

Finance Strategic Policy Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held On 21st September 2017

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2017

Minutes agreed

2. Correspondence and Matters Arising

Matters arising:

Local Property Tax

Cllr. P McCartan raised the issue of the loss in revenue to Dublin City Council as a result of all new builds being exempt from Local Property Tax for the period 2013 – 2019 culminating in an estimated loss of €15m. He requested that this loophole in regulations and subsequent loss of income to Dublin City Council should be brought to the attention of the Minister for HP&LG and the Secretary General.

Agreed: Correspondence would issue to the Minister on this matter.

Agreed: The projected lost income as a result of this anomaly would be circulated to all members.

Agreed: It was further agreed that a sub-committee should be established to make a submission to the Minister on the anomaly mentioned and other issues relevant to the LPT in Dublin City.

Resources Work Group

Cllr. McGinley provided an update on the group meeting held on 31st August 2017 and summarised the issues to be provided by the Chief Executive for the next meeting:

- Update on the arrangements for Councillor queries re IW related reinstatements following transfer of service to Irish Water
- Update on backlog with road maintenance requests
- Update on activity through fix your street and its application in other functions
- Update on recruitment
- Update required on 2017 employment trends in DCC

Correspondence:

a) Carton Estate, Ballymun Remedial Works – letter to B. Kenny
Correspondence noted.

b) Carton Estate, Ballymun Remedial Works – update from T. Flynn
Report noted. It was requested that progress on the recoupment of the costs of these remedial works to Dublin City Council must be ongoing.

c) Rates Legislative Framework – letter from Cllr. McGinley to Minister Murphy
Correspondence noted

3. Motor Tax Administration and Collection

Report noted on the administration and collection of motor tax. K. Quinn highlighted the key findings and feedback of the customer survey undertaken in the Motor Tax Office over a two week period in September. It was noted that a body of work will be required from the Department of Transport to expand the provision of the motor tax service both online and in the Motor Tax Office.

Members spoke about the need for the retention of the Motor Tax Office highlighting various reasons for the continuation of this office based service:

- Elderly members or public with disabilities requiring assistance;
- Not all the public are comfortable with computers;
- Staff assistance at the counters;
- Public requiring assistance as English is not their first language;
- Public service – consideration to the possibility of incorporating the office into the Customer Services Centre;
- Improvements to the current service

K. Quinn noted that the change of ownership process is currently under review by the Department of Transport. She further noted that the monies from motor tax no longer come to local authorities. As a result, the connection between motor tax and local authorities' road services has been broken. She further clarified that the reason for the number of motor tax offices in Donegal County Council relates to the geographical spread of the county whereby all area offices provide full services.

4. Rates – legal costs of Rates Debtors 2016

Report content noted.

5. Revenue Grant Funding of Local Authorities 2016-2017

Report noted. K. Quinn presented data highlighting the following:

- Revenue government grants in 2016 and 2017 showing comparative total figures for all local authorities and Dublin City Council;
- The percentage grant total allocated to Dublin City Council from the overall national total;
- Population per 2016 census;
- Grants per head of population (unadjusted for regional and national services);
- Grants per head of population (adjusted for regional and national services);
- Dublin City Council allocation of total adjusted revenue grants;
- Local Property Tax (LPT) and the equalisation fund;
- Rates and vacancy refund rates.

It was noted that the level of grants allocated to Dublin City Council is not clearly related to either population or rates income. The allocation of funds from the equalisation fund is not indirectly correlated to available funds i.e. rates income.

The following issues were noted by members:

- Unfair urban allocations;
- LPT income has not provided extra services for Dublin City Council;
- No allocation for the cost of running the capital city is provided for;
- No account for the doubling of the population each day from people commuting from outside the city;
- Dublin is not treated fairly in grant allocations;
- Similar community grant allocations are provided to all local authorities regardless of size;
- Query was raised whether it would be possible to establish if the €16m given back through the equalisation fund and redistributed to the other local authorities, allows those local authorities to reduce their LPT by 15%.
- Unfair and discriminatory and anti-Dublin;
- Update sought on the proposed rates legislation;
- Fundamental reform is needed;

K. Quinn was thanked for the comprehensive report presented to members.

Agreed: It was agreed that this report would be issued to both Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Minister for Finance.

Agreed: It was further agreed that this report would be issued to the environment spokesperson for the main political parties.

6. Community Group Lettings and Licences – update

Report noted. It was requested that it should be noted that the leasing/licensing of these properties to community groups incurs a loss of approx. €10m in rents to Dublin City Council and it is important to record the value of this service to the community.

Agreed: it was agreed that the following would be examined by the Planning and Property Development Department:

- The licence details relating to the scouting body in Ireland should be reviewed to regularise the various trust fund arrangements following the merger of the two scouting organisations in the early 2000s;
- Details on the arrangements for the lease of the Rathmines Town Hall to the City of Dublin Education and Training Board;
- KADCA property on Greendale Road and the issues around a long running dispute over this property and the potential for redevelopment for a much needed community facility;
- Cllr. McAdam asked for details of the lease arrangements applying to a current TD in the Central Area at Buckingham Street Lower;
- Cllr. Ring requested that it is established with the Law Department that there is no conflict of interest with him being a member of the board of St. Agatha's Hall.

7. Dublin Docklands Development Authority

D. Kelly, Administrative Officer, Planning and Property Development Department, provided a detailed verbal update on progress with the Jeanie Johnston famine replica ship covering maintenance and operation.

Procurement by way of the advertisement of a PIN for the maintenance and operation of the ship is currently underway and D. Kelly is liaising with the Central Procurement Unit. However, the required repairs would need to be carried out before any concession could take it on.

Work on increasing visitor numbers and the opportunity to move the ship and creating a shore side facility are all issues being considered. It was noted that the development of this facility would come at a significant cost to Dublin City Council. The use of the onboard facilities is also an option being examined.

The Dublin Docklands Development Authority item will be kept on the agenda for a future meeting.

8. Audit Committee – agreed minutes of 1st June 2017

Minutes noted. Cllr. Ring provided an update on the more recent meeting on 14th September where the Local Government Auditor Richard Murphy attended to discuss the audit of the final accounts for 2016 and noting a satisfactory report at the conclusion of the audit.

9. AOB

Vacancy Refund Report

Report is currently being finalised. Cllr. McCartan requested information on the impact from the adjustment made since last year's Budget.

Signed: **Councillor Ruairi McGinley**
Chairperson

Date: 21st September 2017

Attendance:

Members

Councillor Ruairi McGinley (Chairperson)
An tArdmhéara Micheál MacDonncha
Councillor Ray McAdam
Councillor Paddy McCartan
Councillor Dermot Lacey
Councillor Noeleen Reilly
Councillor Larry O'Toole
Councillor Nial Ring
Eric Fleming, ICTU
Morgan O'Regan, Docklands Business Forum
Aidan Sweeney, IBEC

Officials

Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance
Derek Kelly, Administrative Officer,
Fiona Murphy, Senior Staff Officer, Finance Secretariat

Fiona Collins, Assistant Staff Officer, Finance Secretariat

Visitors

Alan Dempsey IBEC

Apologies

Councillor Paddy Bourke

Councillor Tom Brabazon

Cllr Brendan Carr

Councillor Hazel De Nortúin

Aebhric McGibney, Dublin Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Caroline McMullan, DCU

Joanna Piechota, Irish Polish Society

Press

Cónal Thomas – Dublin Inquirer

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