



**NOTIFICATION TO ATTEND MEETING OF THE FINANCE SPC
TO BE HELD IN THE MS TEAMS REMOTE MEETING
ON TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 2.30 PM**

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AGENDA

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2020

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Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of Meeting Held 17th September 2020

Cllr Séamas McGrattan, Chair, welcomed the committee members to the Round Room in the Mansion House and set out the protocols to be adhered to during the meeting.

1. **Draft Minutes of the Finance SPC meeting held on 24th June 2020**

The draft minutes were proposed by Cllr. P McCartan and seconded by Cllr. James Geoghegan. The minutes were agreed.

2. **Matters arising from correspondence:**

Correspondence items were noted.

3. **Rates Alleviation Scheme**

K. Quinn advised that the City Council are awaiting the introduction of the regulations for this scheme.

Agreed: Cllr. J. Geoghegan asked that correspondence should issue to the Minister seeking the enactment of relevant legislation and introduction of the regulations.

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

D. Collins, A/Executive Manager, Environment and Transportation Department, presented a comprehensive report to the members identifying the factors impacting the maintenance of Dublin City Council's road network.

The main factors identified were:

Funding constraints

In 2020, Dublin City Council will invest €12.5m in the annual works programme made available from the City Council's revenue and capital budgets facilitating the restoration and maintenance of approximately 14km of regional and local roads and the repair/renewal of approximately 11km of footpaths. Due to funding constraints decisions have to be made on the prioritisation of roads for repair and inclusion on the annual programme. These works are supplemented by reactive works such as the repair of potholes.

Traffic volumes, transport modal share and transport modal shift

Statistics on the annual survey of road user trends in 2018 was presented. It was noted that 60,000 vehicles crossed over the canals during a 3 hour period along with a further 40,000 pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition, increased economic activity has led to increased levels of construction activity and the associated construction traffic travelling on Dublin's roads and streets. This activity reduces further the serviceable life of roads and footpaths and warrants intervention and investment in reactive maintenance and planned works.

Dublin City Council further works to promote sustainable transport measures and encourage modal shifts towards walking and cycling. However, it is necessary that there be an appropriate and proportionate level of investment in the road's assets in the interest of protecting road safety particularly for these pedestrians and cyclists.

Impact of utility openings and reinstatements

It was noted that road openings and reinstatements can have a detrimental impact on the structural integrity of roads and reduce overall design life. This necessitates

additional maintenance requirements therefore impacting the need for increased funding resources.

Severe weather events/ winter maintenance

The winter maintenance programme covers the treatment of approximately 300km of the road network with gritting salts by specifically trained staff.

Examples of the impact of severe weather events such as Storm Emma involved €6.3m worth of damage to roads and streets. No additional funding was available from governments and these necessary remedial works were funded from Dublin City Council's own financial resources.

Traffic permits and restrictions

Necessary works are carried out in the evening, during night time hours and at weekends to minimise the disruption to the city environment. Such restricted timings have a significant cost implication on tenders submitted by contractors. In addition, the necessary temporary traffic management arrangements for these works are more complex and costly.

Planned maintenance versus reactive maintenance.

Underinvestment in planned maintenance results in a greater need for reactive maintenance such as pothole repairs and tree trip hazards on footpaths.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The Roads Maintenance Division has adapted a new pod system requiring additional PPE safety equipment during the current pandemic. In the initial months of April and May productivity levels fell when it became necessary to reduce the number of crews operating across the city to reduce risks to staff and ensure continued delivery of critical services.

At the conclusion of Mr. Collins's report, the members had a number of queries and comments for response. Items covered were:

- Skills sets of staff with regard to direct labour –v- contracted works
- Future planning for specific developments such as Bus Connects, Luas or significant building
- Reinstatement of roads/footpaths by utility companies and potential penalisation for poor works.
- Comparison of Dublin's allocation of funding for the roads programme with other local authorities.
- Condition of cycle lanes in the city
- Level of insurance claims made as a result of road conditions.
- Breakdown of where the NTA stimulus funding has been spent.
- Use of the European Investment Bank as a funding source for a comprehensive roads maintenance programme.
- Attrition levels of staff with specific skill sets and what is happening to address this loss.

Cllr. S. McGrattan, Chair, acknowledged the appreciation of the Committee for the work of the road maintenance crews over the past months.

Due to time constraints for the overall meeting, members were asked to email through to the Finance Department any questions they had so that a comprehensive list of responses could be co-ordinated.

5. DCC's ICT Transition and Response to Covid 19

Claudio Libanori, SEO, IS Department provided a report to the members giving an overview of the role of the IS Department during the current Covid 19 pandemic restrictions. The report covered the provision of services and usage in the following areas:

Citrix Remote Working

This service became the primary remote working solution for DCC staff. Remote working was immediately made available by the IS department for 1,200 remote users and gradually increased to a current rate of 2,300 users.

Laptops

Using strategic supply partners, over 850 laptops were provided to staff to meet demand.

Mobile Phones and Tablets

450 additional phones and 200 additional tablets were provided to staff.

Security

The IS Department were in a position to scale up the existing security environment which significantly reduced the risks associated with the increased level of remote working. A review of security levels was undertaken and no risks were identified.

Remote Telephony

Measures which allowed remote access to the Council's telephone systems was introduced and the Covid helpline was set up for at risk members of the public to access non-emergency and non-medical supports.

