

# A Liberties Revival

Year 4 Update to the South Central Area Committee

March 2018



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

THE  
**LIBERTIES**



# The Liberties Dublin

Over 500 indigenous and international businesses | A vibrant inner city community | Major social and cultural landmarks | One of Dublin's most iconic visitor destinations | A creative quarter | An innovation district with thriving enterprise clusters | A respected education centre



# Time for a Change

- City Council SCA and local businesses established **Liberties Business Area Improvement Initiative** in 2014
- Active effort to build a business network in the area and **develop a shared vision** – The Liberties Business Forum
- **Communicate a positive message** about The Liberties – actively and positively promote the area, instil confidence
- **Major investment in public realm:** clean streets, refurbished buildings, new parks and improved green spaces, tree planting and street greening, better management of streets
- Maximise benefits of major **public/private sectors investment** (NCH, tourism development, Diageo, student housing development)
- Create a **sustainable and engaged neighbourhood** - a place to be proud of



# Retail & Small Businesses

## One of Dublin's best known commercial and mercantile districts

The Liberties will be a centre for artisan food production, quality neighbourhood shopping, distinctive independent retailing and a lively café, pub and restaurant scene.



# Retail & Small Business

2018:

- much reduced vacancy and demand for retail space,
- new businesses,
- investment in property and shopfronts and revitalised streets,
- greater number of cafes, food and venues,
- increased footfall and visitor dwell time





# Innovation District

## A location of choice for new media, tech and digital enterprises

Our ambition is to draw further companies and employment to the area and to encourage 'scale up and stay' of existing businesses, retaining dynamic enterprises within the local economy.

### 2018:

- Award-winning small business incubators – The GEC
- new office developments in train, new workshare operator opening in 2018 (800 people), 141 Thomas Street, Cornmarket, South Mills, Donore Avenue
- development of 'Innovation Corridor' centred on St James's Hospital/NCH

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Dublin, showing a river, roads, and buildings. A large blue network diagram is overlaid on the left side of the image. The diagram consists of a central blue circle with ten lines radiating outwards to smaller blue circles, representing a hub-and-spoke model of connectivity or innovation.

# The Innovation Corridor

- St James Hospital campus - €1bn investment in new Children's Hospital, MISA, specialist cancer research and care, ambition for a Health, Well-being & Digital Innovation Quarter
- National College of Art & Design – industrial design, vis comms, medical devices
- NDRC – digital start-up investor
- The Digital Hub – 100 micro-SME enterprise cluster including tech, media, med tech, gaming, fin tech
- The GEC – 90 companies – media, services, micro-enterprises – Best Business Incubator with University 2018
- State agency and semi state engagement to develop a compelling investment proposition
- Grow the quantum of office floorspace in the area
- D8 Innovation Corridor Taskforce



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## The Liberties leading latest wave in Dublin's revival



“Strategically, Dublin needs the Liberties as a counterpoint to the Silicon Docks. In this historic quarter of Dublin, ideas flourished and innovation thrived. Our vision is to build on the innovation that exists so that this part of Dublin can be a world centre of excellence in innovation, health and well-being.” (Peter Finnegan, DCC)

An artist's impression showing the aerial view of the proposed St James Quarter scheme

Donal Buckley

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A digital lake and Italian quarter - inside Microsoft's new €134m HQ

**Commercial Property**



Prime residential sites on offer in city's Ranelagh and Castleknock

**Commercial Property**



Dublin residential site with positive planning history guiding at €2.5m

**Commercial Property**



Dublin & Rialto

**Commercial Property**



Make a



# HOME OF THE FREE

Known as **The Liberties**, the area west of Christchurch and east of Kilmainham, is one of the most important and historic in the capital city. While there are impressive plans for regeneration and development over the next ten years, the aim is to retain its unique, Dublin character. **BY STEPHANIE COSTELLO**

PHOTOGRAPHY MIGUEL RUIZ, CONOR HEAVEY, AMBER DE JONG

**N**o other place in Dublin has tapped into the cultural zeitgeist quite like **The Liberties**. From centuries old churches and cathedrals, to horse drawn carriages, colourful characters, fantastic pubs and generations of vendors selling all sorts in long established shops and markets, all human life is here - in a good way...

Once a semi-autonomous jurisdiction, The Liberties (or Na Saeirsí as gaeilge) got its name in the 12th century due to its geographic location outside the city walls. In the manner of the time, King Henry II granted to the Augustinian monks certain privileges and powers, which enabled them to control trade in the area. It's one of the oldest and most historic areas in central Dublin, spanning from the river Liffey on the north end across to Warrenmount on the south; and St.Patrick's Cathedral on the east, to St.James Hospital on the West.

Today, this multi-faceted, bustling part of the city is alive-alive-oh, and brimming with charm. Easily accessible by bus or on foot, it is a focal point for tourists and natives alike.

"It will still be an area of majestic cathedrals and beautiful churches, a famous brewery and trendy new distilleries, lively market streets and colourful local charm."

