

## **Joint Oireachtas Committee – Directly Elected Mayor**

### **Opening Statement**

Cathaoirleach and members of the Committee,

Thank you for inviting us to speak to the committee on this matter of a Directly Elected Mayor for Dublin. Dublin Chamber is the representative body for over 1000 businesses across the whole of County Dublin and beyond. It has fulfilled this role since our founding in 1783. The governance of Dublin has been a concern for members for many years and we were delighted to be able to present to the Citizens Assembly to aid in their decision making.

The Dublin region is the heart of the Irish economy and Ireland's largest population hub, while its importance in the global economy continues to grow. Dublin county accounts for over 40% of GDP and just under one million jobs, corresponding to 38% of the national workforce. It accounts for half of all income tax revenue and about two thirds of corporation tax revenue nationally.

We recognise the significant work that has been undertaken by the Citizens Assembly and were glad to see that many of our recommendations have made it into their report. A properly structured role of a directly elected Mayor has the potential to be a catalyst behind Dublin's future prosperity. We believe that any vote by Dubliners on whether there should be a directly elected Mayor should be an informed one, with firm details as to what powers and responsibilities of such an office should be. The vote should not be rushed. It is important to get it right.

Dublin Chamber has argued that a directly elected Dublin Mayor should have executive powers and responsibility for land use, planning, economic development, and transport. In some areas, some form of co-ordinating role may be appropriate. The Mayor should cover the county of Dublin.

One of Dublin's major challenges in achieving its ambition under the National Planning Framework is greater density and the utilisation of brownfield development. There are 50,000 units with planning permission in Dublin and where construction has not commenced. We believe a Directly Elected Mayor could provide the pressure and the drive to move these projects on and ensure that these are linked to adequate services and transport.

Arguably one of the most important powers of a directly elected mayor will be revenue raising, Dublin Chamber has not called for these powers to be devolved to a mayoral figure but has stressed the need for revenue raised in the Dublin Area to be retained locally and spent on services and capital projects that benefit the metropolitan area of Dublin.

It is important that the Directly Elected Mayor should not be simply another layer of bureaucracy, but a driver of policy change. The Mayor must be accountable to Dublin's citizens and ratepayers, while also being a tangible representative of Dublin overseas on par with holders of comparable offices in other major cities.

Thank you and I look forward to engaging with you further as this process progresses.