

MINUTES OF THE PROTOCOL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD

ON THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2022

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September and matters arising

Order: Minutes Agreed.

2. Councillor Conference Reports:

Councillor Dermot Lacey, Dublin Economic Workshop, 16th-17th September 2022, Whites Hotel County Wexford.

Order: Report Noted

3. St. Patrick's Festival

The Manager reported that she circulated a redacted version of the report into governance of St. Patrick's Festival to the Members.

Following a discussion on the importance of St. Patrick's Festival to the City of Dublin the Members agreed the following actions:

- Write to the Minister requesting he provide for a Councillor Representative on the Board of St. Patrick's Festival.
- Invite the Chair of the Board of St. Patrick's Festival to attend a future meeting of the Protocol Committee.
- Request of full un-redacted copy of the report into the governance of St. Patrick's Festival

Order: Agreed

4. Request to Illuminate City Hall Red in support of the Bram Stoker Festival 28th - 31st October 2022.

The Manager informed Members that a request from HIV Ireland had also been received to illuminate City Hall Red on 1st December 2022 in support of World Aids Day.

Order: The Members agreed to the illumination requests for both the Bram Stoker Festival and World Aids Day.

5. Play on Kathleen Clarke in the Council Chamber

The Manager informed Members that the Dublin City Council Arts Office would like to support a rehearsed reading of a new play by Jessica Freed titled "Waking the Land" about the life of Kathleen Clarke in the Council Chamber on the 3rd and 4th November 2022.

Order: Agreed.

6. **Section 254 License Applications**

The Manager informed Members that this issue was placed on the agenda following a request from Councillor Naoise Ó Muirí.

Cllr. Ó Muirí reported that there was a lack of clarity and transparency surrounding the process of applications for Section 254 licenses, which provided for the installation of equipment and items on a public road or footpath. Councillors and members of the public were not adequately informed when these applications are submitted and considered.

Deri Flood, Senior Executive Engineer from the Road Maintenance Services Division gave a report on the matter. She informed the Committee that Section 254 Licenses are not considered planning applications and therefore are not governed by the same process. When an application is received a site notice is erected at the location and Councillors and members of the public have 3 weeks to make a submission. The City Council has 4 months to consider the application and a report is prepared by the area planner using the same criteria used to determine planning applications. The responsibility to grant a license rests with the Environment and Transportation Department. Licenses are granted for 1 or 5 years depending on the nature of the installation. The decision of the City Council can be appealed to An Board Pleanála at any point after the license is granted. However, only Section 254 licenses issued from 2001 onwards can be appealed. Infrastructure installed prior to that dated cannot be appealed.

Deri Flood confirmed to the Committee that the Road Maintenance Services were reviewing how the consultation process could be improved. In the first instance Section 254 license applications would be included in the Area Planning lists circulated to Councillors. It was also requested that applications and decisions would be published online and be available to Councillors and members of the public to view.

The Members thanked Deri for the informative report and welcomed the changes to the process which would improve transparency. They also requested that consideration be given to treating license applications in the same way as planning applications and conducted through the APAS system. The Members also requested that a report and presentation also be made to the Planning and Urban Form SPC on this issue early in the New Year. The Manager also agreed to get clarification regarding the duration of planning permission for telephone boxes.

Order: Report Noted.

7. **Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding between Dublin, Ireland and City of Dublin, Ohio, USA**

Fanchea Gibson made a presentation to the Members on the request to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin Ohio. The request was in accordance with the criteria outlined in the newly agreed policy on “Twinning and Informal Agreements”. The Members thanked Fanchea for the presentation and welcomed the renewal. It was formally proposed by Councillor Michael MacDonncha and seconded by Councillor Naoise Ó Muirí.

Order: Proposal to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin Ohio was agreed and recommended to Council.

8. **Request to consider awarding Honorary Freedom of the City of Dublin**

The Members discussed the matter and acknowledged that although the decision to award the Freedom of the City was a reserved function and a matter for the City Council the accepted procedure was to bring such requests to the Lord Mayor's Office.

Order: It was agreed to refer the matter to the Standing Orders sub-committee to review the mechanism by which nominations for Freedom of the City should be considered.

9. **Proposed Deadline for submission of Questions and Motions to the January 2023 Council meeting - Monday 19th December 2022**

Order: Agreed.

