

Association of Irish Local Government

For Review of Lobbying Legislation:

The Association of Irish Local Government would like to make the following points as an input to the consultation under way:

Positive aspects of current system

1. The Association agrees that an effective lobbying register is a feature of a modern society where transparency in public life is a key value;
2. The general simplicity of engaging with the web-based lobbying register is a positive feature of the current arrangement.

Suggestions for Improvement

3. Where lobbying involves a meeting or meetings it is suggested that the dates, locations, and persons present should be noted as part of the lobbying return. Similarly where letters or phone calls form part of the lobbying activity, the dates of such letters and phone-calls should be documented. The foregoing detail would add to the transparency and traceability of lobbying interactions.
4. Specifically in relation to the Local Government sector: From the point of view of local authority elected members there is a problem with terminology which might be considered for amendment.

The legislation creates the terminology of "Designated Public Official" which is to apply to those designated by orders made under the Act which essentially includes two categories - senior public service officials and elected members of the Oireachtas and local government (Councillors).

In local government custom and practice the word "official" has a very specific meaning, namely, it refers to the local authority professional officials (Chief Executive, Director of Services, etc.). The word "official" is never used in relation to the councillors or elected members of the local authority. As a result councillors find it difficult to identify with the terminology "Designated Public Official" as set out in the Lobbying legislation.

There is a case for considering an amendment to the Lobbying legislation which would allow the use of the terminology "Designated Elected Member" which would more accurately identify the cohort of local government elected members (Councillors) who are a key component of the range of office-holders embraced by the lobbying legislation.

The Association would be happy to elaborate on its submission should you consider same helpful.

Thank you

Liam Kenny
Director
Association of Irish Local Government

--

Liam Kenny, Director
Association of Irish Local Government
Office Unit 10 Manor Mills Maynooth
Co. Kildare

Eircode: W23YT63

Email: councillors@gmail.com

Web: www.aig.ie

Tel: 01 6106100 Fax 01 6106640