



**NOTIFICATION TO ATTEND MEETING OF THE FINANCE SPC**

**TO BE HELD IN THE THE ROUND ROOM, MANSION HOUSE, DAWSON STREET, DUBLIN 2**

**ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 2.30 PM**

**WEBCASTING NOTICE**

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**AGENDA**

**THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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20/07/2020

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Dublin City Council recognises the significant financial contribution made towards the operations of Dublin City Council by those living within its jurisdiction through the payment of their local property tax. Dublin City Council also recognises the various other financial supports provided to Dublin City Council either directly or indirectly from the public purse. Therefore, so as to communicate a tangible connection between Dublin citizen's LPT contribution and other public monies received and the services, amenities and supports provided by DCC to its citizens that an end of year, graphically illustrated, annual overview of spending leaflet be produced and made available/accessible to all DCC citizens. This leaflet should clearly allow citizens to connect their financial contribution both through their LPT and their taxes to the local services, amenities and supports they receive and experience from Dublin City Council.

11 A.O.B.

**Finance Strategic Policy Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting Held 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Cllr Séamas McGrattan, Chair, commenced the meeting by setting out the protocols that would be adhered to for this remote MS Teams Meeting.

He further welcomed Cllr. Darcy Lonergan to her first meeting of the Finance SPC since her appointment to the Committee in March 2020.

**1. Draft Minutes of the Finance SPC meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

The draft minutes were proposed by Cllr. A. Connaghan and seconded by Cllr. Nial Ring. The minutes were agreed.

**2. Matters arising Correspondence:**

- a) Housing Rents Arrears – Following agreement at the January 2020 Finance SPC meeting, a joint Housing/Finance SPC sub-group has been established. A progress report will issue to a future Finance SPC meeting.

**3. Funding Rates and Local Authority Services**

Correspondence to and from Ministers Eoghan Murphy and John Paul Phelan on this matter were circulated to the members. Ministers Murphy was invited to attend the current meeting but was unable to participate.

K. Quinn, Head of Finance, gave an overview of the correspondence and indicated that Dublin City Council are awaiting further clarification and regulations on the implementation of the Rates Waiver Scheme announced in early May 2020. She further referenced to the impact of Covid 19 on income sources such as parking meters, housing rents and Covid related costs.

Budget Consultative Group (BCG)

**Agreed:** it was agreed to reconvene the BCG. One nomination from each party will be sought.

**4. Funding the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network**

D. Collins, A/Executive Manager, Environment and Transportation Department joined the meeting to present a report of this matter. It dealt with the classification of roads and the funding structure around this classification and the business case that has been prepared to seek additional funding for the roads network in Dublin City Council's area.

The report highlighted the increase in road users due to increased economic and tourism activity. Over the period 2011-2018, it was noted that there has been a 20% rise in the number of buses in the city area, 60% increase in the number of pedestrian users and 30% in the number of cyclists. D. Collins pointed out that in order to ensure that the road network does not deteriorate further it is important to achieve the appropriate level of investment in the maintenance of the road infrastructural network thereby consequently reducing the number of personal injury claims being made by the public.

It was further noted that there has been a significant increase in development and construction activity across the city corresponding with an increased movement of heavy goods vehicles. While welcoming this vital construction activity for the development of the city and national economy, it is also having a detrimental effect on the structural condition of the road network. Thus government investment is required to carry out significant remedial works on the road network.

In addition, it was pointed out that permit requests from utilities companies have increased by 20% from 2011 to 2019. The opening of the public road to allow access by the utilities to their infrastructure is further compromising the integrity of the road and footpaths network thus requiring additional frequent and reactive maintenance works by Dublin City Council.

Currently the Road Maintenance Services budget is €12m to deliver their works programme for 2020 with €5.78m of this figure coming from the Local Property Tax allocation. This will deliver circa 14km of resurfaced road which represents only 1% of the entire City's road network. At the current investment levels from government, it would take 100 years to resurface the entire City network. It is therefore imperative that the City Council receives significant additional investment.

At the conclusion of this report, members raised queries and/or noted issues around the following:

- Further information sought on the total area of the road network in Dublin as a proportion of the local property tax allocation nationally
- Query on rise in the National Construction Tender Price Index and its impact on the maintenance budget and the percentage of maintenance carried out by direct labour
- The use of an integrated asset management system is used to monitor and react to potholes and road maintenance needs producing a priority listing
- Clarification that development levies are not used in the Roads Maintenance budget.
- To ascertain what level of investment would be required for an appropriate benchmark budget
- The impact of a pothole on a pedestrian or cyclist is more significant than a car user.
- Acknowledgement of the increase in personal injury claims year on year.
- Confirmation that there is an equal allocation of funding for maintenance across the areas
- Impact of the Covid 19 pandemic whereby pods of Roads Maintenance Teams have been established across the city.
- On the issue of efficiency and economies scale in the use of contractors, it was confirmed that the use of contractors is required where specialist skills such as tarmacadam laying is required.
- Acknowledgement that the volume and type of traffic on any given road should be factored into account as part of the matrix for funding allocation purposes.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that this report would be sent to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for consideration.

**Agreed:** It was further agreed that a report will be brought to a future meeting identifying the factors having impact on road maintenance, such as the length and breadth of the carriageway, volume of traffic, type of traffic, local factors and any other relevant factors for more equitable funding.

## 5. Rates Debtor year end 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

Fintan Moran, Head of Management Accounting, presented a report on the schedule of uncollected rates at the end of 2019. This report covered:

- Details on the targeted improvement for rates collections across the local authority sector for 2019 showing a 92.4% target collection for Dublin City Council for 2019, actual collection achieving 94%.
- 35% funding by Commercial Rates of Dublin City Council's revenue budget for 2019.
- Breakdown of the 2019 Commercial Rates income across the electoral areas.
- Details on the level of arrears for 2015-2019.
- Analysis of Dublin City Council's rates collection 2015-2019
- Age profile of the 2019 arrears figure of €23.1m
- Analysis of the 2019 arrears accounts across the range of charges
- Details of the arrears across description categories
- Analysis of the 2019 arrears schedule status
- 2019 Arrears by electoral area

In summation of this presentation, it was noted that the 2020 opening arrears of €23.1m had reduced to €20.3m at 7/3/2020.

Members raised a number of issues at the conclusion of this report as follows:

- An opportunity to analyse local business funding and the current commercial rate modelling as it stands into the future with regard to local government funding in general.
- The significant impact of online retail on businesses with premises. A request for a which would deal with this item and also include the properties that currently have exemptions from rates such as government buildings, agriculture, nursing homes and HSE buildings etc.
- The impact of Covid 19 on the cash flow for businesses
- The impact of Covid 19 on the issue of local government financing.
- The need for clarity on the Rates Waiver Scheme for both businesses and the City Council.
- The impact on businesses and the City Council's rates base of remote working and the future requirement for premises.
- The impact of Covid 19 on the turnover of hotels and pubs based on their current valuations
- The need to make strong representations to the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.
- Analysis of the types of business applying for the Restart Grant and the impact on which businesses have been most affected.
- Congratulation to the staff of the Rates Office on this high collection level.
- Quicker decision making is required by the City Council

## 6. Provision for Rates Alleviation Schemes – Briefing Note

Deirdre Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Rates Office, presented a report to the Committee which gave an overview of Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 which provides for the introduction of locally targeted rates alleviation schemes. It is a reserved function of the elected members. It was confirmed that Dublin City Council are awaiting regulations to be made available by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government which would detail among others:

- Maximum percentage of the waiver
- Time period applying to the scheme
- Process and sequencing to be followed
- Public consultation process

The other consideration to be taken into account are possible software changes to the Rates system and the budget implications of any waiver scheme.

Members noted a number of issues:

- This scheme could be used into the future to encourage economic growth in particular areas of the city.
- Noted that government provides the City Council with the opportunity to reduce taxes on businesses but does not provide corresponding opportunities to raise finances for the city.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that a request would be made to the Law Agent to provide clarity on whether the City Council can proceed with introducing this scheme without the departmental regulations being in place and if so to set out in a report on how it is envisaged that this scheme will be implemented by Dublin City Council.

## 7. Restart Grand Fund

Antoinette Power, Head of Financial Accounting, presented a briefing report on details of the introduction of the Restart Grant, qualifying criteria, Dublin City Council's approach and current statistics. Also circulated was the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Taking into account for the potential of 12k-16k business being eligible for this grant, Dublin City Council has worked with a third party provider to provide a backend technical solution to this volume of applications. Funds to the value of €27.6m were received on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the Council approved the payment of the first tranche of grants on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020.

K. Quinn noted that the aim was to automate the process thereby providing a quick turnaround on applications and the Council is working hard to provide this new scheme as efficiently as possible.

Members noted the following issues:

- Acknowledged the significant work that has gone into providing this scheme in such a short timeframe.
- A request for a further report on the eligibility and types of businesses applying for this grant
- Concerns over the eligibility of businesses who are currently in arrears on their rates.
- Further details on the eligibility exclusions from this grant fund

- Concerns over the low application levels for this grant and the effective communication required by government to provide clarity on eligibility.
- Confirmation that an SLA exists between the local authorities and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) and that Council must be in funds before any payments can be made.
- A decision was made that the Finance Department would administer the Restart grants instead of the LEO due to their engagement with other grant applications available.
- Request that the FAQs which are set by the LGMA and DBEI for all local authorities must be adjusted to provide clarity on eligibility.
- Confirmation that a sole trader would qualify for the grant following clarification from the LGMA.

