



“By the people, for the people” – bringing public participation back to politics.

How do we ensure our government and its policies are informed by the needs of our citizens? How do we encourage our citizens to become active participants in forming the policies which affect their future? These are questions which researchers at the University of Limerick are working to answer.

Dr Maura Adshead together with Dr Chris McInerney of the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick have led the development of innovative practice in the area of policy research and civic engagement.

Dr Adshead explains: “Best practice suggests that all policy should be evidence based but policy-makers rarely have access to



Planning Initiative. In the Ennis 2020 initiative the UL research team developed a process that would enable deeper engagement between residents of the town and its council to imagining a vision of the community’s future.

Dr McInerney added; “Our research has shown us that a policy of ensuring the voice of the people is heard leads to greater citizen engagement, and ultimately strong civic pride and better communities. The Ennis 2020 project is an excellent example of research policy and practice being applied and leading to greater citizen to Council

engagement and ultimately building towards a better future.”

This work has informed the training of public administration officials at a national and local level and has been applied in a number of communities including migrants and asylum seekers.

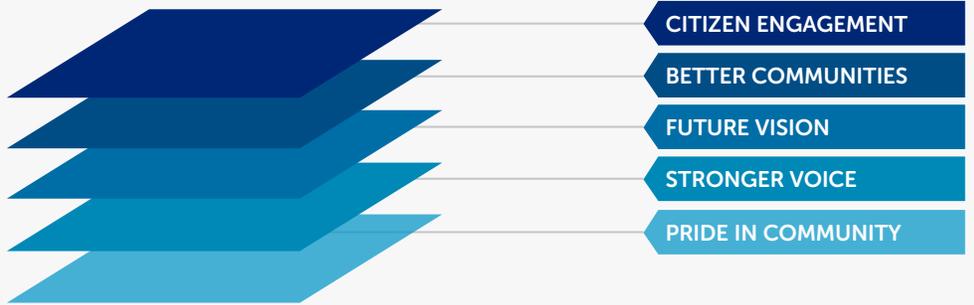
Dr Maura Adshead and Dr Chris McInerney are Lecturers in Politics and Public Administration at University of Limerick.

Find out more: Watch the video at www.ul.ie/researchimpact

Our research has shown us that a policy of ensuring the voice of the people is heard leads to greater citizen engagement

those whom policy most affects. With the exception of a few focus groups or opinion polls, it is often hard for policy makers and politicians to know what really works ‘on the ground’. Our research finds ways to enable ordinary people to express their opinions and influence policy formulation and implementation more effectively”.

Their research has made an impact on public policy and planning projects such as the Clare Immigrant Strategy and the Ennis 2020 Community Visioning and Participatory



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