Microsoft Teams

The facility for 1,500 users to access the secure video and audio conferencing system was rolled out to staff.

Introduction of New Applications

There were a number of additional applications made available to support government initiatives such as the Restart Grant, Restart Grant plus, Community Grants and the Rates Waiver schemes.

Service Level Agreements

Throughout the current pandemic restrictions, the IS Department have been able to maintain the agreed Service Level Agreements with all department.

Members noted the following points:

- Queries regarding the introduction of a hybrid model for physical/remote council meetings were raised
- Expansion of data limits for councillors' mobile data usage
- The cost of investment in IT equipment was noted at €1.7m

At the conclusion of this item, members complimented the staff and management of the IS Department and wished that the hard work and dedication of the staff should be acknowledged.

6. Restart Grant Update

Antoinette Power, Head of Financial Accounting, presented an update outlining the introduction of the Restart Grant and more recently the Restart Grant Plus scheme.

Statistics for the Restart Grant which closed on 22nd July 2020 were presented showing overall applications paid/rejected and the grand total of payments made. This update provided details on initial funding received of €27.6m and €7.3m in hand at the closure of this scheme with €20.28m paid out to 3,853 applicants. An appeals process is being developed in conjunction with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment for businesses that missed out on the Restart Grant deadline of 22nd July and 4 appeals were received with a total value of €13,107.

The introduction of the Restart Grant Plus commenced in August 2020 whereby enhanced grants with new minimum/maximum levels of €4,000 and €25,000 respectively are available. This scheme was expanded to take in medium sized firms and independent hotels with up to 250 employees. Turnover figures have also expanded and the criteria of loss of 25% in turnover is still in effect. This new scheme is open to rate paying sports clubs and charity shops. Those businesses who did not apply/qualify for the initial scheme are now eligible to complete an application form and declaration form. Top up grants to previously eligible businesses are available. Up to 17th September, €35m have been paid out to 5,001 businesses under this scheme and the closing date is 30th September 2020. In summary, a total of €55m has been paid out across the two schemes and funding in the amount of €62m has been received from DETE.

The issue of additional payments to wet pubs is under consideration by government however, to date no information is available to Dublin City Council. In addition, Dublin City Council are awaiting communication regarding any potential uplift in grants that may be applicable to Dublin in the event of further restrictions being imposed. A 20% uplift was applicable to businesses in Laois, Offaly and Kildare during their recent shutdown.

The following observations were made by members:

- Request an extension of the deadline of this scheme from DETE for the four Dublin local authorities and seek this corresponding uplift in grants for Dublin businesses.
- Further investment in the promotional campaign should be made while also acknowledging that Dublin City Council has issued a press release promoting the current scheme and that rate collectors are engaged with businesses to advise them of the scheme.
- Potential to link up the marketing of this scheme with the Enterprise Office
- All committee members were asked to promote this undersubscribed scheme.
- Acknowledge the extent and professionalism of the work carried out by the staff involved in these schemes.
- Minimal level of bureaucracy was required for this scheme
- Request that the Lord Mayor should be requested to send correspondence to the Minister regarding the extension of the forthcoming deadline.
- Queries around the reason for rejection of applications etc.

In conclusion, K. Quinn acknowledged the work of the staff in developing a robust system to work through these claims. She further acknowledged that the application rate is low.

Agreed: A request would be made to the Lord Mayor to write to the Minister regarding an extension to the Restart Grant Plus closing date of 30th September.

7. Rates Waiver Scheme

D. Murphy, Rates Office, gave a presentation on this scheme indicating that a rates waiver scheme has been introduced to cover the period 27th March – 27th September. It sets out the categories eligible and ineligible.

There is an appeal's process in place whereby businesses in the excluded categories, which are severely impacted by the pandemic, can apply for the waiver. Supporting documentation for this appeals application process was detailed and the assessment of those excluded must meet specific criteria. These appeals determined by Dublin City Council will be submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for approval by 30th November. There is €40m available nationally for this scheme.

It was noted that there is no application process for the waiver other than those falling into the specific eligibility categories. Dublin City Council has set up a dedicated email account for queries and details have been posted on the website. Currently revised rates bills with updated balances are issuing to rate payers.

The following observations were made by members on the following issues:

- The impact on excluded businesses in the office accommodation category
- The issue that excluded category businesses may consider not re-opening next year and the impact of this on the vibrancy of the city.
- Further information sought on the impact on certain sectors for next year.
- Impact on businesses whose turnover is impacted by closures must be taken into account
- The collection rates is currently at 80% in comparison to 73% for last year which may indicate possible full or prepayments by some businesses who may be eligible for refunds.
- Impact on vacancy rate applications for next year.

9,000 accounts approximately have paid their accounts in full and will be entitled to a refund. They will have the option to leave it on their account as credit or apply online for a refund. Correspondence is currently issuing to those eligible and ineligible for the waiver. The value of the waiver is €100m and the annual accrual is €357m.

8. Audit Committee Minutes of 30th January 2020

Minutes were noted

9. Motion from Cllr Alison Gilliland

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.

Cllr Gilliland proposed the production of a type of infographic which will show the LPT contribution of citizens and Dublin City Council's spend for the year. The motion was seconded by Cllr. D. Barron.