**8. Motion in the name of Cllr. Dermot Lacey re: Proposal for the provision of public liability insurance being offered to not-for-profit organisations by Dublin City Council through its membership of IPB insurance.**

A report previously circulated at the January 2020 Finance SPC was noted. Cllr. Lacey asked that this report would now be reviewed in light of the current Covid situation. In particular, it was noted that this is not just a financial issue as the whole insurance issue is having a detrimental impact on community groups across the city leading to their closure. It was further noted that government need to act on this situation as community life is impacted.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that this item will remain on the agenda and will be returned to at a future meeting.

**9. Review of the feasibility of the implementation of Crowdfunding and/or Participatory Budgeting**

A report prepared by K. Quinn was circulated to the members outlining the merits of both funding initiatives.

K. Quinn noted that the City Council will pursue the introduction of civic crowdfunding at this time and in due course will review its progress in terms of monies secured, governance and community impact. Through a current market sounding exercise, Dublin City Council will establish the interest among crowdfunding platform providers. On completion of this exercise, a provider will be sought through a full procurement process. It is anticipated that an update to the September Meeting which will detail that Dublin City Council has gone to tender and then a pilot project will be undertaken.

**Agreed:** A report will be presented to the September Finance SPC Meeting.

**10. AOB**

There were no items raised under A.O.B.

**Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September in the Round Room, Mansion House and will be a physical meeting.**

### **Members Present**

Cllr Séamas McGrattan (Chairperson)  
Cllr. Daryl Barron  
Cllr Mary Callaghan  
Cllr Anthony Connaghan  
Cllr. Daithí De Róiste  
Cllr. Alison Gilliland  
Cllr James Geoghegan  
Cllr Dermot Lacey  
Cllr. Darcy Lonergan  
Cllr. Paddy McCartan  
Cllr. Noeleen Reilly  
Cllr. Nial Ring  
Jack Daly, Docklands Business Forum  
Tara Lillywhite, Dublin Chamber of Commerce  
Dr. Caroline McMullan, DCU  
Philip O'Callaghan, PPN  
Aidan Sweeney, IBEC

### **Apologies**

Eric Fleming, ICTU

### **Officials**

Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance  
Antoinette Power, Head of Financial Accounting  
Fintan Moran, Head of Management Accounting  
Dermot Collins, A/Executive Manager, Environment and Transportation Department  
Deirdre Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Rates Office  
Fiona Murphy, Senior Staff Officer, Finance Secretariat  
Mary Curran, Personal Assistant, Finance Secretariat

Minister Darragh O'Brien  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
Custom House  
Dublin 1  
D01 W6X0

30th July 2020

### **Re: Funding for Dublin City Council Services 2020 and 2021**

Dear Minister O'Brien,

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment. These are especially challenging times with many pressures evident, across all aspects of life, health, economic, societal and personal. It is very important during this difficult period that local government and Dublin City Council services in particular continue to be delivered to all clients, especially those most marginal. Also Dublin City Council provides many services which support the trading environment, now at its most difficult for many years.

I write to you as the Chair of Dublin City Council's Budget Consultative Group (BCG), a cross party group of councillors nominated to consider the Council's annual budget. The BCG met today to consider the financial impact of the pandemic on Dublin City Council in 2020 and 2021. The recently announced rate waiver scheme for quarters 2 and 3 is welcomed and much needed. The scheme will provide relief to businesses unable to trade and consequently unable to meet rating liabilities. The scheme also provides certainty to Dublin City Council through the funding of rates so that service provision can continue.

There remains some key concerns for the balance of the 2020 financial year and for 2021. The future level of economic activity over the remaining months of 2020 is unclear but more likely than not, it will be below pre pandemic levels. Necessary measures such as social distancing have had a direct impact on business viability in some sectors. It remains then unclear as to the capacity of the business sector to meet rating liabilities for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of this year. Attention should also be given to other local authority income than rates, such as planning fees, parking charges, housing rents. I understand that a sectoral submission was made to your Department some time ago for this lost income. Dublin City Council estimates that €32m has been foregone, arising from the pandemic, across other income sources than rates. There have of course been additional costs incurred as a direct result of the pandemic. These include increased activity of Dublin Fire Brigade including the operation of an additional ambulance, staff overtime, business continuity measures, IT devices to support remote working, PPE and additional services for persons presenting as homeless. It is estimated that all of these have resulted in €41m additional incurred costs to Dublin City Council. A further sectoral submission has been made on this.

You will be keenly aware that the funding of Local Government is finely balanced. The cost of service provision has risen in recent years in parallel with an increasing expectation that the

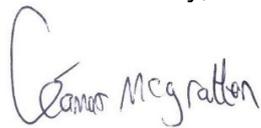
local authorities should apply no or low increases to charges. One of the difficulties will be in the provision of full housing services due to shortfall in funding. In a Dublin context the LPT has not delivered a flow of funds from which to provide services that householders now expect. In this already difficult setting, the financial impact of the pandemic is considerable.

I ask that you meet with the members of the BCG, at a date, time and place convenient to you, to discuss the funding measures required to ensure continuity of important services. The three priorities for that meeting, as outlined above, from the perspective of Dublin City Council, are to gain certainty that there will be a rates waiver scheme to cover relevant businesses for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2020, that there will be compensatory funding for local authorities for lost income (other than rates) and that there will be compensatory funding for local authorities for additional costs incurred related to the pandemic.

I look forward to meeting with you.

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Yours sincerely,



**Cllr. Séamas McGrattan**  
**Chairperson**  
**Budget Consultative Group**

Minister Eamon Ryan,  
Minister for Climate Action, Communications Networks and Transport  
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2  
D02TR60

13<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **Re: Funding the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network**

Dear Minister Ryan,

At the meeting of the Finance Strategic Policy Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, a report was presented to the Committee Members that dealt with the classification of roads and the funding structure around this classification and the business case that has been prepared by Dublin City Council to seek additional funding for the road network in the City Council's administrative area.

During the debate that followed it was highlighted, among other issues, that there has been an increase in road users due to increased economic and tourism activity. Over the period 2011-2018, it was noted that there has been a 20% rise in the number of buses in the city area, 60% increase in the number of pedestrian users and 30% in the number of cyclists.

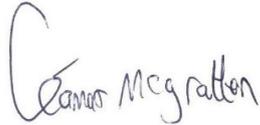
It was further noted that there has been a significant increase in development and construction activity across the city corresponding with an increased movement of heavy goods vehicles. While welcoming this vital construction activity for the development of the city and national economy, it is also having a detrimental effect on the structural condition of the road network. Thus government investment is required to carry out significant remedial works on the road network.

In addition, it was pointed out that permit requests from utilities companies have increased by 20% from 2011 to 2019. The opening of the public road to allow access by the utilities to their infrastructure is further compromising the integrity of the road and footpaths network thus requiring additional frequent and reactive maintenance works by Dublin City Council.

As you will be aware, the allocation to Dublin City Council for roads maintenance has been set at €5,780,600 for the past six years. Since the introduction of the Local Property Tax, exchequer funding was replaced with LPT receipts. It is, I think, evident that €5.78m is not adequate to address the maintenance requirements of the capital city's road network.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that a copy of this report would be forwarded to your department for review. The Committee Members would very much welcome your views on this business case for additional funding and would also welcome the opportunity to formulate a funding matrix which would take into account the length of road, volume of traffic, types of traffic and any other relevant factors for more equitable funding.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr. Séamas McGrattan**  
**Chairperson**  
**Finance Strategic Policy Committee**

**Copy To:** Ken Spratt, Acting Secretary General

From: Ministers Office <no-reply@cloud.gov.ie>  
Sent: Friday 21 August 2020 09:43  
Subject: Ref:TTAS-MO-02970-2020

Our Ref: TTAS-MO-02970-2020

Dear Cllr. McGrattan,

I refer to your letter of 13th July regarding the condition of roads in Dublin City.

As you know, each local authority has statutory responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of roads within its area of responsibility. State grants, where applicable, are intended to supplement the funding allocated to the maintenance and improvement of roads by local authorities from their own resources.

The arrangement put in place by Government following the introduction of the Local Property Tax (LPT) required local authorities, where receipts from LPT exceeded the previous General Purpose Grant, to use part of that surplus to replace certain Central Government funding, including regional and local road grants. The €5.78 million mentioned in your letter reflects the amount of the regional and local road grant provided to Dublin City Council prior to that change.

Apart from the requirement to allocate €5.78 million each year in place of the Central Government regional and local road programme grant, it is for Dublin City Council to assess its expenditure priorities and allocate funding accordingly taking into account the overall resources available to it. In this context the report prepared on the condition of roads in Dublin City will, I expect, be considered as part of the Council's consideration of future budgets.

