

"URBS CAPTUS EST"

City's standalone Mayoral title shelved as Councillors vote for name change

Despite assurances from former Environment Minister Phil Hogan suggesting the contrary, one of Europe's oldest political offices was effectively consigned to the history books on Thursday last after 729 years.

This followed a vote in which 25 Waterford City and County Councillors voted to amend the titles of Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach of the newly merged authority to Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the City and County, while seven members opposed the motion.

Making reference to Roger De Long, Waterford city's first Mayor in 1285, Councillor Mary Roche (Ind) addressed the August meeting at City Hall prior to the vote, cognisant that the title change was already "a done deal".

Also referring to a comment made by our European Commissioner designate on October 23rd last year, and an assertion subsequently refrained by Fine Gael locally, namely that the Mayoralty would be safeguarded, Cllr Roche claimed: "That was a lie, quite frankly".

She also said that many of her former colleagues who sat on the outgoing City Council for Fine Gael, who had "jumped ship" when it came to the merger, "may not have realised the consequences of their actions" at the time.

"This was neither sought nor desired...I have said repeatedly that the culture and heritage of our city, an area where so much good work has been done in recent years, was something worth protecting and fighting for, but a day and a decision that I had feared for quite some time has now sadly come to pass."

Adding that she failed to see how there could be, as supporters of the title change claimed, public confusion regarding the first citizen of the merged authority; Cllr Roche said the vote represented "the final nail in the office of the Mayor of Waterford."