender on candidate recruitment at the 2014 local elections. It will

examine the impact of 'Gender Quota' system on the 2016 General Election. Speakers and delegates will consider the Gender Quota system and whether it is effective, necessary and/or useful behind women's increased participation in elections?

The conference will highlight the administrative structures of local authorities, where men dominate senior management positions. Recent years have shown an increasing number of women accessing senior management roles, however, gender barriers remain in play.

Analysis of candidate data and electoral results from the 2014 local elections show that women's political representation currently stands at just under 21 %. This is a record high for women's participation in the elected structures of county and city councils since 1918. Against this backdrop of increased yet still great under representation of the gender, the necessity of considering "Have Women Qualified?" must be highlighted and addressed.

Cost: 110 Euros per delegate to include lunch

2.2 Co-operation Ireland - Rural Society in Transition: Planning for 21st Century Rural Potentials and Challenges

This conference will take place at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk on Thursday 26 April 2018 from 9 am – 5 pm.

Rural areas are diverse, with development affected by the interactions of a range of sectoral policies. Too often rural policy is determined at the edge of more established policies – whether agriculture, environment or planning. Instead, rural policy-making must be cross-cutting. Research tells us that the make-up of rural communities and the rural economy is changing. The population is aging faster than in urban areas; agriculture is no longer the dominant employer; and issues of deprivation, connectivity, access to services and energy supply remain key challenges. Furthermore, relying on communities themselves to build vibrant communities using the asset-base of the rural is no longer sufficient.

A shared challenge for central, regional and local government, together with rural communities, is to co-design and co-deliver vibrant rural societies that are sustainable into the future. And to fully understand the implications of following a 'business as usual' model.

This event aims to begin an all-island conversation on the interventions required to sustain rural societies across Ireland...and not only sustain but build vibrant rural communities. This is not just about economic regeneration; rather, it requires a cross-disciplinary dialogue that has regard to economics, planning, community planning, rural development, social inclusion, heritage, and environmental management / protection. This event will consider the broader challenges and opportunities at play and the policy environment in which rural society must find a defined and legislative context to be an integral part of a Master Plan for “all Society”.

There is no fee for this conference.

4. Recommendation

Members wishing to attend the above conferences should contact Democratic Services.