In relation to the points raised in your letter regarding road openings, the Department has supported the development of the MapRoad roadworks licensing system (MRL) which is intended to provide an online national licensing system complying with the National Guidelines for the Opening, Backfilling and Reinstatement of Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book). 30 of the 31 local authorities are using the system and software development work is underway at present which will allow Dublin City Council to also use the MRL system. The Department has provided significant financial support to facilitate this and it is anticipated that this process will be completed this year.

The Department considers that the national road licensing system will support better consistency, transparency and efficiency in roadworks management by roads authorities particularly with increased volumes of road opening licence applications.

As regards the references in the report attached to your letter to sustainable transport and modal shift, I would draw your attention to the fact that the new Programme for Government – Our Shared Future - sets out an ambitious and wide-ranging set of commitments in relation to walking and cycling, supported by an increased multi-annual budgetary allocation amounting to some €1.8 billion over the lifetime of the Government. This commitment to significantly increase the allocation which will benefit a range of cycling and walking infrastructural projects that are delivered under various programmes including, Sustainable Urban Transport, Cycling & Walking, Greenways and the BusConnects Programme. The National Transport Authority, in conjunction with a number of local authorities, provide infrastructure for cycling and walking through our sustainable mobility programme.

The Programme for Government also includes a commitment to review the current LPT arrangements with a view to providing that money generated in a local authority area will be retained locally.

With best wishes,

**Eamon Ryan**  
**Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport**

The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (details available on [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie))

An Roinn Iompair, Turasóireachta agus Spóirt  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Lána Liosain, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 TR60  
Leeson Lane, Dublin, D02 TR60

[www.dttas.gov.ie](http://www.dttas.gov.ie)

# Meamram

## Memo



Oifig an Cheannasaí Airgeadais, An Roinn Airgeadais  
Oifigí na Cathrach, An Ché Adhmaid, Baile Átha Cliath 8, Éire

Office of the Head of Finance, Finance Department,  
Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8, Ireland  
T. 01 222 2102/3 E. [finoff@dublincity.ie](mailto:finoff@dublincity.ie)

John Flanagan,  
Acting Assistant Chief Executive  
Environment and Transportation Department  
Block 2, Floor 4  
Civic Offices

16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **Re: Funding the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network.**

Dear John,

At the meeting of the Finance Strategic Policy held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Dermot Collins, Acting Executive Manager, presented his report to the Committee Members on the funding issues around the road maintenance budget. I wish to thank you, Dermot and Bernard for the preparation of this report which was very much welcomed by the members. At the meeting the following actions were noted:

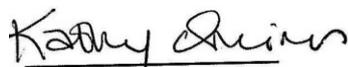
- a) This report would issue to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport for consideration.
- b) It was agreed that a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee identifying the factors having impact on maintenance, such as the length and breadth of the carriageway, volume of traffic, type of traffic, local factors and any other relevant factors for more equitable funding.

I wish to confirm that your report has been sent on to the new Minister for Climate Action, Communications Networks and Transport, Eamon Ryan and I attached a copy of the Chair Séamas McGrattan's letter for your records.

I would wish that this report, outlining in greater details the many issues that impact on the maintenance of our roads network, would go to the meeting of the Finance SPC scheduled for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September. I would appreciate if you would advise on the feasibility of this. Alternatively the report could be presented to the meeting scheduled for Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020. The deadline for submission of reports for the September meeting is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August or for the November meeting is Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Kathy Quinn  
Head of Finance  
With responsibility for ICT



# Meamram

# Memo



Oifig an Cheannasaí Airgeadais, An Roinn Airgeadais  
Oifigí na Cathrach, An Ché Adhmaid, Baile Átha Cliath 8, Éire

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Yvonne Kelly,  
Acting Law Agent,  
Block 3, Floor 4,  
Civic Offices

16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**Re: Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019  
Section 15 - Provision for Rates Alleviation Schemes**

Dear Yvonne,

At the meeting of the Finance Strategic Policy held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, a briefing note was presented to the committee members by Deirdre Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Rates Office on Section 15 of this new legislation - Provision for Rates Alleviation Scheme (copy attached).

Committee members were advised that the City Council awaits the circulation of regulations from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in order to commence this process.

It was proposed by Councillor James Geoghegan and agreed by the committee members that a request would be made to the Law Agent to provide clarity on whether the City Council can proceed with introducing this scheme without the departmental regulations being in place and if so to set out in a report how it is envisaged that this scheme will be implemented by Dublin City Council.

I would intend to present your advice to the next meeting of the Finance SPC scheduled for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and I would appreciate if you would submit your report by Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Quinn  
Head of Finance  
With responsibility for ICT



# MEAMRAM MEMO

Chuig/To	Kathy Quinn	Ó/From	Yvonne C. Kelly Acting Law Agent
Ref:		Ref:	YK/FIN001/1358
Dáta/Date	20 July 2020		

## **RE: Scheme for Waiver of Rates Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019**

Dear Kathy,

I refer to your memo requesting a report for the next Finance SPC meeting by 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020. I note the report of Fintan Moran outlining the scheme for waiver of rates under Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 for the previous SPC meeting. By way of further clarification to that report requested by Cllr James Geoghegan – *The members requested whether they can proceed with introducing a scheme for waiver of rates under Section 15 of the Local Government and Other Matters Act 2019 without Departmental regulations.*

The simple answer is no because according to the legislative directory – Irish Statute Book online - Section 15 of the Act has not yet been commenced. Only a limited number of provisions of the 2019 Act were enacted in July of 2019. The legislation sets out that the making of a scheme under Section 15 is a reserved function. It provides that the Minister may make regulations for the purposes of Section 15. Fintan reports that the Department is currently drafting regulations. It is likely the intention of the government not to commence Section 15 until regulations are ready to be signed into law.

How a scheme will be prepared for the elected members to consider and finally implement will be a matter for the Rates and Finance Department to devise. The legislation itself gives very little detail and it is therefore likely that the proposed regulations will provide more clarity. As such, before you can report on this, you would need to see the regulations or proposed regulations.

The legislation in Section 15(4) provides that a local authority **shall not** make a scheme under this section until the adjustment period (within the meaning of section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) ceases for every specified area within the administrative area of that authority. Section 29 concerns base year adjustment calculations and specified areas. Are these applicable in the DCC administrative area? You might clarify what is the position on this with Rates. This will impact ability of members to make a scheme when and if legislation is commenced if applicable.

I will check the legislation directory on status of Section 15 before 28<sup>th</sup> and advise you of any change.

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Yvonne C. Kelly  
Acting Law Agent



## Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee

### Factors Impacting the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network



## **Introduction:**

The Executive Manager (Engineering), Roads Section, presented a report to Dublin City Council's Finance Strategic Policy Committee, on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2020, titled "*Funding the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network*". The report set out the Business Case for securing additional funding for investment in the maintenance of the Dublin city's road network and provided an overview of the following:

- The role of Dublin City Council's Road Maintenance Services
- Dublin City Council's corporate objectives for the maintenance of roads
- Investment streams in the maintenance of Dublin city's roads network – General Purpose Grant versus Local Property Tax
- The condition of Dublin City Council's road network
- Insights from Road Maintenance Services' Transport Asset Management System (TAMS)
- Traffic volumes and mode share within Dublin City Council's administrative area
- Road Maintenance Services Works Programme 2020
- Utility openings and road and footpath reinstatements

It was agreed, that a copy of '*the report*' would be issued to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport for consideration. This report was subsequently sent to the new Minister for Climate Action, Communications Networks and Transport, Eamon Ryan through the Chair, Councillor Séamas McGrattan, on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Emerging from the Committee meeting's discussions, it was further agreed that an additional report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee, identifying the key factors that have an impact on the maintenance of Dublin City Council's road network. The key factors include the following criteria:

1. Funding constraints
2. Traffic volumes, transport modal share and transport modal shift
3. Impact of utility openings and reinstatements
4. Severe weather events/ winter maintenance
5. Traffic permits and restrictions
6. Planned maintenance versus reactive maintenance.
7. COVID-19 Pandemic

## **Background to the Roads Section, Dublin City Council**

Dublin City Council's Roads Section is responsible for the management of Roads Maintenance Services, Road Design and Construction, Transportation Planning and the Survey and Mapping function for Dublin city. Dublin City Council manages transportation assets, with a conservative estimated value of €2.35 billion, consisting of 1,250km of public roads and footways, 107 bridges and traffic

infrastructure. This transportation network also houses a subterranean network of critical infrastructural energy, water, drainage and communications assets, which enhance the connectivity and socio-economic needs of Dublin city. This web of underground ducting and services impacts on the road and footway operations and maintenance activities, on a daily basis. The efficient operation and maintenance of these assets is imperative, in delivering the requisite service to all road users, while ensuring that value for money is achieved. The maintenance works are carried out through a combination of the Roads Maintenance Services Operational Divisional staff and expert external contractors'.

## 1. Funding Constraints

Dublin City Council is one of four local authorities that receives no funding from the Department of Climate Action, Communications Networks and Transport (formerly the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport) for investment in the regional and local roads restoration and improvement programme.<sup>1</sup> In the current year, the Department has made over €400-Million available to other local authorities for investment in the maintenance of regional and local roads. Grants are issued under the category headings such as ‘restoration improvement - €245M’, ‘restoration maintenance - €42M’, ‘supplementary restoration maintenance - €26M’, ‘discretionary grants - €85M’ and ‘rehabilitation of former national roads - €7Million’.

