

Item No. 14

Report to the Chairperson and Members of the Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 – Transparency Code

The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 commenced on 1st September 2015. The Act does not aim to prevent or inhibit lobbying activity. Its objective is to make the process more transparent. The Act aims to do this by providing for:

- The establishment and maintenance of a publicly accessible register of lobbying
- Obligations on lobbyists to register and to provide information regularly about their lobbying activities, including, in the case of professional lobbyists, information about their clients
- The introduction of a "cooling off" period during which lobbying activity may not be carried out by some former officials
- The Standards in Public Offices Commission (The Standards Commission) to be the regulator of lobbying.

However, in light of the different nature of engagement between public officials and non-public officials in certain forums such as task forces, committees and working groups, the Act does not seek to capture and register these interactions, provided that appropriate transparency arrangements are in place. Therefore, in order for SPC's to be considered exempt from the above obligations they must comply with the Transparency Code (see attached). A copy of the presentation on the Lobbying Act given to Local Government Management Agency Members from Sherry Perreault, Head of Lobbying Regulation Standards in Public Office Commission, is also attached.

The Transparency Code requires that the following information must be published on Dublin City Council's web-site.

- 1) Name of Chairperson together with details of his or her employing organisation
- 2) Names of Members together with details of their employing organisation
- 3) Whether any non-public servant members were previously designated public officials.
- 4) Terms of reference of the group
- 5) Agenda of each meeting;
- 6) Minutes of each meeting;
- 7) Expected timeframe for the group to conclude its work

- 8) Reporting arrangements
- 9) Is this information in a prominent place on the website and easily accessible.

In addition the Chairperson is responsible for overseeing and conducting the work of the Committee in a manner which ensures that the Committee operates in a manner fully in accordance with its terms of reference and in the public interest. The Chairperson will also include with the annual report of the Committee a statement confirming its compliance with the Transparency Code.

Ideally the information should be published in as timely a fashion as possible, having regard to the public interest in safeguarding the integrity of the deliberative process. At a minimum, the information on the website must be updated at least every 4 months in relation to each Committee.

It is proposed to contact Members to clarify as necessary the relevant details set out in the Transparency Code. The Environment and Transportation Department will also ensure compliance with the other general requirements of the Transparency Code.

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Environment and Transportation Department

28th October 2015