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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Philadelphia Welcomes Irish Female Leaders to Forge New Economic and Cultural Ties through Trade Mission

Philadelphia, PA, October 31, 2024 – Ireland's North West City Region, a dynamic cross-border partnership between Derry City and Strabane District Council in Northern Ireland and Donegal County Council in the Republic of Ireland, will send a delegation to Philadelphia on November 11-12, 2024, to strengthen economic, educational, and cultural ties to Philadelphia. Led by Mayor Lilian Seenoi-Barr of Derry and Cathaoirleach (Chairperson) Niamh Kennedy of Donegal, and with the support of Pennsylvania's Department of Community & Economic Development, the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia and the City of Philadelphia, this trade mission will bring together representatives from both regions to engage with local leaders, businesses, and institutions in Philadelphia.

“This mission to Philadelphia represents a key step in deepening the North West City Region's ties with a city that shares our vision for inclusive growth and innovation. The connections we build here will pave the way for economic and cultural collaboration for years to come,” said Mayor Lilian Seenoi-Barr.

“By bringing together Philadelphia's leaders with our North West delegation, we hope to foster a foundation for transformative partnerships that will benefit both regions across borders,” added Cathaoirleach Niamh Kennedy.

Both female mayors, newly elected in 2024, are leading pivotal change in their regions. Mayor Seenoi-Barr, Northern Ireland's first Black mayor and a former refugee, was recently invited to speak at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in Washington, D.C., highlighting the role of diverse leadership in shaping community development. Cathaoirleach Niamh Kennedy, Donegal's first Independent woman Councillor and fourth female Cathaoirleach in its 125-year history, has championed initiatives to boost regional economic resilience and growth.

Philadelphia Agenda Highlights

Monday November 11: A Welcome Reception hosted by the [Irish Diaspora Center](#) and Donegal Philadelphia Society. This gathering will celebrate the shared heritage and foster discussions on potential partnerships, bringing together leaders from the Irish and Philadelphia communities.

Tuesday November 12: The delegation will meet with Sr. Mary Scullion at Project HOME to discuss innovative social enterprise models in addressing homelessness and community building in Philadelphia, insights that could inspire similar initiatives in the North West City Region.

Panel Discussion at Villanova University: Focusing on “Regional and Cross-Border Placemaking for Economic Development and Growth,” this event will feature key figures from Ireland and Philadelphia discussing strategies to drive regional economic growth. Villanova Assistant Professor of the Department of Political Science, [Cera Murtagh Ph.D.](#) will facilitate the discussion.

University City Science Center Visit: An opportunity for the delegation to engage with Philadelphia's thriving life sciences and technology hub, exploring pathways for collaboration in cutting-edge sectors.

About the North West City Region

The North West City Region encompasses Donegal, Derry, and Strabane, regions renowned for their innovation and collaborative spirit. With a focus on sustainable economic development, the North West Strategic Growth Partnership works toward achieving long-term prosperity through infrastructure enhancements, educational advancements, and regional resilience.

About the Irish American Business Chamber & Network (IABCN)

For over 25 years, the IABCN has been the leading organization promoting and facilitating business connections between the Irish and American communities in the Greater Philadelphia region. Our mission is to foster relationships, strengthen the business environment, and support members as they grow and expand. Through strategic partnerships, event programming and networking, IABCN continues to be a valuable resource for companies on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Background on the North West City Region

The North West City Region is a pioneering cross-border (EU-UK) collaboration, driven by the North West Strategic Growth Partnership. This partnership, a first of its kind on the island, brings together senior officials across all government departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland to work on shared goals of economic, environmental, and social prosperity.

The delegation's visit to Philadelphia highlights the mutual commitment to exploring new avenues for cooperation and investment. Recent developments in the North West include the restoration of the Northern Ireland government and ambitious projects under the Derry-Strabane City Deal, with a projected economic impact of 6,000 jobs. Key initiatives include advanced manufacturing, digital infrastructure enhancements, riverfront redevelopment, and establishing a School of Medicine and personalized medicine innovation center.