In 2020, Dublin City Council will invest €12.5 Million in the delivery of the Road Maintenance Services Annual Works Programme. €3.5 Million of this funding has been made available from the City Council’s Revenue Budget, with a further €9-Million received from the Capital Budget. This investment will facilitate the restoration and maintenance of approximately 14km of regional and local roads and the repair/ renewal of approximately 11km of footpaths. As illustrated in ‘Table 1’ below, Dublin City Council’s road network is 1,239km in length.

Classification	National	Regional	Local Primary	Local Secondary	Local Tertiary	Total
Length (km)	1	244	118	4	872	1,239

Table 1 - Road Classification Dublin City Council Administrative Area

Visual condition surveys, conducted in 2018/2019, have indicated that 11% (27km) of the regional road network and 20% (196km) of the local road network are in need of structural restoration/ road reconstruction. However, the current level of funding available to the Road Maintenance Services Division will only facilitate the repair of 14km (1%) of Dublin City Council’s road network deemed to be in need of structural restoration/ reconstruction.

Decisions therefore need to be made on which roads are to be prioritised for repair and for inclusion in the *Annual Works Programme*. These decisions are based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments, emerging from a combination of data sets, assembled and analysed from Machine Road Condition Surveys (incl. skid resistance) of the road network, visual condition surveys, defects and hazards recorded on our asset management system, service requests, strategic and local issues and engineering expertise, experience and knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> The other local authorities that do not receive funding from the Department for investment in regional and local road restoration and improvement are South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

Planned works, which are works delivered through the aegis of the Annual Works Programme, are carried out by a framework of contractors', operating on behalf of the Road Maintenance Services' Division. These works are supplemented by reactive works, such as the repair of potholes, carried out by the Division's operational crews'. Further details are provided in section 6 of this report.

Table 2 below sets out details from the 'National Oversight and Audit Commission, (NOAC) Local Authority Performance Indicator Report, 2018', together with information received from the national Road Management Office (RMO). It highlights the investment that each local authority made in the restoration and improvement of their regional and local roads during 2018. The Road Management Office has advised that the 'amounts expended' in the restoration and improvement of these roads, include both grants from the Department, together with supplementary investment from the local authorities. In the case of the four Dublin Local Authorities, the investment recorded is exclusively from their own budget resources.



*Photographs illustrating roads in Dublin City that are in need of structural restoration and reconstruction.*



**Table 2 - Regional and Local Roads Grant Works**

Authority	KM of regional road strengthened during 2018	Amount expended on regional road strengthening during 2018 (€)	KM of regional road resealed during 2018	Amount expended on regional road resealing during 2018 (€)	KM of local road (i.e. total of primary, secondary and tertiary) strengthened during 2018	Amount expended on local road strengthening during 2018 (€)	KM of local road resealed during 2018	KM of regional and local roads in each local authority.
Carlow	12.2	744,282	1.3	58,372	53.4	2,753,164	17.4	1,251
Cavan	13.3	1,518,500	19.2	453,192	81.7	4,685,807	106.5	2,908
Clare	13.6	1,784,375	17.7	465,089	93.1	6,022,451	123.1	4,125
Cork City	1	488,796		10.2	3,516,730			897
Cork County	34.1	8,470,723	64.2	1,999,647	185.5	15,935,815	271.8	11,752
Donegal	38.9	5,489,882	25.2	813,161	232.9	12,438,043	105.5	6,173
Dublin City	7.3	3,531,903			14	5,382,040		1,239
Dún Laoghaire* Rathdown	3.3	2,206,160			4.2	1,145,454		760
Fingal*	8.6	1,514,330	4.8	95,000	14.6	1,614,512	5.9	1,335
Galway City	1.7	713,475			1.9	240,600		286
Galway Co.	20.3	3,146,252	27.4	1,073,310	150.9	1,0338,526	106.5	6,540
Kerry	11.8	2,351,106	24.8	794,453	80.1	7,047,608	71.4	4,454
Kildare	21.7	3,207,000	8.4	183,838	81.9	6,083,754	17	2,494
Kilkenny	8.4	1,397,363	19.7	695,894	52.3	5,360,712	40.5	3,054
Laois	5.9	1,271,049	4.7	271,144	21.9	2,449,897	23	2,211
Leitrim	13.7	1,585,085	5.9	259,785	89.9	3,938,458	45.7	2,125
Limerick City and County	9.5	2,002,767	19.1	650,767	75	5,883,422	80	3,815
Longford	5.4	701,641	5.1	124,524	56.3	3,086,246	46.8	1,557
Louth	9.4	1,783,657	6.3	406,665	18.9	1,371,936	47.2	1,500
Mayo	18	3,610,193	8.5	289,316	103.4	8,514,139	239.7	6,272
Meath	19.8	3,602,923	15.8	553,529	62.5	6,301,820	83.2	3,181
Monaghan	7.1	1,477,989	13.5	421,463	39.9	4,313,022	49.1	2,454
Offaly	24.8	2,210,754	8.8	284,615	70.4	3,022,710	44.9	2,090
Roscommon	14.1	2,466,182	0.7	29190	160.8	6,023,656	133.2	3,775
Sligo	4.1	713,824	5.6	159316	68.4	5,443,078	62.9	2,681
South Dublin	2.1	310,000			11.2	1,816,418		906
Tipperary	32.2	3,284,681	19.5	669,516	132.7	9,433,764	68.5	5,579
Waterford City and Co.	10.3	1,790,293	19.3	672,768	30	3,918,492	42.7	2,819
Westmeath	12.5	1,597,817	11	299,631	93.1	5,114,715	57.5	2,207
Wexford	18.1	2,961,071	27.2	80,2617	56.7	5,424,774	56	3,552
Wicklow	12.9	2,180,765	14.6	385,137	68	3,838,065	20.2	2,289
<b>Totals</b>	<b>416.1</b>	<b>70,114,838</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>12,911,939</b>	<b>2,215.8</b>	<b>162,459,828</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>96,281</b>

NOTE: \*These local authorities did not receive grants from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Works were funded through their own resources.

## 2. Traffic volumes and modal share on Dublin City Council’s road network

Dublin City Council, in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA), conduct an annual survey on road user trends, in terms of the modal share of vehicles and people crossing the canal cordon. Table 3 below presents the total numbers of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists crossing the Canal Cordon in the inbound direction between 7am and 10am, during a typical morning in 2018.

Mode	Count
Bus	1,837
Car	48,820
Taxi	4,399
Walk	23,858
Cycle	12,227
Goods	1,153
Motorbike	1,477



Table 3 – Traffic count canal cordon (inbound 7am to 10am).

As clearly illustrated from the table, the City’s road network attracts a high volume of traffic and people movements in comparison to other major Irish cities. Almost **60,000** vehicles crossed over the canals and into Dublin city during this three-hour window, with a further **40,000** pedestrians and cyclists travelling in the same direction. Buses, lorries and cars continuously braking, turning and accelerating on the City’s streets has an enduring detrimental impact on the roads’ surface, resulting in deterioration, erosion and the onset of cracking and potholes.

In addition, increased economic activity in Dublin city, in recent years, had led to an increase in the level of construction activity, adjacent to roads and footways and associated construction traffic travelling on Dublin’s roads and streets. Consequently, the confluence of these factors reduces the serviceable life of the roads and footways and places an attendant need for intervention and investment in reactive maintenance (pothole repair) and planned maintenance works.

Dublin City Council, through its stated policies, plans and objectives, will continue to work closely with its key partners and stakeholders, to promote sustainable transport measures and encourage a modal shift, weighted towards walking and cycling. In reducing our reliance on private car usage, the modal shift acts as a catalyst in generating better environmental, health and wellbeing outcomes for our citizens and visitors. However, there is still an ongoing need for an appropriate and proportionate level of investment in the maintenance of Dublin city’s road assets, in the interest of protecting the safety of all road users; particularly vulnerable users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

### 3. Impact of Utility Openings and Reinstatements

Dublin City has an extensive network of utility infrastructure, located beneath its road network, including water, drainage, gas, electricity and ducting for fibre optics. These services are essential for promoting Dublin as a City to live, to visit and to conduct business in. In 2019, Dublin City Council received approximately 13,500 traffic permit applications. The majority of these related to Utility companies seeking permission to open the roads and footways, to access or install their infrastructure, to carry out essential repairs or in order to upgrade their services.

Dublin City Council performs a regulatory function in regard to inspecting these openings and reinstatements, to ensure that they are carried out in accordance with relevant national specifications and standards. However, it is not possible for supervisory staff to be present and check the quality of reinstatement at all openings. Utility road openings and reinstatements have a detrimental impact on the structural integrity of roads and ultimately reduce the roads' design life. This phenomenon necessitates additional maintenance works on the affected roads and thereby the need for additional funding and resources.

Dublin City, as the capital city, administrative and educational centre, economic engine for the State, and a major hub for residential development, businesses, and tourism, has more utility openings each year in comparison to all other local authorities. This invasive activity, places further demands on the road and footway structures, with increased levels of damage in comparison to other local authorities and therefore creates a greater need for intervention and investment.