Walkers generally begin their Liberties jaunt in Medieval Dublin, at Christ Church Cathedral, one of the capital city's oldest and most exquisite structures: one can saunter around the famous 12th century crypts and gaze in amazement at the splendour of its artistry and craftsmanship, before heading over to Dublinia, a historical museum dedicated to our Viking

as well as the manifold musicians, who are studying and developing their craft at **BIMM college** just a few doors down. District 8, located in The Tivoli Theatre, at the Thomas Street end of Francis Street is a clubbing institution for the newest generation of ravers, where top international house and techno DJs are likely to be found on weekends. Meanwhile, The Tivoli car park has become a go to place in and of itself. There, the work of the cream of Irish urban artists can be found on display, on its towering walls.

The Tivoli is set to be redeveloped as a hotel in the coming years. Its loss will be mourned by many - but it is also a sign that developers see the huge potential in the area and are anxious to get involved. The Liberties are rising...

## BREWING AND DISTILLING

This area of Dublin wasn't always a prime target for cash injections and redevelopment plans. It has a strong, proud working class history with some of Dublin's oldest tenement buildings remaining an important part of the social and cultural mix.

That there was a huge divide historically between the rich and the poor of the Liberties was axiomatic: that's how things were then. Locals were all too well aware of the ill-treatment of children generally in Ireland, in what was a very divided society. Indeed it was a Liberties resident, the great Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Jonathan Swift, who in 1729 wrote the justly famous work of satire, *A Modest Proposal*, which highlighted the inequality, hypocrisy and double standards of the time.

During the late 18th and 19th century, however, the area became an important brewing and distilling quarter and many residents found work in the factories there. That did not mean an end to poverty. But there was work to be had, and the area was an important centre of industry.

Historic hardships only served to embolden the community spirit in the Liberties, as Nancy O'Doherty who was born and raised on Reginald Street remembers.



# Tourism

## Dublin's 'must-see' area

Our goal is to welcome more visitors, improve their experience of the area, encourage them to dwell for longer and explore, and to support additional investment in attractions and accommodation

Tell the story of The Liberties, enhance cultural life, put The Liberties firmly at the centre of city's cultural life



# 2018: Tourism is a Key Driver

- 1.7m visitors to The Guinness Storehouse in 2017
- 0.6m visits to St Patrick's Cathedral / 225k to Christ Church Cathedral (2016)
- 200k visits to Teelings since opening June 2015 – transforming potential of Newmarket
- Pearse Lyons Distillery opened September 2017
- Dublin Liberties Distillery and The Vaults to open Summer 2018.
- €40m investment by Diageo in Roe Distillery & Guinness Storehouse
- Over 700 hotel bedrooms to open in area by March 2019
- Actively promoting quality cafes and places to eat. Lively pubs and venues.





# Creatives & Culture

## A quarter of highly-respected education centres and creative industries

The area boasts a vibrant and diverse arts and culture scene. Its home to a large number of architecture and design practices, galleries and art collectives, craft stores and studio spaces. We aim to continue to strengthen and enhance that and to retain creative talent in the area.

### 2018:

- how can we support social enterprises,
- a new chapter for NCAD,
- our busy cultural calendar – Culture Date with Dublin 8, Culture Night, Liberties Festival, St Thomas’s Abbey events



- **Liberties Enterprise Day:** Investment and small business showcase held in partnership with Bank of Ireland Enterprising Towns | Oct 2017
- 300 attendees to range of events and presentations at NDRC - SME Fair and Networking - social enterprise involvement
- Liberties entrant to inaugural all-Ireland **Enterprising Town Awards** competing with almost 80 urban centres across Ireland

## Liberties Enterprise Day & Enterprising Towns

# Our Positive Message

- [www.libertiesdublin.ie](http://www.libertiesdublin.ie) website and active social media channels promote the area, its businesses and community
- Regular newsletters to business and community keep people informed about what's going on and encouraged to be part of area renewal
- A 'go to' information resource for existing and new businesses - promotional brochures, 'How to...' business guides, premises to let
- Media coverage of the area – national and local media, RTE Nationwide, radio - city gets to know The Liberties
- Visitor information, what's on, maps and guides

# Snapshot of Activities in 2017

- 6 meetings of Liberties Business Forum
- 1 Liberties Enterprise Day partnering with Forum & Bank of Ireland  
Enterprising Towns: c.300 visitors over day
- Entrant to Ireland's Most Enterprising Town
- 12 monthly newsletters to over 500+ business and community
- 40k visits to [www.libertiesdublin.ie](http://www.libertiesdublin.ie) – over 70% from Dublin
- 16k followers across social media – 3 active platforms
- 10k visitor maps and guides printed and distributed
- Ongoing engagement with new arrivals, existing businesses, investors and agencies
- Exposure local and national media
- 1 Culture Date with D8 – active social and cultural programme



# Votes of Confidence

- Announcement in 2017 of St James's Gate Quarter project covering 15 acres south of Thomas Street
- €200m regeneration planned for Newmarket and Mill Street
- Commencement of work at Grand Canal Harbour – Marlett
- Digital Hub masterplanning for future growth
- Development of long vacant sites – Cork Street
- €15m investment by DCC in public realm, parks and amenities





# A Liberties Revival

Thank You

[www.libertiesdublin.ie](http://www.libertiesdublin.ie)



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