10. **Vacancy on the Dublin Mid-Leinster Regional Health Forum**

Order: The Members to revert to their groups and seek a nomination for this vacancy.

11. **Motion in the name of Councillor John Lyons:**

"To encourage more Councillors and City Council Staff to cycle to City Hall, provision for the safe parking of bicycles inside the building shall be made."

The Manager informed the Members that plans were in place to install a secure lockable bike storage facility at Palace Street by the end of November 2022. The facility will be open to both Councillors and the staff of Palace Street.

The Committee welcomed the Managers proposal and requested that further details regarding the design and location of the facility be circulated to the Members.

The Members also requested that the wider issue of Councillor involvement in the operation of City Hall be listed for discussion at the next meeting of the Protocol Committee.

Order: Report noted and the Manager agreed to circulate further information on the bicycle storage facility to the Members and to bring a report on the operation of City Hall to the next meeting.

12. **Manager's Report**

a) **Hybrid City Council meetings - Councillor Attendance and Sound Quality**

The Manager reported that a sound engineer has assessed the Council Chamber and confirmed the audio / visual system was operating optimally. However, a sound quality audit would be conducted at the November City Council meeting to identify any ongoing issues.

Councillor Heney also requested that the operation of the automatic door to the Council Chamber during meetings be reviewed as it was a contributing factor to sound quality.

Councillor Flynn thanked the Manager for the report on remote attendance at Council meetings which was very informative.

Order: Report Noted.

b) **City Hall Sculpture**

The Manager reported that the sculpture on the plinth at City Hall would remain in place until November before being relocated to Grangegorman TU. There were no current plans to replace sculpture.

The Members expressed their support for the continued use of the plinth to display public art and sculpture and asked the matter be considered by the Arts SPC.

Order: Noted.

c) **Tea & Coffee Facilities in City Hall**

The Manager reported that the low numbers of physical attendees at Committee meetings in City Hall was resulting in significant waste of tea and coffee. She suggested that for smaller meetings Members self-serve using the facilities provided.

Order: Agreed.

12. **A.O.B.**

- Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy informed the Committee that she wished to introduce a new installation at the Mansion House this year. Rather than the live animal crib she was proposing an interactive Winter Wonderland experience.

There were no objections from Members, however, no decision was taken by the Committee as events at the Mansion House are the prerogative of the Lord Mayor. The Members also wished to acknowledge the role of the Irish Farmers Association and DSPCA in supporting the live crib over many years. Their involvement has ensured that animal welfare was always of paramount importance.

Order: Noted.

- Councillor Mannix Flynn highlighted the importance of online protection for Elected Members and informed the Committee of a system which provided online monitoring of social media platforms in relation to Councillor safety.

The Manager confirmed that Councillors could avail of such systems through the use of the vouched expenses scheme.

Order: Noted.

- Councillor Micheál MacDonncha raised the issue of the right of Councillors to information on matters which formed part of court proceedings. He was concerned that the use of the concept of “sub judice” was frustrating the Members legitimate requests for information. He gave the example of the current situation in relation to the unauthorised demolition of the O’Rahilly house as a case in point. He also requested that the Chief Executive respond to his correspondence on the matter.

It was agreed that this issue deserved greater consideration and that it should be listed for a future meeting of the Protocol Committee.

The Manager also confirmed that she would raise Cllr. MacDonnacha's specific concern regarding the O'Rahilly House with the Chief Executive.

Order: Noted.

- Councillor Dermot Lacey asked for clarification with regard to the decision of Dublin City Council not to nominate Councillors to Area Partnerships.

The Manager confirmed that this decision was taken following guidance from the Department on the matter. The Manager agreed to investigate further and to report back to the Members.

13. **Proposed date of Next meeting: 24th November 2022 at 8am**

Order: It was agreed that the next meeting of the Protocol Committee would take place on 24th November 2022 at 8am.

Councillor Deirdre Heney
Chairperson
Thursday 27 October 2022

Attendance:

Members:

Deirdre Heney (Chairperson)
Anthony Connaghan
Joe Costello
Darcy Lonergan
Cat O'Driscoll

Members:

Caroline Conroy
Mannix Flynn
Micheál MacDonncha
Michael Pidgeon

Members:

Donna Cooney
Dermot Lacey
Naoise Ó Muirí
Noeleen Reilly

Officers

Ruth Dowling
Fanchea Gibson

Deri Flood

Michael Gallagher

Apologies

Anne Feeney