*Photographs illustrate examples of utility reinstatements failing on the road network, and an example of ducting, which has not been laid to the correct depth.*

#### 4. Severe Weather Events/ Winter Maintenance:

Each year during the period October to April, the Road Maintenance Services Division manages a winter maintenance programme. This programme involves the treatment of approximately 300km of the road network with gritting salts, on those occasions that freezing and icy road conditions are forecasted. To illustrate the regularity of these events, there were twenty-five such incidents during the winter maintenance period 2019 to 2020, where road temperatures were predicted to fall below 0°Celsius.

Severe weather conditions, such as prolonged periods of snow and ice, have a detrimental impact on the quality of the road network. For example, following Storm Emma (February to March 2018), which brought severe snow and ice conditions, the Road Maintenance Services Division identified €6.3 million worth of damage caused to Dublin city's road and streets. Examples of the type of damage included the lifting of road sections from freeze and thaw action on soils and the deepening and widening of potholes from expanding water / ice.

In order to help fund the cost of the remedial works that were required to repair the damage to these roads, Dublin City Council applied to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for financial support, however no funding was forthcoming. Consequently, Dublin City Council funded the necessary repair works through its own financial resources.



*Photograph illustrating damage to the Stillorgan Road, as a result of Storm Emma.*



*Photograph illustrating damage to Grace Park Road, as a result of Storm Emma.*

## 5. Traffic permits and restrictions/ temporary traffic management

Dublin City Council's Roadworks Control Unit grants permissions for contractors, operating on behalf of the Road Maintenance Services Division, to carry out road resurfacing and reconstruction works on the City's streets. In order to reduce congestion and to minimise the disruption of the maintenance works on the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services across Dublin city and in order to reduce the impact of works on operational bus corridors, businesses, educational centres and recreational amenities, it is necessary to restrict such activities on strategic and busy commuter routes, to the evening and night-time hours and at weekends.

These works and linked restrictions have a significant cost implication on the tender sums received from contractors, for works that are to be undertaken outside normal business hours. These works cost more than works of a similar nature that are carried out during normal business hours. Additionally the temporary traffic management and safety requirements and measures to be undertaken, for works of this nature and complexity, in a city centre built environment, are more complex and costly.



*Photograph - resurfacing works being carried out at night on South Great George's Street.*



*Photograph - resurfacing works being carried out at night at Lincoln Place.*

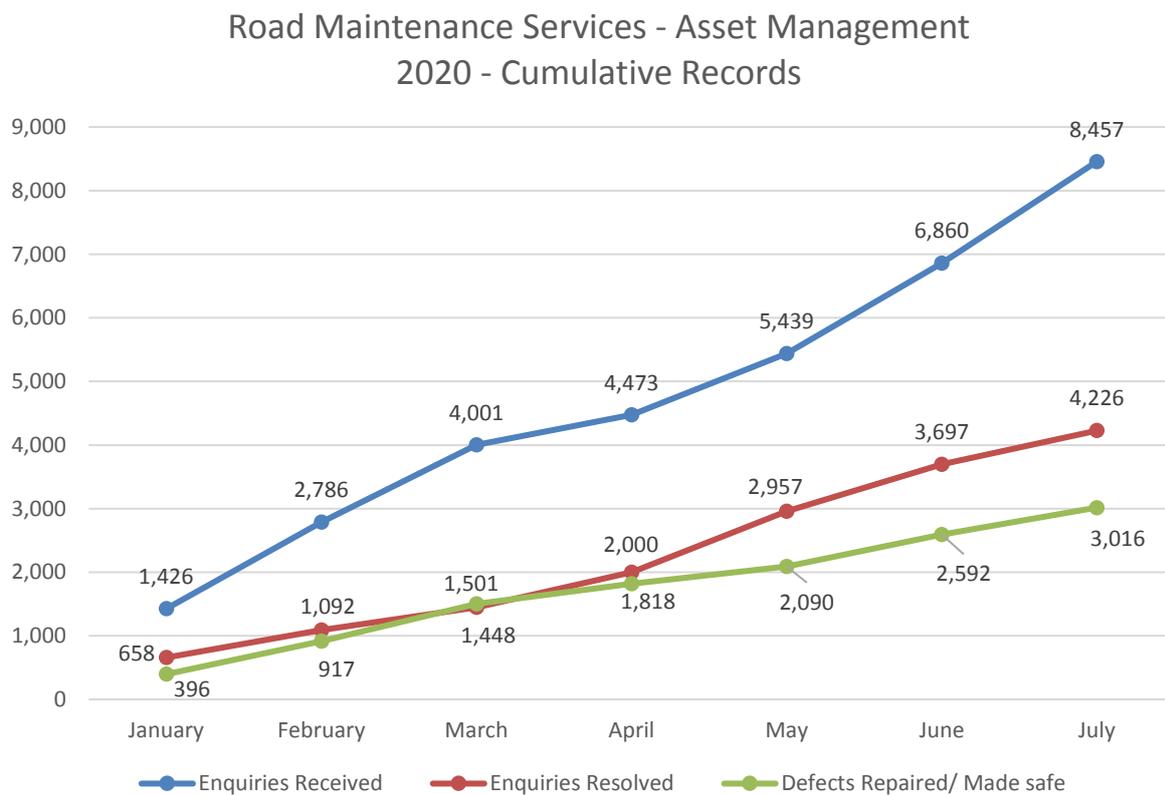
## 6. Reactive Maintenance versus Planned Maintenance.

The graph presented below provides a snapshot of Road Maintenance Services' reactive maintenance for the period January 2020 to July 2020, in terms of enquiries and services requests received (8,457), enquiries resolved (4,226), and defects/ hazards repaired/ made safe (3,016).

Potholes and hazards on the carriageway and trips on footpaths are prioritised for repair, based on the severity of the defect and the Traffic Impact number of the road. Critical defects are tended to first and lower priority defects are added to a works programme and are repaired when resources become available.

Underinvestment in planned maintenance, such as the resurfacing and reconstruction of large sections of carriageway or the reconstruction of footpaths, results in a greater need for reactive maintenance i.e. repairing potholes, tree trip hazards on the footpaths that have emerged and worsened over time, as a consequence of repairs not being carried out in a timely manner.

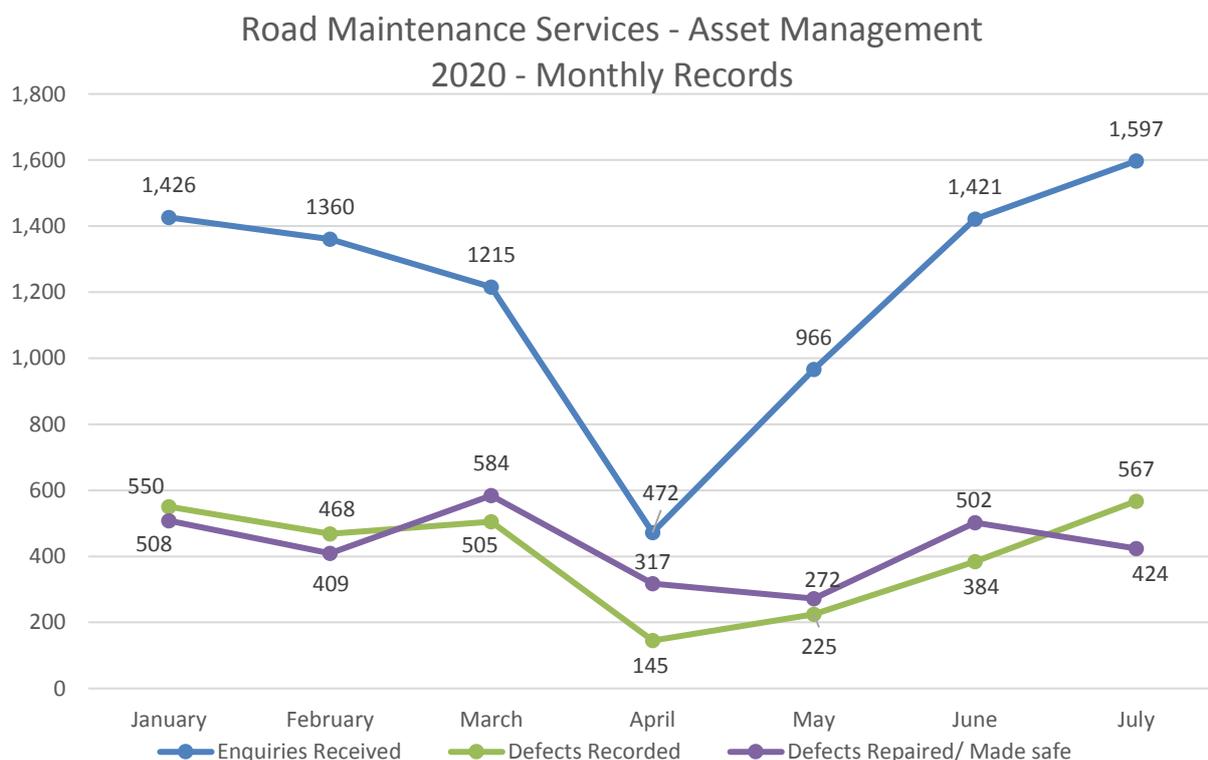
Additional investment in planned maintenance works would decrease the need for reactive maintenance works, which would not only make the road network safer for all road users, but would reduce the need for reactive maintenance and the costs associated with same.



