

**PRESS STATEMENT:**

**MUNSTER v LEINSTER – A TEMPLATE FOR BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT –  
NORTH-WEST MEP CANDIDATE**

“The IRFU’s decision to move from club to provincial representation upon entering the professional era is one which has delivered great rewards in Ireland beyond the game of rugby. A similar opportunity to reorganise local government was missed when the position of councillors was effectively professionalised in 2001,” said Michael McNamara, a candidate in the European elections in the Western constituency, running on the reform platform.

“There can be little doubt that that the 1 627 councillors who will be elected on 5 June are professional politicians,” he continued. “After all, a €10 million fund has been set aside for redundancy payment for those who fail to get re-elected and each councillor will receive a representational payment, a fixed annual allowance and expenses.”

“Yet the local government structure to which they are elected remains fragmented, duplicated and ultimately, democratically unaccountable,” he explained. “The twenty-nine County Councils, five City Councils, five Borough Councils and 75 Town Councils each have their own bureaucracy. Yet not one elected councillor has executive power. This situation is no longer tenable,” he said.

“Councils are in a state of financial crisis, yet there is no debate about how essential local services are to be maintained. Of the councils’ 33 000 staff, those on contracts providing front line services are likely to be sacrificed first to maintain this status quo.”

“We must ask whether we are using our increasingly scarce resources wisely by duplicating and re-duplicating management across local authority areas that no longer make any sense? Should local government be carried out by an Assembly in Munster, Leinster and the West? Should we have directly elected mayors with executive functions in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford?”

ENDS

**Michael McNamara** is a Clare-based farmer and practising barrister.

**reform.ie** is a an internet-based political platform that advocates the reform of local government in Ireland and the continuing reform of the European Union with Ireland at its core. We believe that these objectives are shared by a large proportion of the Irish electorate and we aim to provide a forum for debate and to register this.

We hope to enlist the support of additional candidates, both local and European, who will pledge to sponsor the reforms so urgently required if elected.

reform.ie is not linked to any existing political party or movement in Ireland or elsewhere, nor are we funded by any political or economic entity.

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