Agreed: The motion was passed. K. Quinn advised that she will bring a report to the November Finance SPC meeting on this matter.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 3rd November and the meeting arrangements will be circulated in advance.

Signed: Councillor Séamas McGrattan
Chairperson

Date: 17th September 2020

Members Present

Cllr Séamas McGrattan (Chairperson)
Cllr. Daryl Barron
Cllr Mary Callaghan
Cllr Anthony Connaghan
Cllr. Alison Gilliland
Cllr James Geoghegan
Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr. Paddy McCartan
Cllr. Nial Ring
Cllr. Darcy Lonergan
Eric Fleming, ICTU
Philip O'Callaghan, PPN
Aidan Sweeney, IBEC

Apologies

Cllr. Noeleen Reilly – observing online
Cllr. Daithí De Róiste – observing online
Jack Daly, Docklands Business Forum
Tara Lillywhite-Torpey, Dublin Chamber of Commerce – observing online
Professor Caroline McMullan, DCU

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
Claudio Libanori, Senior Executive Officer, IS Department

Minister Darragh O'Brien
Department of Housing Planning & Local Government
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0

25th September 2020


Re: Enactment of Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019

Dear Minister O'Brien,

At the meetings of the Finance Strategic Policy Committee held on 24th June and 17th September, the issue of the enactment of Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 was raised and debated. In addition, it was noted that Dublin City Council are awaiting the issuing of regulations which will allow for it to introduce a Rates Alleviation Scheme in its administrative area.

It was agreed that correspondence would issue to you requesting that the enactment of this legislation and the circulation of the necessary regulations is advanced by your Department.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Séamas McGrattan
Chair of Finance Strategic Policy Committee



 October 2020

Cllr. Seamus McGrattan
seamas.mcgrattan@dublincity.ie

Please quote ref: HPLG-MoSB-00230-2020

Dear Cllr. McGrattan,

I refer to your correspondence on behalf of the Finance Strategic Policy Committee of Dublin City Council, in connection with section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, which was forwarded to me from Minister Darragh O'Brien.

The Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 was passed by the Oireachtas and enacted on 11 July 2019. Key Elements of the Act include:

- A modernisation of rates legislation and practice, including variation of rates payment arrangements;
- Provision that newly valued properties and amendments to valuations of existing properties are effective immediately for rating purposes;
- The pro-rata levying of rates on occupiers based on period in occupation within a year;
- The application of interest payments on unpaid rates; and
- Minimum charges for vacant commercial premises.
- Amendment to Rate Limitation Order formula in place in the year following revaluation

Importantly, section 15 the new Act also provides for a rates waiver schemes, to be decided by local authority members in order to promote national and/or local policy objectives, including for example, local area plans under the Planning and Development Act 2000, and local economic and community plans under the Local Government Act 2001. This section has not been commenced to date.

Currently, only the sections of the Act relating to the amendment of the Rate Limitation Order have been commenced. Commencement of the remaining elements of the Act will be dependent on a number of factors, including the drafting of the requisite prescribed regulations, the preparation of circulars and guidance to local authorities and to ensure that the local government sector will be in a position to have the IT and administrative processes in place to fully support the new provisions.



It had been intended that the bulk of the provisions would be operational for the 2021 local authority budget cycle, in November 2020. However, preparations have been delayed by several months due to the impact of the COVID crisis and ongoing work on the government funded rates waiver. Plans to commence the legislation and introduce the regulations are temporarily delayed, with the revised aim of having them in place for the 2022 budget process.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Burke', is written over a horizontal line.

Peter Burke T.D.
Minister for Local Government and Planning

Please note: I am a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of lobbying Act, 2015



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Report on Housing Rent Arrears



Housing Department

November 2020

Housing Rents and Arrears

Background

- Dublin City Council has 24,800 rented tenancies
- Approximately 67,000 people reside in these tenancies
- The weekly average rent charge is €70.41 (€281.64 per month)
- Rent arrears currently amount to €36,603,071 (as of 12th October 2020)
- Credit on accounts is €3,494,244.13

The weekly rent charge is determined in accordance with the 2019 Dublin City Council Differential Rent Scheme. The current differential rent is calculated at 15% of the principal earner's weekly assessable income, which exceeds €32.00 in the case of a 'single person' principal earner and €64.00 in the case of a 'couple' principal earner (principal earner is the household member who has the highest assessable income). Where a spouse/partner is in receipt of any weekly income over €32.00 the couple allowance will not apply.

After the rent payable in respect of the principal earner has been assessed, 15% of the weekly assessable income of each subsidiary earner which exceeds €32.00 (€64.00 in the case of a "couple" subsidiary earner), will be added to the weekly rent, subject to a maximum charge of €21 per subsidiary earner (increased from €19 in March 2019). A maximum of four earners is assessed for rent purposes. There is a rent reduction of €1 per dependent child

The assessable income of either a principal earner or of a subsidiary earner will, in general, be that person's normal weekly wage and/or social welfare payment, net of income tax, P.R.S.I. and Universal Social Charge (USC) payments (where applicable). Income from the following sources will be included in assessable income:

- Employment including self-employment,
- Social insurance/social assistance payments and allowances,
- Health Service Executive allowances, FAS training allowances,
- Payments under the Community Employment Programme and
- The Back to Work scheme and
- Income from any pensions or other sources.