## 7. COVID-19 Pandemic

The emergence of Covid-19 in Ireland in March 2020 has impacted the Roads Maintenance Services Division in carrying out its functions efficiently and effectively. This operational led Division requires a 24/7/365 presence on Dublin city's roads and streets to manage daily occurring incidents. The operational and governance constraints imposed by Covid-19, in ensuring and leading a new culture in ensuring the safety of staff, contractors and citizens alike, has required a reconfiguration and a re-engineering of the way tasks and activities are carried out, on behalf of Dublin City Council. The adaptation of new innovative solutions, such as the introduction and implementation of POD systems of work, additional PPE safety requirements and the challenges posed by a nascent communications environment, has placed additional challenges on the Road Maintenance Services Division, in effectively delivering its essential services.

The graph presented below illustrates the level of service requests received, defects recorded, and defects and hazards repaired and/or made safe during the period January to July 2020. As evidenced by the data, productivity levels fell during the months of April and May, when compared with the earlier months in the year. For example, just 272 defects/ hazards were repaired and/or made safe during May, this compares with a total of 584 during March. This reduction in output was a result of the Division's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when it became necessary to reduce the number of crews operating across the City, in order to 1) minimise the risk of staff becoming infected with COVID-19 and 2) ensure the continued delivery of critical services , such as responding to serious hazards on the road network. It is expected that the Division's response to COVID-19 will continue to impact productivity levels over the coming months.



## 8. Conclusion

This report highlights that there are a number of critical factors that impact on the maintenance of the road network in the City centre and its environs, such as funding constraint, high traffic volumes, the impact of utilities, the impact of severe weather events, the impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the need to keep Dublin city moving, to support businesses and commuters and the enduring need to provide a steady state and appropriate level of investment in planned maintenance activities.

As referenced in the conclusion section in the report to Dublin City Council's Finance Strategic Policy Committee, on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2020, titled "*Funding the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network*", Dublin City roads infrastructural network plays a pivotal role in ensuring the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services, across Dublin city and provides the vital access and egress transport links to and from the city. It is therefore critical, that there is sufficient ongoing support and investment in the maintenance of Dublin city's existing road and footway network.

**Dermot Collins**

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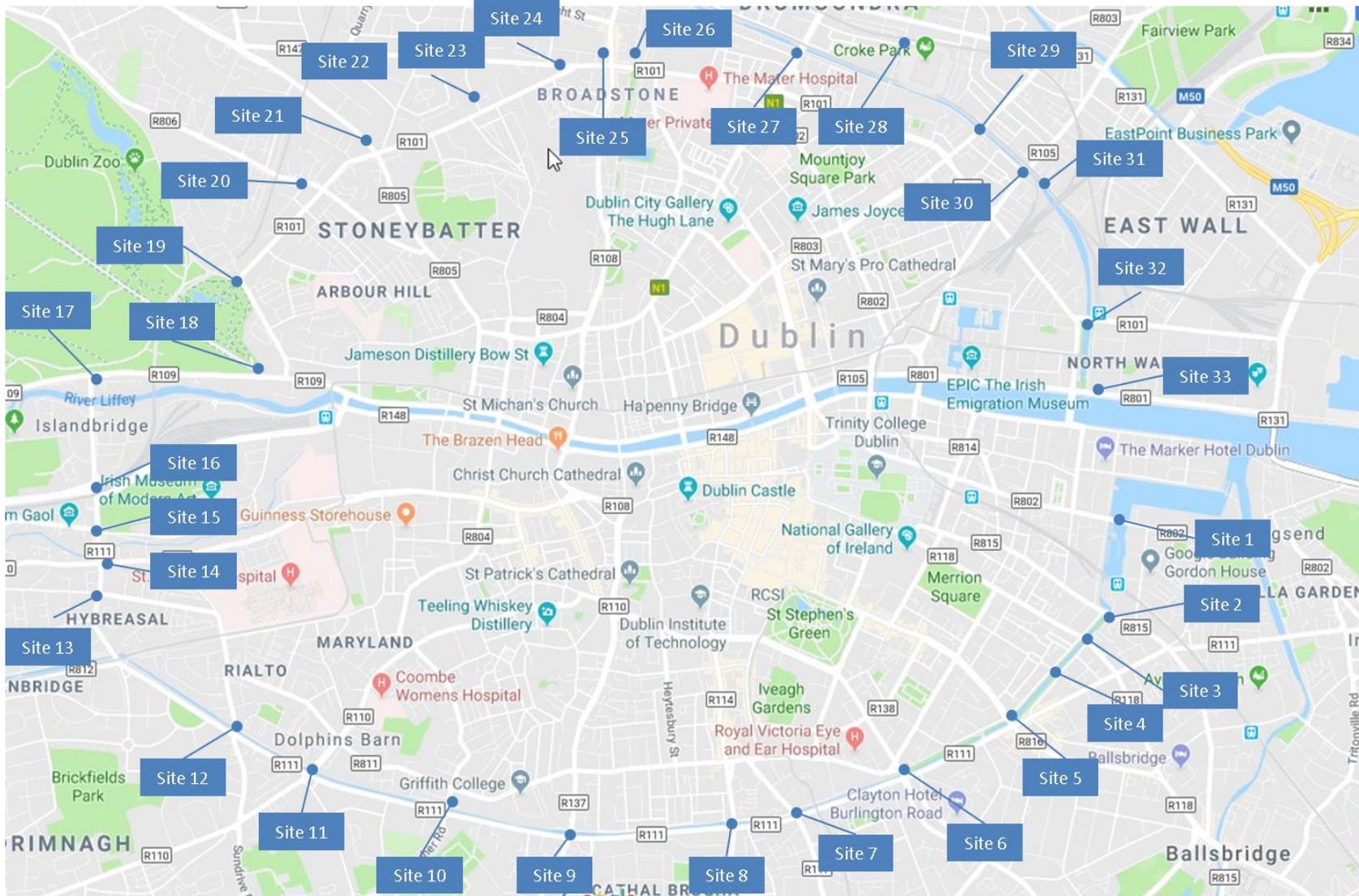
**Executive Manager (Engineering)**  
**Roads Section**

**19<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

# Factors Impacting the Maintenance of Dublin City Council's Road Network

## Appendix A

Canal Cordon Count Locations:





*Photographs illustrating roads in Dublin City that are in need of structural restoration and reconstruction.*



*Photograph illustrating road in Dublin City that is in need of structural restoration and reconstruction.*



*Photograph illustrating high traffic volumes of the City's road network.*



*Photograph illustrating high traffic volumes of the City's road network.*



*Photograph illustrating example of utility reinstatement failing on the road network.*



*Photograph illustrating example of utility reinstatement failing on the road network.*



*Photograph illustrating utility laid to the incorrect depth.*



*Photograph illustrating damage to the Stillorgan Road, as a result of Storm Emma (2018).*



*Photograph illustrating damage to Grace Park Road, as a result of Storm Emma (2018).*



*Photograph - resurfacing works being carried out at night on South Great George's Street.*



*Photograph - resurfacing works being carried out at night at Lincoln Place.*





## Finance Strategic Policy Committee

### Dublin City Council's ICT Transition and Response to Covid 19

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## **1. Introduction**

This report outlines the actions carried out by the IS department in support of the business changes required to support Dublin City Council (DCC) through the Covid 19 Crisis. It outlines how the business continuity plan was invoked by the IS department to allow DCC ICT services to be remotely provided.

It will also outline how additional services were developed by DCC in an agile fashion to allow critical needs to be delivered to very tight timelines.

## **2. Remote Working and Business Continuity**

DCC's technical architecture has always been designed by the IS department to support access from any device from any location to all services. In addition, the systems are concentrated in an internal cloud style service with high levels of availability from multiple data centres. This allow great flexibility in terms of business continuity and disaster recovery. The business continuity requirements have been planned over many years so while this specific requirement was unique it was possible to quickly provide the services that were available in the Offices to a remote environment.

All applications and access to all data was possible within the normal secured environments in DCC.

### **2.1 Citrix Remote Working**

DCC's desktop policy includes the use of Citrix desktops. These are used both as Thin clients in the Civic offices & Area offices and from remote clients connected securely over the internet. This service became the primary remote working solution for DCC. Remote working was immediately made available by the IS department for 1,200 remote users. This was increased up to 2,200 users to meet the final demand from business for remote working by increasing the number of servers and broadband utilised.

### **2.2 Laptops**

With the increased number of remote workers, the demand for laptops by users became critical to the delivery of service. Use was made of our strategic supply partners to ensure the quick delivery of additional laptops. These were configured by the Technical and End User staff of the IS department. Over 850 laptops were provided by IS to the business in a brief time to meet this demand.

### **2.3 Mobile Phones and Tablets**

To support the increased number of remote workers and the requirement to provide secure access to services additional mobile phones and Tablets were provided by the IS department.. Working with Vodafone our partner for mobile services the technical support team configured over 450 additional phones and 200 additional tablets for use by DCC staff.

