
**Finance Strategic Policy Committee
Breviate of Meeting held on 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
- Traffic volumes, transport modal share and transport modal shift
- Impact of utility openings and reinstatements
- Severe weather events/ winter maintenance
- Traffic permits and restrictions
- Planned maintenance versus reactive maintenance.
- COVID-19 Pandemic

At the conclusion of Mr. Collins's report, the members had a number of queries and comments for response and it was agreed that due to overall time constraints for the meetings, members were asked to email through to the Finance Department any questions they had in order so that a comprehensive list of responses could be co-ordinated.

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

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
- Laptops
- Mobile Phones and Tablets
- Security
- Remote Telephony
- Microsoft Teams
- Introduction and Development of New Applications
- Service Level Agreements

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. 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.

The introduction of the Restart Grant Plus commenced in August 2020 with enhanced grants ranging from new minimum/maximum levels of €4,000 and €25,000 respectively. This scheme was expanded to take in medium sized firms and independent hotels with up to 250 employees. This new scheme is open to rate paying sports clubs and charity shops. 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.

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.

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 circa €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.

Councillor Séamas McGrattan

Chairperson

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