All regular income and payments in the nature of pay, including shift allowance, travel allowance, bonus, commission and overtime will be included in assessable income. Pension Related Deductions, Superannuation. Pension Fund payments or any other deduction apart from income tax, P.R.S.I. and Universal Social Charge payments (where applicable) are not deductible from a person's normal weekly wage for the purposes of calculating rent.

Assumed incomes are applied to self-employed tenants. Taxi/Hackney drivers, non-trade and other business earners have an assumed income of €500 per week applied. Tradesmen are assumed to be earning €560 per week.

Notification of Income Changes

Tenants must notify the City Council immediately of any changes in household income or in household circumstances (e.g. changes in the number of occupants including newly born babies, changes in the employment status of household members etc.).

Various charges may apply which are specific to the property such as heating and boiler maintenance. A €3 waste management charge per week applies to all flat complexes where there is a universal bin. The charge also applies to Part V properties.

Differential Rent Charge

- The minimum weekly rent charge based on the Social Welfare payment of €203.00 is €25.65
- There are 1,188 tenants on the minimum rent charge
- There are no tenants on the maximum rent charge of €423, The current highest DCC weekly rent charge is €265.87

Dwelling Size	Maximum Weekly Rent
Bedsit (i.e. 1 room)	€257.00
1 Bedroom (i.e. 2 rooms)	€301.00
2 Bedroom (i.e. 3 rooms)	€313.00
3 Bedroom (i.e. 4 rooms)	€401.00
>3 Bedroom (i.e. > 4 rooms)	€423.00

Main causes of Arrears

- The main cause of rent arrears is the non-declaration of increased household income and/or missed or insufficient payment of weekly rent charge.
- 12,000 rent accounts are reviewed annually resulting in a full review of all accounts over a two year period. Household details are sought from tenants in order to ensure that the correct rent charge is applied. Where details are not submitted, an assumed income is added to the account. This has the effect of increasing the weekly Rent Debit while also increasing the level of arrears. The correct rent charge is applied when household details are received which may eliminate/reduce or increase arrears.
- All tenants are required under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement to report any changes in household income or composition immediately. It is Dublin City Council's policy to apply

retrospective debits to accounts where undeclared income is brought to our attention. While some Local Authorities do not apply retrospective debits, Dublin City Council considers the application of retrospective debits to be equitable to all tenants.

- Social problems are a contributing factor in non/under payment.

Arrears statistics:

Tenancies in Credit/Clear/Debit	Number of Tenancies	Total Tenancies 24839 % in Credit/Clear/Arrears
Tenancies in Credit	9665	38.91%
Tenancies Clear	273	1.9%
Tenancies in Arrears	14901	59.99%

While almost 60% of accounts are in arrears, the highest percentage of accounts in arrears have a debit of less than €500:

Amount of Arrears	Number of Accounts	% of Total Number in Arrears
01 – €500	6390	25.72%
€500 – €2000	3622	14.58%
€2000 – €7000	3445	13.86%
€7000 – €11000	800	3.22%
€11000 – €19000	507	2.04%
€19000 – €27000	100	0.40%
€27000+	37	0.15%

Arrears per household income bracket:

Total Income per Household	No. of Tenancies	Amount owed in Arrears	% of Total Arrears
€203 - €400	6000	€5,106,065	13.82%
€400 - €600	3829	€7,135,059	19.31%
€600 - €800	2729	€8,119,960	21.97%
€800 - €1000	1722	€5,734,724	15.52%
€1000 - €1500	1910	€8,225,991	22.26%
€1500+	490	€2,624,241	7.10%

Weeks in arrears:

Number of Weeks in Arrears	Number of Accounts in Category	Total Arrears €
1 – 4	3468	€404,001.74
4 – 6	1079	€334,466.17
6 – 12	1845	€1,164,736.78
12 – 24	2077	€2,838,088.05
24 – 52	2383	€7,071,018.22
52+	2826	€23,634,023.82

Managing Rent and Arrears collection

- The Arrears Management Section is staffed at present by 21 Executive Housing Officers (EHO) who are each responsible for approx. 1,200 rent accounts.
- Their job is to continuously monitor and manage the accounts and engage with the tenants at an early stage of missed payments.
- Through early intervention accounts falling into arrears are identified as quickly as possible and tenants are contacted to enter into an agreement so as to prevent serious arrears accruing.
- Every effort is made by the EHO to agree a realistic repayment plan with the Tenant.
- Tenants are contacted by letter, by telephone or house call by the Executive Housing Officer (EHO). The Rent Arrears Recovery procedure is supplemented by regular informal contact which offers every opportunity for tenants to engage.
- Tenants experiencing financial difficulties are advised of the availability of financial advice through MABs. Tenants who are experiencing welfare difficulties are linked in with social workers.

Change in Legislation

Part 2 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 replaced Section 62 of Housing Act 1966

- Legislation commenced in April 2015 when tenancies could no longer be terminated by Notice to Quit.
- DCC started serving Tenancy Warnings in September 2015.
- Due to the absence of relevant Court rules no applications for re-possession could be made until June 2017.

