



How (Not) To Do Public Policy

Conference and launch of report on
Water Charges and Local Property Tax

Aula Maxima, NUI Galway
13 September 2018

How (Not) To Do Public Policy

Conference Programme

Moderator: Dave O'Connell, Connacht Tribune and RTÉ

13:30 – 14.00 Registration

14:00 – 14:05 **Welcome**
Alan Ahearne, Director, Whitaker Institute

14:05 – 14:15 **Opening remarks**
Ciarán Ó hOgartaigh, President, NUI Galway

Session 1 **Launch and presentation of Whitaker Report on Water Charges and Local Property Tax**

14.15 – 14:45 **Presentation**
Jim O'Leary, Senior Research Fellow, Whitaker Institute

14:45 – 15:45 **Comments and discussion**
Josephine Feehily, Chairperson, Policing Authority
Maria Graham, Assistant Secretary, Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Govt.
Eamon Ryan TD, Leader of the Green Party
Don Thornhill, former Secretary General, Dept. of Education and Science

15:45 – 16:05 **Open discussion**

16:05 – 16.20 Coffee break

Session 2 **Making Better Public Policy**

16:20 – 16:45 **Keynote speech**
Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

16:45 – 18:00 **Panel and open discussion**
Richard Boyle, Head of Research, Institute of Public Administration
Joan Burton TD, former Tánaiste and Leader of the Labour Party
Kevin Cardiff, former Secretary General, Department of Finance
Jill Rutter, Programme Director, Institute for Government, London

18:00 – 18.30 Drinks reception

Conference Participants



Richard Boyle
Head of Research, Institute of Public Administration

Richard Boyle is Head of Research, Publishing and Corporate Relations at the Institute of Public Administration, responsible for planning and management of research and publications functions. He has carried out a wide range of research and consultancy studies on aspects of public service management including public sector reform, performance measurement, evaluation, the management of cross-cutting issues, and long-term policy thinking. He is an expert on evaluation, is Chair of the Irish Evaluation Network, and has served on the board of the European Evaluation Society. Richard has over 30 years of experience of working with public sector organisations with the IPA.



Joan Burton
TD, Labour Party

Joan Burton is now on her fifth term as Labour TD for Dublin West. She is a Commerce Graduate of UCD and is a chartered accountant by profession. She previously served as a Minister of State first at Social Welfare and then as Minister for International Development. In Opposition she was Labour's Spokesperson on Finance from 2002 to 2011 and was elected Deputy Leader of the party in 2007. She was appointed Minister for Social Protection in 2011 and continued in that role until 2016. She was Leader of the Labour Party and Tanaiste from 2014 to May 2016. In the current Dáil she has returned to be Labour Finance Spokesperson and serves on the Budget Oversight Committee.



Kevin Cardiff
former Secretary General, Department of Finance

Kevin Cardiff recently completed his 6-year term of office as a member of the European Court of Auditors where his later work included responsibility for review and audit projects on the ECJ, ECB and the Single Resolution Board. Previously, he was a senior official, then Secretary General, in the Department of Finance and was centrally involved in the battle to save the banking system, and later the State itself, from bankruptcy. His 2016 memoir 'Recap: Inside Ireland's Financial Crisis' explains the events of this period from an Irish point of view. Kevin is chairperson of the Board of Auditors of the European Stability Mechanism.



Josephine Feehily
Chairperson, Policing Authority

Josephine Feehily was Chairman of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners from 2008 to 2015. During her Revenue career, Josephine was Chair of the World Customs Organisation for three years, and Chair of the OECD Forum for Tax Administration – a forum of leaders of advanced Tax Authorities. She also served in a range of positions in the then Department of Social Welfare, and the Pensions Board, was an independent member of the Labour Relations Commission from 2000 to 2006. Josephine is now Chairperson of the independent Policing Authority. Josephine is a graduate of NCI and Trinity College Dublin. In 2016 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Limerick.



