



Office of Regeneration (Southside)
Limerick City & County Council
Unit 12-14b,
LEDP,
Roxboro,
Limerick,
Rep. Of Ireland.

Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR)
Palais Wilson,
52 rue des Paquis,
CH-1201 Geneva,
Switzerland,



For the Attention of: Ms. Magdalena Sepulveda Carmona.

Regarding: Letter dated 13-Feb-2014

CC: Dept. Finance, Dept. Environment, Community and Local Government, Limerick City And County Managers Office.

05-March-2014

Dear Ms. Sepulveda,

I refer to your letter dated 13th February 2014 (copy enclosed) which has been forwarded to my office by both Minister Michael Noonan (Department of Finance) and Minister Jan O'Sullivan (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government) on 19th February 2014 for a response.

I note that in your letter you are referring to a 'Mission to Ireland' in January 2011 and the numerous meetings you held with both officials, elected representatives and community representatives as per your press release on www.ohchr.org.

I welcome any advice and contact from your office and would have valued the opportunity to brief you on our current activities and commitments in the area of community engagement before your

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office issued the recent letter.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of the activities that the Office Of Regeneration (Limerick City and County Council) has been engaged in over the last 18 months.

Following the re-integration of the Limerick Regeneration Programme into the Limerick City & County Council in June 2012 (of which the Office of Regeneration is a part) our Office initiated a number of activities aimed at strengthening community engagement with the intention of improving the lives of all the citizens of Limerick.

Two key processes include a **Civic Engagement Programme** and the delivery of a **Framework Implementation Plan** for the delivery of the objectives of Regeneration from a physical, social and economic perspective:

Civic Engagement Programme -

The overall intention of this programme is to strengthen, broaden, and make more effective, mechanisms through which civic engagement can take place. There is an emphasis on ensuring multi-stakeholder involvement in the process, strengthening capacity of stakeholders for full and meaningful participation in decision-making, and a sustainable model both within Limerick regeneration areas and beyond.

The proposal for the programme was prepared following structured discussions involving a Civic Engagement Programme Development Group, consisting of the following partners: representatives of 'regeneration' communities (through the Community Consultative Forum), PAUL Partnership (local development company) , a representative of the Traveller Community, and Limerick City and County Council.

Activities will be carried out as part of a five-stage development process. The Development Group is currently engaging in Stage 1, which involves a process of clarification and building joint understanding about participation and engagement.

A structured consultation with key stakeholders (community-based forums, local authority etc.) is nearing completion, which addresses key developmental and strategic elements in the participative process – including objectives, partner functions, representative structures, community reporting procedures, indicators for sustainability etc. The process will result in the development of, and

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agreement on, a '*Charter for Civic Engagement*'.

Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) -

The LRFIP has been developed since the Office of Regeneration took up its duties in June 2012. It was endorsed by the 5 Regeneration Committees in early 2013 and a series of public consultations were held in the communities between March and June 2013.

There were 18 information sessions held in the Southside of the city which comprised of:

- 7 general presentations to organisations and groups
- 4 'World Cafe' style consultation sessions in O'Malley & Keyes Parks,
- 3 'World Cafe' style consultation sessions were held in Ballinacurra Weston.
- 4 'World Cafe' style consultation sessions in Carew Park & Kincora Park.

A full 'Statement of Community Involvement' (Appendix 3 in the LRFIP) with the above information, along with the numbers of residents who attended these information sessions was published as part of the formal 'Draft Framework Implementation Plan', launched on 27th September 2013 .

A copy of the LRFIP can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://www.limerick.ie/regeneration/2013-11-01limerickregenframeworkimplementationplanpublicconsultation.html>

A 5 week public display period was announced in the local media and on our corporate websites and ran from November to December, 2013. This period of time allowed the public to provide comments, reviews, suggestions and criticisms of the draft document by way of written submissions: E-mailed submissions were also accepted. All submissions were accepted and acknowledged, either in person by staff in our offices or via e-mail.

The Office of Regeneration received 274 submissions in respect of the Draft Framework Implementation Plan and a Managers Report was produced and provided to the elected representatives:

This report documents all the submissions received, a summary of all issues raised and presents a series of recommendations in respect of these submissions. The document itemises proposed amendments to the plan based on the submissions received. The Draft Framework Implementation Plan was presented formally to Council on Monday (24-2-2014) for consideration and was adopted by the elected representatives following open discussion during which community representatives were present. <http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/Amalgamated%20Report%20low%20resolution.pdf>

Office of Regeneration, Limerick City and County Council:

There is ongoing opportunity for residents to have their input into the Regeneration Process and our Office continues to review and strengthen both community structures and our communication mechanisms: For example, we are launching a 'no-reply' text messaging service for the community this coming week to further enhance our communications.

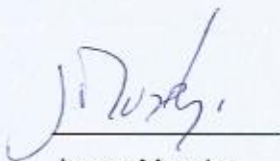
In addition to the above there are many other means to engage with the regeneration programme:

1. Call to our offices directly either in Roxboro (Southside) or Watchouse Cross (Northside)
2. Contact an elected representative who can then assist in the engagement process
3. Make a submission on any planning application in respect of any of the forthcoming developments which go through standard planning procedures.
4. Engage with other community structures and agencies to have issues raised in other fora such as the new Local Community Development Committees.

I would be delighted to take an opportunity to meet with you or your representatives should you decide to visit Limerick again in the future. I believe the objectives of the Office of Regeneration mirror the principles underpinned by the United Nations and that those objectives will improve the lives of those living in our communities.

As always, our office is always open to the community we would urge all groups to engage with us and the structures.

Sincerely Yours,



Jason Murphy

Senior Executive Officer

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva 13 February, 2014

TO WHOM IT MIGHT CONCERN

Participation is a human right in itself and a key means of realizing all other human rights. As United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, a core part of my mandate has been examining to what extent people living in poverty are able to enjoy their right to equal participation in public life. During my mission to Ireland in 2011, I visited the Fatima Mansions regeneration project in Dublin. I praised this in my subsequent report to the Human Rights Council as a "good example of community participation in the decision-making process that should be ensured in other projects".

I applaud the great work of the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance (BWRA) in working with disadvantaged communities to promote their agency, rights and voice, and I support their approach to community participation. I believe they have legitimate concerns about the limited extent to which residents have been able to participate in decision-making around regeneration and I therefore urge the relevant authorities in the Limerick regeneration areas to take their recommendations, based on human rights, into consideration. Tokenistic or formulaic participation is not empowering or rights-compliant. In order for people living in poverty to have their dignity upheld, they must be able to have a real say in decisions that affect their lives. As the BWRA has said, "Safe and sustainable communities can only be delivered through real and meaningful community participation and partnership"; and moreover, I would add that this is a matter of fundamental justice from the human rights perspective.


Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

For more information

Report Mission to Ireland is available here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx>

Report on participation of people living in poverty in decisions that affect their lives is available here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>