Rent Arrears Recovery Procedure

Stages 1 and 2: Early intervention/escalation

- 1st Warning letter issued after 3 weeks arrears.
- 2nd Warning letter issued after 5 weeks arrears.
- Broken Agreement/3rd warning letter

Stage 3: Issuing of a Tenancy Warning

- If the arrears are not paid in full or an agreement has not been made or been kept between the tenant and the EHO for the repayment of the arrears, a Tenancy Warning may be served.
- There is a 10 day waiting period after the Tenancy Warning is issued to allow for tenants to appeal the decision to issue the Tenancy Warning. The tenant must apply in writing to Dublin City Council within 10 working days.

Stage 4: Court Proceedings

- Where the arrears are still increasing and no agreement has been entered into, a Possession Application is prepared for Court.
- The EHO will notify the tenant by letter that a Court hearing is being arranged.
- Our Legal Department will issue notification to the tenant informing them that a Court date is being sought.
- Where a Possession Order is granted by the Court and where there is still no agreement to pay the arrears, or an agreement has been broken, the case is referred to the Eviction Office.

Other Arrears Management Measures

- Tenants signing for new lettings are, where possible, required to sign up to Household Budget/Direct Debit. Direct Debit/Household Budget options are also promoted to existing tenants.
- New tenants are required to pay two weeks rent in advance to cover the set up period. This prevents early arrears in new tenancies
- Tenants with accounts in arrears are not permitted to exit the Household Budget Scheme
- Tenants are advised of the option of Debt Solutions-(Debt Relief Notices) administered by Insolvency Services Ireland and MABS
- Quarterly Statements are issued to all tenants.
- No routine maintenance will be carried out on properties where the account is in arrears unless a repayment plan is being adhered to.

Activity in 2019

- 30,132 letters were issued to Tenants for rent arrears
- 165 Tenancy Warnings were issued
- 56 applications for Possession of Tenancies progressed to Legal Department for Court Hearing dates
- 2019---4 Possession orders were granted – 1 eviction took place

Activity in 2020

- 1 eviction took place in 2020
- 3 orders for possession obtained.
- 125 cases are with our Legal Department awaiting court dates to seek Possession Orders
- 28 cases were adjourned due to Covid and provisional dates notified for 30th November 2020, however, it is likely those dates will be adjourned.
- Vacancies at Executive Housing Officer were filled on an acting basis in May 2020 and all rent arrears patches are now covered.

Effect of Covid 19

- House calls were suspended in mid-March 2020 - the lack of visibility in the community was a contributory factor in the rise of rent arrears. House calls recommenced on 14th September 2020 and there was a visible increase in engagement on behalf of tenants. House calls are now suspended for a further 6 weeks under Level 5 Covid Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2021. EHOs will continue to telephone and e-mail tenants. Formal correspondence under the arrears recovery process will continue to be issued up to tenancy warning stage.
- Government legislated for a moratorium on evictions for all rented dwellings for a period of almost 6 months from March 2020, a further period is now in place until early December 2020. New legislation will provide for future moratoria on evictions for periods when a 5km travel restriction is in place.
- Following consultation with our Legal Department, no Tenancy Warnings were issued during the first moratorium period as they expire after one year.
- Serious arrears cases were prioritised for Court hearings in November 2020, however, it is likely that these will now be adjourned. It is unclear when these cases will be rescheduled for hearing.

Other initiatives

- ▶ The new application LAVA has been developed by the LGMA and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. This application provides access to full income details of an individual. To date, the completion of an accurate rent assessment relied on the tenant providing evidence of changes in their household income (ideally in real time but at least annually). If household income details are not provided by the tenant, an assumed income is applied based on the assessing officer's judgement of potential earnings. This raises the net weekly charge and a debit is applied to the account which results in arrears. Direct access to household income will eliminate the need to apply assumed income in most cases. A review of all accounts with assumed incomes applied will take place in the first half of 2021, resulting in a more accurate determination of the rent charge and arrears.
- ▶ A sub-committee of the Housing SPC was established earlier this year to make recommendations on new initiatives to tackle rent arrears. The recommendations of this group will be considered at the November Housing SPC meeting.
- ▶ A pilot project is being initiated with our Legal Department to trial the seeking of judgement orders for RAS arrears cases.

- ▶ A dedicated RAS arrears EHO has been assigned.
- ▶ An ongoing evaluation of serious arrears cases is being conducted in order to prioritise cases for early court hearings.
- ▶ Transfer applications will be cancelled where an account is in arrears. Housing Allocations are in the process of preparing for implementation. The second phase of this initiative will involve the pausing of transfer applications already in the system where the account is in arrears.
- ▶ Housing Rents is working with Housing Allocations to identify transfer applications which are nearing offer stage to target those accounts for arrears recovery.
- ▶ An additional solicitor has been engaged by the Legal Department to expedite Housing issues.
- ▶ A communications plan is being developed to publicise the importance of paying rent/returning Household Detail forms/payment methods for rent/availability of financial advice through MABS/consequences of accruing arrears
- ▶ An application for mobile devices which would facilitate payment of rent, checking balances and notification of income changes is being considered.

Tara Robertson
Housing Rents Section

Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Market Soundings Exercise - Crowdfunding

Background

Report No 6/2020 to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee outlined the merits of and objectives in pursuing the introduction of crowdfunding in Dublin City Council. The report noted that a market soundings exercise had been commenced and that a further update would be provided.

Potential Benefits from Crowdfunding.