### **2.4 Security**

With a strategic corporate desktop environment, build on Citrix there is a high level of security available for remote working. We did not need to build a new environment but could scale up the existing environment, which significantly reduced the risks associated with this level of remote working.

With the increased use of remote applications and technical environment, an independent security review in line with our normal procedures was carried out. This highlighted no risks to the environment.

### **3. Remote Telephony**

A number of measures were put in place to allow remote access to DCC's telephony systems where required by the business. This allowed for the management of the telephony channel to include remote workers as well as staff based in the offices. The Covid Helpline was also setup to help at risk members of the public in accessing non-emergency and non-medical supports and advice during the current public health emergency.

### **4. Microsoft Teams**

A pilot had been underway in DCC for the use of Microsoft Office 365 including the Teams client. This was accelerated by DCC when the crisis arose to allow for secure video and audio conferencing of staff. The Pilot was ramped up by the IS Department from 100 users to 1,500 users. This was supported by the availability of 1,000 free licences for a period of time from Microsoft as part of their support of Covid 19 initiatives.

Utilisation of these services immediately increased and are now heavily utilised by the staff of DCC. A support team was established by the IS department internally to support this new environment and to rollout additional features to meet business needs as they change.

### **5. New Applications**

In addition to the technical availability of remote working with the additional video conferencing, there were a number of additional applications required. These were mainly public facing systems but some internal systems were also required.

The greatest demand was to support a number of government initiatives such as the Restart Grant, Restart Grant plus, Community Grant, and the Rates Waiver.

To develop these in days rather than months as would be usual it was decided by the IS department to utilise a cloud based development environment from Microsoft. This was supported by the supply of free licences for a period by Microsoft. The applications were developed in an agile fashion with weekly deliverables from our development partners.

Very tight timeframes were achieved by IS and our development partner. Flexibility was provided by this approach to meet changing business requirements as the need arose.

### **6. Service Level Agreement**

The IS Department has operated under the ITIL methodology for service management for over twenty years. This allows the level of service delivered to the business by the IS Department to be monitored and evaluated against agreed service levels. With the IS department itself now operating substantially remotely, it was important that the level of service was still achieved. Even with over 630 calls per week, all SLAs were achieved for all services. In addition, the level of availability of systems was also achieved. This shows the level of service provided by the IS department and its support partners in this difficult time even with substantial changes in the client environment that was underway.

**Brian Curtis**  
**ICT Manager**

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**





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## Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Restart Grant and Restart Grant Plus 2020

#### Introduction

In May 2020, the Government announced details of a new €250m Restart Grant to give direct grant aid to micro and small businesses to help them with the costs associated with reopening and reemploying workers following COVID-19 closures.

The Grant was for businesses with a turnover of less than €5m and employing 50 people or less, which were impacted by at least a 25% reduction in turnover from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The grant was to help with the cost of re-opening or keeping a business operational and re-connecting with employees and customers and to help businesses get back up running so that they could return to viability and contribute to the national economic recovery.

The grants was equivalent to the rates bill of the business in 2019, with a minimum payment of €2,000 and a maximum payment of €10,000. There was a number of eligibility criteria in the scheme. The scheme opened for applications on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and was administrated by Local Authorities. The scheme was closed to application from 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 following the introduction of the Restart Grant Plus. The table below set out details in relation to the number of applications received by Dublin City Council up to the close of the scheme on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>04 September 2020</b>	
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	<b>Dublin City Council</b>	
<b>RESTART GRANT SCHEME STATISTICS</b>		
	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>€31,868</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS PAID</b>	<b>3853</b>	<b>€20,281,900</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS REJECTED</b>	<b>1638</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5496</b>	<b>€20,313,768</b>

## **Approach taken**

Due to the potential volume of grant applications in DCC (20,000 rate accounts) it was decided that a grant system would need to be developed to process the grants within the timeframe of the scheme. An application form with basic verification in-built was designed and launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020. A backend technical solution was also developed which includes roles and responsibilities for processors, approvers and system administration. The system is capable of electronically taking in an application, checking it and assigning an approved or rejected status by the processor / approver. A file is then produced which is imported into our Financial Management System. It is checked to ensure bank details and revenue status regarding tax clearance are in order and then a file for payment of all approved grants is produced.

The Council received funds to the value of €27.6m on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 for the initial payment of the Restart grants. Following the closing of the Restart Grant scheme Dublin City Council had a balance of €7.3m on hand.

## **Appeals for Restart Grant**

The closing date for the Restart Grant, which was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> May was 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. When the Government announced the Restart Grant Plus scheme they closed applications to the Restart Grant on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. As businesses who were entitled to the Restart Grant could also apply for the Restart Grant Plus, if they did not apply before the 22<sup>nd</sup> July they missed out on the initial grant and only received the Restart Grant Plus. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment are now working with local authorities to agree an appeals process for those businesses who missed the 22<sup>nd</sup> July deadline for the initial Restart Grant. The City Council currently has 4 appeals to the value of €13,107 on hand.

## **Restart Grant Plus**

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar announced the opening of applications to the Restart Grant Plus Scheme on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The scheme aims to give grants to businesses to help them reopen and adapt to what is a very different environment.

Businesses that received a grant under the first scheme are eligible to re-apply to receive additional funding under this scheme. The grant is based on the amount of the rates assessment for the premises for 2019 with a new minimum grant of €4,000 and a maximum grant of €25,000 up from €2,000 minimum and €10,000 maximum in the original scheme.

The scope of the scheme was expanded to include medium-sized firms and independent hotels with up to 250 employees, the previous maximum employee number was 50 employees. Like the previous scheme the business must be a commercial trading entity and operating from a premises that is commercially rateable. The business must have a turnover of less than €100k per band of employee to a maximum of €25m, previous scheme was €5m turnover only. Business must have suffered a 25%+ loss in turnover between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in line with the original scheme and commit to remain open or to open if closed and intend to retain employees on the TWSS. Rate-paying sports clubs and charity shops with a trading income can apply for the new grant. Businesses that did not apply / qualify for the initial Restart Grant have to complete an application form and a declaration form. Those businesses that qualified for the initial grant are only required to complete a declaration form. This has enabled the processing of top-up grant to previous eligible businesses to be accelerated. The table below set out

details of the number of grants processed by Dublin City Council as of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>04 September 2020</b>	
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	<b>Dublin City Council</b>	
<b>RESTART GRANT PLUS SCHEME STATISTICS</b>		
	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>€305,978</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>€7,462,627</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS PAID</b>	<b>3896</b>	<b>€26,411,976</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS REJECTED</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5184</b>	<b>€34,180,581</b>

To date Dublin City Council has paid out €26.4m in Restart Grant Plus and has an additional €7.4m grants which are ready for payment. The Council received €26.3m in funding for Restart Grant Plus given a total of €53m received for the two schemes. The Council has paid out €46m to date to over 4,250 businesses. The closing date for the Restart Grant Plus scheme is September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020.

**Antoinette Power**  
**Head of Financial Accounting**

8<sup>th</sup> September 2020



# Rates Waiver

Circular Fin 11/2020



# Background

- ▶ Circular Fin 06/2020 – 3 month rates waiver of rates for businesses forced to close due to Covid 19 ( May 2020 )
- ▶ Circular Fin 11/2020 – Waiver extended to a 6 month period – 27 March to 27 September
- ▶ Categories of business extended
- ▶ Small number of categories excluded



# Categories Excluded

- Public Service
- Global Utility Networks on the Central Valuation List
- Vacant Properties
- Individual Office Premises with an annual rates bill of €100 K or greater for 2020
- Individual Industrial Premises with an annual rates bill of €100 K or greater for 2020
- Supermarkets greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup>
- Data Centres
- Incinerator, Generating stations



# Categories Excluded cont....

- ▶ Landfill sites
- ▶ Network ( cable )
- ▶ Network ( Storm Water )
- ▶ Network ( Water )
- ▶ Windfarms
- ▶ Banks, Building societies
- ▶ Pharmaceutical manufacturing
- ▶ Computer /Technology/Electronic manufacturing
- ▶ Premises contracted to provide services to the Covid 19 on behalf of state

# Can Excluded categories appeal ?

- ▶ Businesses in the excluded category that were severely impacted by the pandemic may apply for the waiver
- ▶ Supporting proofs must be submitted to demonstrate impact on business
- ▶ Supports proofs include:
  - evidence business was forced to close ( not included as essential retail outlet under S.I. 121 of 2020
  - evidence of participation in TWSS operated by Revenue
  - evidence of employees availing of PUP
  - correspondence with Revenue to agree forbearance measures with tax liabilities etc.....

