



**Chambers**  
**Ireland**  
Advancing business together

The Citizens' Assembly  
Directly Elected Mayor Discussion

## Overview:

- Scene setting
- The current situation
- Concerns about a Directly Elected Mayor
- Aspirations for a Directly Elected Mayor
- Questions for the Assembly

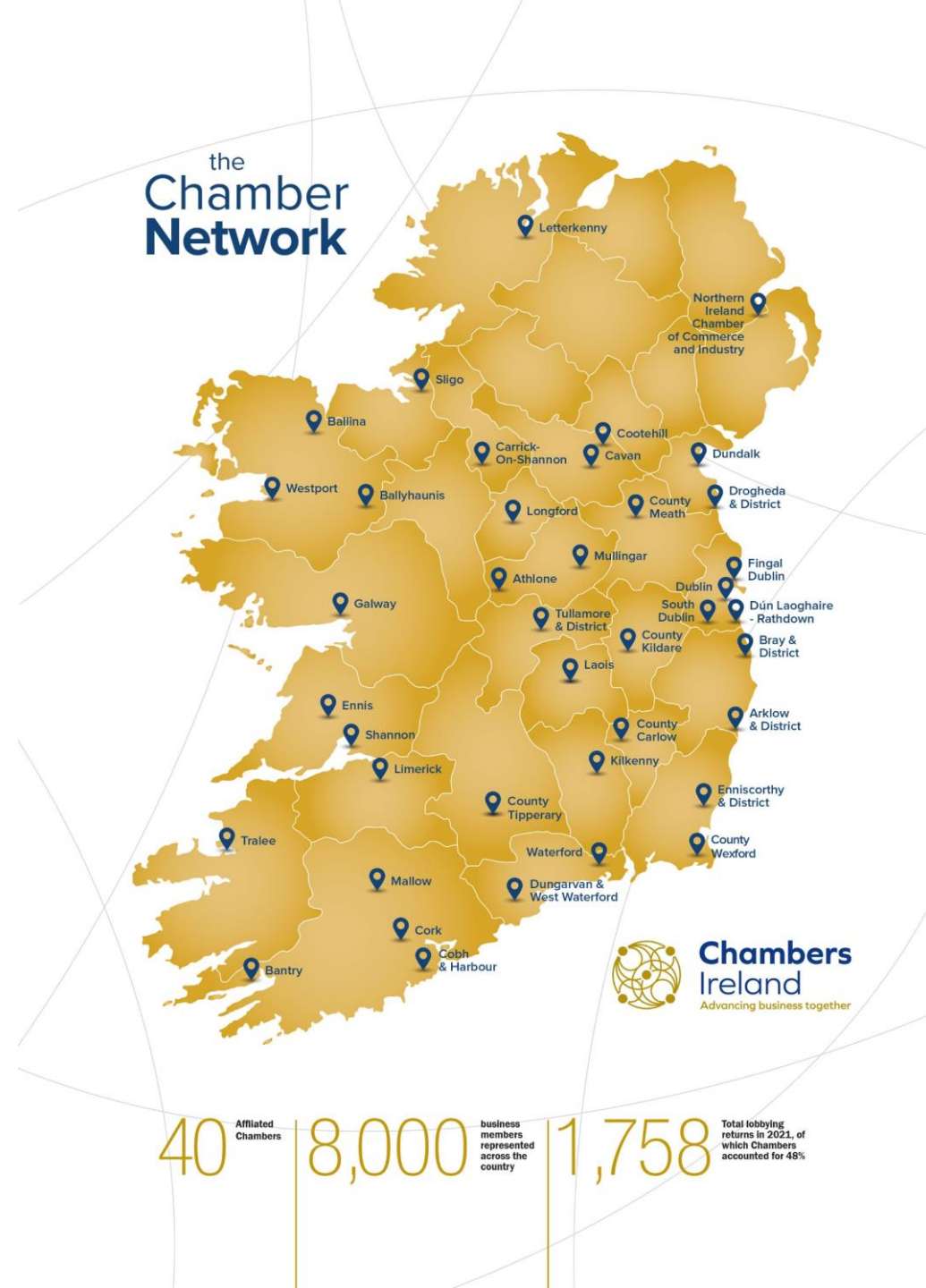


Who we are:

Grassroots

Business Organisation

Geographical



## Scene Setting:

- Chambers Ireland did not take a view on the plebiscites
- Our local chambers took their own positions
- Limerick and Cork were in favour
- Waterford had mixed views
- Little political support across the country (Local Authorities, and some Councils were against it)
- Results were marginal

## Current Situation:

- Three big concerns for businesses right now
  1. Housing
  2. Availability of Talent
  3. Energy Cost and Security
- Hard to see how a Directly Elected Mayor will deliver on these
- Directly Elected Mayor concept is good in principle, but what its effectiveness in the Irish context is up for question

## Current Situation:

- Limerick Chamber wants to see Directly Elected Mayor coupled with Local Authority reform
- Limerick Chamber would appreciate having a responsive Directly Elected Mayor implementing policy
- Limerick Chamber support decentralisation and the principle of subsidiarity

## Current Situation:

- Limerick Chamber is very interested in the Directly Elected Mayor having responsibility over transport and infrastructure
- Across our network there is the belief that decision making which is closer to the ground
  - secures local buy-in more easily and,
  - helps deconflict different policy aims
- Across all chambers there is the belief that the Limerick model will be extended to other cities

## Concerns:

- A merely ceremonial role would be a failure
- Populism – protest votes and novelty candidates
- Revenue raising powers
- Execution of powers requires authority and autonomy
  - Will the central government relinquish the resources?



## Concerns:

- If it doesn't involve policing, educational & transport responsibilities, then what is it for?
- Could become a political cover for Local Authority Executives
  - The introduction of an ineffective mayor could become an alternative to actual local government reform

## Attraction:

- Single point of responsibility and accountability
- Opportunity to make impactful changes to Citizens' lives
  - Liveability/Quality-of-life (transport features highly here)
  - Public realm improvements/parks (making cities and towns attractive places to live and work)
- Opportunity to reform Local Government
- Ambassadorial role
  - Attract investment and growth

## Questions:

- If the problem is seen to be democratic unaccountability, is a Directly Elected Mayor the right way to solve it?
- Subsidiarity – The challenge of finding the right level of decision making, what does that look like in a metropolitan area with multiple Local Authorities?
- How to we finance the role without the success of the mayor being dependent on their relationship with Government?