Resources available to Dublin City Council to support community based local development projects are scarce. Civic crowdfunding may provide an opportunity to increase available resources through small contributions from a large volume of funders. Bringing together like minded individuals around a commonly supported community initiative is likely to have a positive impact on community development. It may also be that the use of crowdfunding may make Dublin City Council funding more accessible.

Market Soundings Exercise

A market soundings exercise was commenced to establish the potential market offer around crowdfunding platforms. Dublin City Council's approach is that it would provide part funding with the project being largely community led. Dublin City Council wishes that a crowdfunding platform would support community groups both to identify and to apply for funding for community projects. The use of the crowdfunding platform gives community groups interaction with an objective third party and also gives clarity that funding is ring fenced for specific projects. The key dates of the market soundings exercise are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Crowd funding market soundings exercise key dates

Date of:	Stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the issue of the market soundings call 	Publication of the eTenders advertisement 27 th February 2020 eTenders Reference RFT 166341
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the first closing date 	Closing date for clarifications: 16 th March 2020 Closing date for submissions : 23 rd March 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extended closing date 	Closing date for clarifications: 31 st March 2020 Closing date for submissions : 14 th April 2020

Submissions

Four submissions were received in the response to the market soundings call as set out below in Table 2. The submissions provide options developed through experience in civic, cultural, start up and business projects.

Table 2: Submissions to crowdfunding market soundings exercise

Submission No.	Organisation/Company
1	Spacehive
2	Spark Crowdfund
3	Jackie Ryan Art
4	Business to Arts Trading As Fundit.ie

Review Team

A review team was established with nominations from across Dublin City Council reflecting the many aspects of the initiative. The members of the review team are set out in Table 3. The composition of the team is intended to reflect the differing services within Dublin City Council which may be impacted by crowdfunding. As this is a new initiative for Dublin City Council, the Head of the Central Procurement Unit is a Review Team member. In addition, the team was guided by additional procurement expertise by Greenville Procurement.

Table 3: Review Team of crowdfunding market submissions

Review Team Member	Department/Unit	Role
Kathy Quinn	Finance	Project Owner
Alan Nangle	Central Procurement	Procurement advice and guidance
Imelda Brehony	Housing	Advice on needs of Community Services
Donncha O'Dúlaing	CRES	Input of Parks Division
Ruth Byrne	Finance	Financial administration requirements
Assisted by:		
Jeanne Copeland	Greenville Procurement	Expert procurement advice

Meetings

The review team first met on 27th August. The delay between the extended closing date and first team meeting arose from changed working arrangements and priorities arising from the pandemic. A full discussion was held around the content of the submissions received and it was agreed that separate meetings would be held with each entity to discuss their proposals further. These meetings are scheduled for 27th, 28th and 30th October.

Next Steps

Arising from understandings and insights gained from the meetings on each submission, a report will be prepared for the Finance SPC for consideration, outlining the proposed approach to crowdfunding.

Kathy Quinn

Head of Finance

With responsibility for ICT

16th October 2020



Oifis 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

Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Restart Grant Plus Scheme (RGP) – Update Further Top-Up Grants from 7th October 2020 *How it affects Dublin Businesses*

Business Type and Grants Payable (RGP plus 50%)

- Small and medium sized companies/independent hotels
 - Sports Clubs with commercial activities which are based in a rateable premises
 - Trading Charity Shops based in a rateable premises
- The grant payable under the RGP scheme is the 2019 rates assessment subject to a minimum grant of €4k and a maximum of €25k.
 - A further Top-Up Grant of 50% of the Basic RGP Grant is now payable subject to a minimum total RGP of €6k and a maximum of €37.5k.
- 'Wet' Pubs (RGP plus 50% plus 40%)
 - The grant payable under the RGP scheme is the 2019 rates assessment subject to a minimum grant of €4k and a maximum of €25k.
 - A further Top-Up Grant of 50% of the Basic RGP Grant is now payable subject to a minimum grant of €6k and a maximum of €37.5k.
 - In addition to the extra 50% above, businesses which qualify as "Wet Pubs" will receive a further 40% of the RGP amount
 - For qualifying businesses, a minimum payment increases to €7.6K and the maximum increases to €47.5K.

Restart Grant Appeals

All premises that applied for the RGP and were approved but who did not submit an application for the original RG are being contacted to ask them if they wish to submit a declaration to appeal not applying for the original RG. Contact is being made with all applications who meet the criteria for the initial RG scheme and who would benefit from receiving this grant now. All appeal declarations must be received before 31st October 2020.

Closing of Restart Grant

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment have given notice that the Restart Grant Schemes including Appeals will close on 31st October 2020.

The Restart Grant Plus Scheme, including the top-ups applied nationwide and in certain counties, will close from midnight on Saturday 31st October. A new COVID

Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) was established as part of Budget 2021 on 13th October 2020 and is being operated by the Revenue Commissioners

<https://revenue.ie/en/corporate/press-office/budget-information/2021/crss-overview-and-examples.pdf>.

The table below set out the number of grants approved and the value of grants paid by Dublin City Council since the start of the scheme on 22nd May 2020. The total amount dispersed by the Council up to 23/10/2020 is €76.1m. It is anticipated that a further €22.7m will be paid out to applicants approved but not paid. This includes the final 20% top-up, RG appeals and applications up to 31/10/2020, resulting in total funds of approximately €98.8m being dispersed. The Council are awaiting funds from Enterprise Ireland before we can pay the final tranche of payments.