# Assessment of Excluded Categories

- ▶ Business should be able to demonstrate a decline of at least 25 % in turnover for the 6 month period 27 March – 27 September
- ▶ This decline does not automatically confer a right to have 100% credit in lieu of rates applied
- ▶ LA to assess applications and determine which proportion if any should be applied to the business
- ▶ The proposed waiver determined by the LA must be submitted to the Department for approval by 30 November
- ▶ €40 m available nationally for this provision



# Key factors

- Ratepayers that have not paid 2020 rates are eligible for waiver
- Ratepayers in arrears are eligible for waiver
- No conditions can be imposed on ratepayer ( i.e. payment plan ) to receive waiver
- If a ratepayer has paid in excess of 6 months rates for 2020 they will be entitled to a refund
- Waiver does not apply to BID's
- Waiver does apply to EYL
- There is no application process for waiver



# Rates Office Progress to-date

- ▶ Email account set up to address queries [rateswaiver@dublincity.ie](mailto:rateswaiver@dublincity.ie)
- ▶ Details of Waiver posted to Dublin City Council website
- ▶ Re Issuing Rate Bills with updated balance
- ▶ Engaged with Techenable to develop automated refund application





**Dublin City Council**

**Audit Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 at 8.00 a.m.  
in the Richard O'Carroll Room, City Hall**

**Attendance:**

**Members**

Ms. Louise Ryan, Trinity College Dublin, Chairperson (LR) (Chair)  
Mr. Johnny McElhinney, Docklands Business Forum (JMCE)  
Mr. Nathy Walsh, Institute of Public Administration (NW)  
Professor Diarmuid Hegarty, Dublin Chamber (DH)  
Councillor Nial Ring (Cllr. NR)  
Councillor Naoise O Muiri (Cllr. NOM)

**Officials:**

Mr. Owen Keegan, Chief Executive (OK)  
Ms. Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance (KQ)  
Mr. Hugh Fitzpatrick, Head of Internal Audit (HF)  
Ms. Martina Mc Loughlin, Senior Staff Officer, Internal Audit

**External Attendee in attendance in relation to Item 6 of these minutes:**

Ms. Seona Grant, Deloitte (SG)

**Apologies:**

Councillor Mary Fitzpatrick (Cllr. MF)

**1. Minutes of Audit Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.**

HF updated the Members on the progress of the action items, as follows:

- A letter was sent to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHP&LG) outlining the Committees concern in relation to the level of Government Debtors.  
  
KQ confirmed that a meeting had taken place between the DHP&LG and DCC officials and the Department have committed to work with DCC to reduce the level of Government Debtors.
- HF confirmed that updates under actions 2 & 3 will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee, i.e. a report from Housing Management on a plan to tackle rent arrears and a progress report on reconciling the Fixed Asset Register to the Housing Register.
- The AC report on the Audited AFS and the Local Government Auditor's report on the AFS for 2018 and the report on the AC's Charter and Work Programme for 2020 were submitted to the December 2019 City Council meeting and were noted and adopted respectively.

LR requested that outstanding actions be kept on the agenda.

The minutes were agreed.

## **2. Standing Item on the agenda – Any Conflict of Interest of A.C. Members**

No conflict of interest was declared.

## **3. Draft report of the Audit Committee on its activities during 2019**

LR highlighted the issue of the non-implementation of recommendations, specifically in relation to the Joinery Workshop, which has to be brought back to the AC.

The AC agreed the Report and HF will submit it to the March City Council meeting.

**Action 1: That an update on the implementation of the outstanding recommendations in relation to the Joinery Workshop, be brought back to the AC**

**Action 2: HF to submit the annual report of the Audit Committee to City Council, at their meeting to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020**

## **4. Draft Internal Audit Charter**

HF informed the AC that it is a requirement that the Internal Audit Charter is reviewed periodically and approved by the AC. This was last done in 2015.

He outlined some slight changes to the wording of the previous Charter (no changes of any great significance). The Members agreed the Charter, which was subsequently signed off by the Chair of the AC and the Chief Executive.

## **5. Draft Audit Plan for 2020**

HF updated the Members on the draft Plan.

Four audits are underway within the IA Unit, with four to be co-sourced from the Plan, possibly including the PSC reports. IA are currently preparing to go to tender for the co-sourced reports and this will probably include four more for 2021.

HF said an audit had been dropped from the Plan, i.e. Recoupment of Sick Leave payments to A1 class PRSI employees, from the Dept. of Employment and Social Protection, which had been agreed with the AC at the training session on 27<sup>th</sup> November last. One additional audit had been included, i.e. Public Procurement Compliance within a section of a diverse Department, e.g. Libraries.

A query was raised in relation to staffing resources in the IA Unit. HF explained there is a Grade V panel in operation at the moment and it is hoped that, at a minimum, two people will be assigned to the IA Unit from this panel to fill at least two of three vacant posts.

## **6. Audit Reports:**

(A) Review of Major Emergency Management report, prepared by Deloitte

Ms. Seona Grant, Audit Manager, presented the report to the Committee.

The Committee noted its “satisfactory” rating and that all recommendations made in the audit will be implemented by Senior Management of Dublin Fire Brigade/City Engineer.

Ms. Grant expressed her appreciation for the assistance given to Deloitte by Dublin Fire Brigade, the City Engineer and the Deputy Chief Executive, in preparing the report.

(B) Public Lighting Upgrade Project, In-Depth Check Report under the Public Spending Code (PSC)

KQ in presenting the report, outlined the significant reduction of 50% of energy consumption in respect of “Public Lighting” which accounts for 25% of DCC’s energy consumption and that it will significantly contribute to DCC realising or even exceeding its targets in relation to “Climate Change” actions. The “strong” rating given in the audit indicates that the project is being well managed. KQ explained that the project will also provide a communications infrastructure that will support “SMART City” applications in the future.

The Committee expressed its surprise that a “Steering Committee” had not been established for such a significant capital project. Given the 5-year project timeframe, the establishment of a Steering Committee could enhance governance. HF explained that that was not an absolute requirement under the Public Spending Code and DCC’s Project Guidelines provide for the reporting directly by the Project Manager to the appropriate Assistant Chief Executive, in the absence of a “Steering Committee”. The Committee asked that its recommendation to establish a Steering Committee be conveyed to Senior Management for consideration in respect of all projects of a major expenditure nature and of long duration.

DH asked what % of PL in Dublin City is LED?

KQ explained that the conversion to LED is ongoing and will come back to DH with a figure.

**Action 3: Response to the Members in relation to the percentage of public lighting in Dublin City that is LED**

**Action 4: The Audit Committees recommendation that a Steering Committee be established in respect of all projects of a major expenditure nature and of long duration, be conveyed to Senior Management for consideration**

(C) Review of Attendance and Overtime procedures operated from the Public Lighting and Electrical Services Depot, Marrowbone Lane.

HF informed the Members that this was a follow-up report to a Protected Disclosure While the rating was “weak”, the improvements needed are of a minor nature and the Senior Engineer in charge has undertaken to comply with the recommendations.

**7. NOAC report:**

Report No. 23 – Public Spending Code Local Authority Quality Assurance Report 2018  
The Committee noted the Report

LR referred to the comments on page 5 of the Report to the effect that (a) Dublin City Council had not published on its website, details of procurements in excess of €10M as at the 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 and (b) had omitted to answer questions 3.6 to 3.9 on Checklist 3.

HF informed the Committee that DCC's procurement details were published on its website before the deadline of the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019. A link to where precisely, such details are located was not included on the Quality Assurance Return to NOAC, but that he will advise the Corporate Project Support Office (CPSO) to do so in respect of future returns.

In relation to (b), the response to the questions should have been given as n/a (not applicable). The Committee considered that, in future, some form of engagement with NOAC should take place in order to ensure that any such errors or misrepresentation in relation to DCCs return would be removed, before publication of the report.

**Action 5: KQ & HF to consider appropriate measure in consultation with the CPSO (who are responsible for gathering the various elements of the Quality Assurance Return and submitting the Return to NOAC.**

#### **8. Further training/familiarisation sessions required by AC Members**

LR asked the Members to let her know if there was any training they felt would be beneficial.

NR suggested a talk on climate change and the Committee agreed, particularly how it impacts on the work of DCC.

HF to arrange a talk on this subject for the next meeting.

**Action 6: HF to arrange a talk on climate change, to be given to the AC at the next meeting.**

#### **9. Dates of future meetings:**

The following dates were agreed for future meetings in 2020:

30th April; 17<sup>th</sup> September; 3<sup>rd</sup> December

#### **10. A.O.B**

The meeting concluded at 9.00am.

*Louise Ryan*

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**Louise Ryan, Chairperson**

**13<sup>th</sup> July, 2020**

## Appendix A

- Action 1:** That an update on the implementation of the outstanding recommendations in relation to the Joinery Workshop, be brought back to the AC
- Action 2:** HF to submit the annual report of the Audit Committee to City Council, at their meeting to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020
- Action 3:** Response to the Members in relation to the percentage of public lighting in Dublin City that is LED
- Action 4:** The Audit Committees recommendation that a Steering Committee be established in respect of all projects of a major expenditure nature and of long duration, be conveyed to Senior Management for consideration
- Action 5:** KQ & HF to consider appropriate measure in consultation with the CPSO (who are responsible for gathering the various elements of the Quality Assurance Return and submitting the Return to NOAC.
- Action 6:** HF to arrange a talk on climate change, to be given to the AC at the next meeting.

## Appendix B

### **Actions agreed at the Audit Committee meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2019**

- Action 2:** The Committee requested a report from Housing Management be brought to a future meeting of the A.C. outlining a focussed/targeted plan to tackle the level of rent arrears.
- Action 3:** The Committee to be kept informed of progress made by the working group over the coming months in relation to reconciling the Fixed Asset Register to the Housing Register.