Maria Graham
Assistant Secretary, Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Maria Graham is Assistant Secretary with responsibility for the Water Division at the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government. Her responsibilities include: Water Sector Policy, the governance and funding of Irish Water and the Ervia Group, the oversight of the Group Water sector and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, development of a marine spatial planning framework for Ireland and foreshore legal framework. In previous roles, Maria has had responsibility for planning policy, water capital investment, housing finance and policy and public private partnerships. Prior to joining the Department, Maria worked in several other Government Departments including the Department of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Social Protection.



Dave O'Connell
Connacht Tribune and RTÉ

Dave O'Connell is Group Editor of the Connacht Tribune, a role he has held for the past eleven years. A graduate of journalism at the College of Commerce in Rathmines, he started as a reporter with the Connacht Tribune before moving to the then-Cork Examiner. He was promoted to Deputy Editor and News Editor of the Cork Evening Echo before joining the Star. He worked as News Editor and Night Editor there until he departed for the Westmeath Independent, subsequently becoming Group Editor with the Westmeath Examiner Group, serving as editor of the Westmeath Examiner, Westmeath Independent and Offaly Independent. A regular presenter and contributor with RTE, he currently shares the weekly regional newspaper review slot on Drivetime with John O'Connor.



Jim O'Leary
Senior Research Fellow, Whitaker Institute

Jim's career has spanned the public and private sectors and the groves of academe. He is a former Chief Economist with Davy Stockbrokers, Senior Fellow in Economics at NUI Maynooth, and Irish Times columnist. He has worked in the ESRI and the NESI, and as an Economics advisor in two government departments (An Taoiseach in 1983-84 and Finance in 2010-11). He has also served on a number of boards including Aer Lingus, AIB, Gresham Hotels, and Bank Zachodny WBK (Poland), as well as the National Statistics Board and the Public Sector Benchmarking Body.



Jill Rutter
Programme Director, Institute for Government, London

Jill Rutter is a programme director for Brexit at the Institute for Government (IFG) in London. She has also produced reports on better policy making, most recently on making tax policy better. Before joining IFG, Jill was Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development at Defra. Prior to that she worked for BP for six years, following a career in the Treasury, where she was Press Secretary, Private Secretary to the Chief Secretary and Chancellor, as well as working on areas such as tax, local government finance and debt and export finance. She spent two and a half years seconded to the No.10 Policy Unit (1992-94) where she oversaw health, local government and environment issues.



Eamon Ryan
TD, Leader of the Green Party

Eamon Ryan is leader of the Green Party and was elected to represent Dublin Bay South in the 2016 General Election. He studied commerce in UCD and went on to found a cycling tourism company, Irish Cycling Safaris, in the late 1980's and in 1996 won the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. He was the founding chairperson of the Dublin Cycling Campaign and began his political career as a Dublin City Councillor for the Rathgar – Rathmines ward. He then went on to serve both as a TD for Dublin South and as a Government Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. In recent years, Eamon has worked for a European climate organisation (www.e3g.org) and chaired the digital policy group in the Institute of International and European Affairs.



Don Thornhill
former Secretary General, Dept. of Education and Science

Dr Don Thornhill is a former Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and Executive Chair of the Higher Education Authority. He was chairman of the 2012 Inter-Departmental Expert Group which designed the Local Property Tax. In February 2015 he was asked by the Minister for Finance to review the operation of the property tax and to recommend what changes if any should be recommended. He is former chair of the National Competitiveness Council, and the current chair of the Board of Hibernia College, the Chartered Accountants' Regulatory Board (CARB) and the Standing Committee of Dublin Maternity Hospitals. He is a graduate of UCD and TCD and a former Fulbright Scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC.



Robert Watt
Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Robert Watt is Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. Robert is leading a major public sector reform programme in areas such as procurement, shared services, digitalisation and civil service modernisation. Robert is one of the principal advisers to the Government on economic, budget and financial issues. He was involved in the management of the Troika Programme and was a key adviser to the Government, on economic issues, since his appointment in 2011. Robert is an economist and has experience in both the public and private sectors. He has worked in a range of roles within the Department of Finance as well as previously working as an Economic consultant. He is a member of the board of the NTMA and was a member of the Economic Management Council.



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