DATE:	23 October 2020	
RESTART GRANT SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	0	€0
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	2	€8,183
APPLICATIONS PAID	3856	€20,305,585
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	1638	N/A
GRAND TOTAL	5496	€20,313,768

DATE:	23 October 2020	
RESTART GRANT PLUS SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	39	€651,408
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	491	€4,143,529
APPLICATIONS PAID	6122	€55,827,798
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	937	N/A
GRAND TOTAL	7589	€60,622,735

RG1 APPEALS, 20% Top Up, Other	
Appeals	1,974
Top-up	8.4m
Other (new application & top-ups)	2.2m

Antoinette Power
Head of Financial Accounting

23rd October 2020



Oifis 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

Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Overview of Spending Leaflet

The Finance Department has been engaging with the Web & Social media team to design a series of infographics to present financial information to the general public in a more engaging, informative and accessible format. This follows from the setting of the Finance SPC's work programme in which SPC members outlined the provision of transparent financial information as a deliverable over the SPC five year period.

Work commenced in late 2019 and continued into early 2020. Due to the pandemic and other work pressures, it was not possible to give resources to this matter over the 2nd quarter and much of the 3rd quarter in 2020. Work has now recommenced and it is expected to be completed in Q4 2020. It is intended that the information will be presented to the public via our social media channels on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. The infographics presented will support the information contained in Budget Y2021. It is understood that the SPC members sought the provision of information in a leaflet format. There is a cost element with this option and it is felt that it may be useful to assess what type of information is best received by the public and to consider the format of a leaflet in the future.

Attached to these Finance SPC meeting papers are draft examples of the infographics that are currently being worked on in video and PDF format. The input and views of the SPC members are sought in evaluating the format, design, content of the draft examples.

Kathy Quinn
Head of Finance
With responsibility for ICT

27th October 2020

Dublin City Council

Audit Committee

**Minutes of Meeting held on 8th July, 2020 at 9.30 a.m.
via MS Teams**

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)
Councillor Nial Ring (Cllr. NR)
Councillor Naoise O Muiri (Cllr. NOM)

Officials:

Mr. Owen Keegan, Chief Executive (CE)
Ms. Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance (KQ)
Ms. Theresa Lannon, Acting Head of Internal Audit (TL)
Ms. Martina Mc Loughlin, Acting Administrative Officer, Internal Audit

Attendees from Housing & Community Services Dept. - in relation to Item 3 on the agenda:

Mr. Hugh Mc Kenna, Acting Executive Manager (HMCK)
Mr. Frank D'Arcy, Senior Executive Officer, Maintenance Section (FD'A)
Ms. Tara Robertson, Administrative Officer, Rents Section (TR)
Ms. Joann Reid, Project Manager, Data Management Unit (JR)

Attendees from the Human Resources and Corporate Services & Transformation Depts. - in relation to Item 4 on the agenda:

Mr. Gerry Geraghty, Acting Head of Human Resources and Corporate Services (GG)
Ms. Eileen Quinlivan, Executive Manager (EQ)
Mr. Brendan Hayden, Acting Executive Manager (BH)

Non-Attendance:

Professor Diarmuid Hegarty, Dublin Chamber (DH)

1. Minutes of Audit Committee meeting held on 30th January, 2020.

A report was submitted to the Members on the Update of Actions from the AC meeting held on 30th January last.

Appendix A:

- Action 1 to be dealt with under Item 3 on the agenda for this meeting
- Actions 2, 3 and 5 had been dealt with and were noted by the AC
- Action 4 was discussed, in relation to the Housing & Community Services Department coming under the remit of the Corporate Project Support Office. The CE confirmed that an instruction had been given and he would follow-up re implementation. The AC requested that this issue be kept open and followed-up with an update to the AC.
- Action 6 was deferred to the next meeting of the AC.

Appendix B:

- Actions 2 & 3 would be dealt with under Item 3 on the agenda for this meeting

The minutes were subsequently agreed.

Action 1: CE to give update to the AC in relation to the Housing & Community Services Department coming under the remit of the Corporate Project Support Office

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

No conflict of interest was declared.

3. Action Items from Previous Meetings by Mr. Hugh Mc Kenna, Acting Executive Manager, Housing & Community Services:

- a. Report on Housing Rent Arrears**
- b. Report on Fixed Assets Register**
- c. Update on Joinery Workshop**

Presentations were given for the three areas listed and the AC asked questions following each presentation. The Members asked that the presentations be forwarded to them.

Action 2: The presentations given by Housing to be forwarded to the Members:

- **Report on Housing Rent Arrears**
- **Report on Fixed Assets Register**
- **Update on Joinery Workshop**

a. Housing Rent Arrears:

The AC raised some concerns about rent arrears increasing, including the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on rent collection measures.

KQ queried what the situation was in relation to payments being deducted from social welfare/employment payments. Housing responded that this was being pursued nationally through the LGMA.

In response to a query about a national rent scheme, the CE stated that this was an issue for Government but was complicated as conditions varied throughout the country and in the absence of political consensus on this issue, it was not being pursued

The Committee requested that Housing would keep them updated on this issue and that there should be strong, early intervention on pursuing rent arrears.

Action 3: The AC to be kept updated on the issue of Housing Rent Arrears

b. Fixed Assets Register:

This work was in response to the Principal Local Government Auditor's (PLGA) report in 2017. The AC queried when it is scheduled to be completed. Housing responded that they were eighteen months into a three-year project to establish data governance and that the stock figures were comprehensive. However, this was only one part of the project and they were looking at all issues under the Open House Management System.

KQ stated that the 2019 and 2020 figures were not at the level expected, but the PLGA will re-visit the work done to date in her next report and the AC will review when the PLGA report is received.

The AC will review when the next PLGA's report is presented to them.

Action 4: The AC to review the work done on the Fixed Assets Register, following consideration of the PLGA's report for 2019

c. Update on Joinery Workshop

The Members welcomed the update, particularly that a unit cost was now available for direct labour, and commended the work being carried out by the JW. They requested that output be reviewed after one year and a new audit carried out for comparison purposes. TL confirmed that the outstanding recommendations from this audit were being followed-up under the current Review of Recommendations.

Action 5: Review of output from the Joinery Workshop after one year and a new audit to be carried out for comparison purposes

4. Update on Covid 19 Business Continuity Measures

GG gave a verbal report on DCC's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of the challenges presented in continuing to provide services and in relation to working conditions for staff, particularly under Health & Safety.

A Crisis Management Team was already in place, which proved very beneficial. DCC responded based on national public health guidelines. A group has been established to look at how DCC moves forward in terms of staff returning to work or continuing to work remotely. The Members thanked GG for the positive report.

5. Audit Reports:

a. In-Depth Check of the Appraisal & Planning Stages of the North City Operational Depot (NCOD), under the Public Spending Code (PSC)

KQ outlined the reasons for this project, i.e. to provide better working conditions for staff, particularly under Health & Safety and to free up sites for housing. She noted the Satisfactory outcome of the Report and confirmed that the tender price had increased and DCC were looking at ways to reduce this. The AC asked how it would be funded. The CE responded that it would be from the sale of sites and sanction from the Department for borrowing. Sites would be made available to AHBs, who can access funding. He also stated that the Cost Benefit Analysis would be re-run and would be re-submitted to the Elected Members for approval and he welcomed the Satisfactory outcome of the report, and the report's recommendations which were classified as low level risks.

b. In-Depth Check of Dublin City Council's Ongoing Management of Revenue Spend in Relation to Road Maintenance and Improvement, under the Public Spending Code (PSC)

The AC noted this Report.

NR informed the Members that a two-page report was presented at the last Finance SPC meeting in relation to the Funding of the Maintenance of DCC's Road Network. This report to be circulated to the Members.

Action 6: Finance SPC report on Funding of the Maintenance of DCC's Road Network to be circulated to the AC Members

c. Investigation of Allegation that Residential Parking Permits have been issued to Non-Residents in respect of a specified street

TL outlined the context for this audit, i.e. a member of the public made a complaint in relation to parking permits, which was ultimately investigated by the IA Unit. The AC commended the work of Internal Audit in investigating this matter and bringing it to a successful conclusion, but noted its concerns in relation to the process deficiencies which allowed this incident to occur.

TL advised that recommendations have been made which will reduce the possibility of this occurring, including two proofs of residency when applying for a permit and continued proof of residency when applying for a renewal to be produced every four years. The AC queried if this could happen elsewhere and suggested that sampling/spot checking should be undertaken to see if this is commonplace.

Action 7: Sample/spot check of parking permits issued in high-demand areas to be undertaken

6. Training/familiarisation sessions required by AC Members

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

7. A.O.B

LR informed the Members that following Cllr. Mary Fitzpatrick's appointment to the Seanad, it is expected that her replacement to the AC will be appointed at the September City Council meeting.

Due to Covid-19 constraints, the AFS will not be presented to the AC at the September meeting, but at the final meeting of the year. Members will be contacted closer to the September meeting in relation to whether the meeting will be held virtually or in person.

The AC asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Hugh Fitzpatrick and to wish him well on his retirement.

The meeting concluded at 11.00am.



Louise Ryan, Chairperson

Date: 22/09/2020

Appendix A

Action 1: The CE to give update to the AC in relation to the Housing & Community Services Department coming under the remit of the Corporate Project Support Office

Action 2: The presentations given by Housing to be forwarded to the Members:

- Report on Housing Rent Arrears
- Report on Fixed Assets Register
- Update on Joinery Workshop

Action 3: The AC to be kept updated on the issue of Housing Rent Arrears

Action 4: The AC to review the work done on the Fixed Assets Register, following consideration of the PLGA's report for 2019

Action 5: Review of output from the Joinery Workshop after one year and a new audit to be carried out for comparison purposes

Action 6: Finance SPC report on Funding of the Maintenance of DCC's Road Network to be circulated to the AC Members

Action 7: Sample/spot check of parking permits issued in high-demand areas to be undertaken

Appendix B

Actions agreed at the Audit Committee meeting of 30th January, 2020

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

Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Schedule of Meetings For 2021

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Thursday 21 st January	TBC	2.30 pm
Thursday 18th March	TBC	2.30 pm
Thursday 20 th May	TBC	2.30pm
Thursday 16th September	Council Chamber	2.30pm
Thursday 18th November	Council Chamber	2.30 pm

Meetings will take place on 3rd Thursday of the month.

