

International Relations

Dublin delegation visit San Jose, California

A delegation from Dublin led by Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy travelled to San Jose, California as part of the ongoing Twinning relationship between the two cities. The delegates were Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy, Cllr Tom Brabazon, Cllr Claire Byrne, Cllr Alison Gilliland, Fanchea Gibson and Gráinne Kelly.



Delegation with Mayor Mahan and Council Members

Meetings and visits were held as follows:

- Mayor San José Matt Mahan
- City Manager Jennifer Maguire and Senior Management of San Jose City Council
- San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighbourhood services with a focus on Youth Programmes which included a site visit to a Community Centre
- Visit to the Martin Luther King Library and meeting with the City Librarian
- San Jose Housing Department including site visits to encampment, interim housing and permanent supported housing
- Climate Smart San Jose, San Jose City Council
- Office of Racial Equity, San Jose City Council
- Office of Economic Development, San Jose City Council
- San Jose Downtown Association

Areas of interest and for possible further consideration and follow-up

- Housing/Homelessness – similarities in challenges facing both cities particularly in relation to the significant need of affordable housing options and similar numbers of people without accommodation though San Jose has 2,000 rough sleepers compared with Dublin's 100. Both cities work collaboratively with external housing and homeless accommodation providers and both use a housing first approach to support those without accommodation. Different means of approaching support of rough sleepers with City of San Jose including supporting rough sleepers into accommodation as part of the remit of the BID contract.

Mayor Mahan referred to the need to consider alternative approaches to better supporting rough sleepers into supported accommodation.

- Youth Intervention and Neighbourhood services including Young Adult Work programmes both to give those who need work experience to get a job and also 6 month long term paid work experience training in natural resource management projects eg clearing land to reduce risk of fire. City of San Jose offer work under these programmes and in some cases the youth go on to permanent roles within the City Council.
- Youth Commission
- Hotel / Bed Tax – 10% in San Jose. 40% of the monies raised through this Hotel Tax is ring-fenced for Arts & Culture with the remainder for San Jose city's Convention and Visitors Bureau and Capital Expenditure for the City.

Visit to Dublin by delegation from Dublin Ohio, USA

A delegation of three people led by Mayor Jane Fox visited Dublin from 15th – 18th March 2023. She was accompanied by Alison LeRoy, Director of Community Events and Lindsay Weisenauer, Director of Communications & Public Information.



Signing of MOU

On 15th March Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy and Mayor Jane Fox signed a renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between our two cities at the Mansion House. This MOU was agreed by the Protocol Committee on 27th October 2022 and areas of co-operation identified included Culture and Citizen Engagement.

During their visit the delegation visited three cultural institutions in the Temple Bar area accompanied by the Dublin City Arts Officer. They visited the Project Arts Theatre, Smock Alley Theatre and Temple Bar Gallery & Studios where they had a tour of the institutions and met with the Directors. Meetings were held with staff from Corporate Services and Transformation Unit and covered the topics of a new service design approach involving Dublin City Council and nominated Disabled Persons Organisations, work with the Bloomberg Cities Network on becoming a more responsive and innovative City Council and Dublin City Council Beta projects. They met with staff from the International Relations Section and discussed potential areas of co-operation. They viewed

the Capel Street pedestrianisation works and took a tour of 14 Henrietta Street. On 17th March they attended the St. Patrick's Day Parade as guests of the Lord Mayor and Dublin City Council. They were presented with copies of "The Coroner's Daughter" by Andrew Hughes and the concept of One Dublin One Book was outlined. They also presented a podcast on their visit to Dublin which has been broadcast to the citizens of Dublin Ohio <https://dublinohiousa.gov/link-ahead-the-city-of-dublin-podcast/>

Following their visit, the following areas are being explored for further follow up:

- Involvement in the Dublin Irish Cultural Festival in August
- Arts :
 - Developing Arts infrastructure ie buildings. There is building expertise in DCC on developing Arts infrastructure and exchange of expertise would be valuable.
 - Supporting local artists and arts organisations to use this infrastructure which could include interest in reciprocal visits by artists.

It should be noted that the Arts in America is primarily supported by philanthropy and sponsorship unlike here in Ireland.

- Riverboxes (Art / Geocaching)
- Beta projects

Visit to Dublin by delegation from Seoul, Republic of Korea

A delegation of 17 people led by Mayor Oh Se-Hoon visited Dublin from 15th – 17th March 2023 as part of a four city European tour. The Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Ireland also accompanied the delegation.



Signing the Declaration

On 16th March Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy and Mayor Oh Se-Hoon signed a 4 year Friendship Agreement between the cities of Dublin and Seoul. This MOU was approved by the Protocol Committee on 23rd February 2023 and areas of cooperation included Transportation, Housing, Climate Action, Low Carbon City and Climate Resilience, Circular Economy, Smart Cities, Social Economy and Culture.

A meeting was held between the two Mayors following the signing with the Lord Mayor joined by Cllr Deirdre Heney, Assistant Chief Executive Richard Shakespeare, Executive Manager Mary MacSweeney and Head of International Relations Fanchea Gibson. Topics raised included

- Cultural opportunities
- Innovation in Dublin, Social Enterprise and the Circular Economy
- Impact of Covid on Dublin City and impact of remote working on the city. Dublin City Council's policy on remote working.
- Climate Challenge and the current EU project which both cities are involved in
- Night time economy and possible Night time Mayor
- Pedestrianisation of Dublin City and the challenges faced
- Current project with a focus on shared challenges around mobility under IURC Programme being done by the Transportation Departments of both Councils

The delegation then met with the Dublin City Council Staff and members of the Docklands Oversight and Consultative Forum for a walking tour of Dublin Docklands starting Grand Canal Square and ending at the Convention Centre Dublin.

These two elements were part of a larger visit by Mayor Oh Se-Hoon to Dublin which was co-ordinated by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Ireland.

Following their visit, the following areas are being explored for further follow up:

- Seoul Smart City Prize –Dublin City Council Smart Cities have indicated that they will take part in this competition
- Invitation received for 2023 World Cities Summit Mayor's Forum in Seoul to be considered by the next Lord Mayor following his/her election in June
- Ongoing work on European Union's International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) Programme with a focus on shared challenges around mobility specifically walking and cycling which has been signed up to by the Transportation Departments of both Councils. Additional funding has been received from IURC to facilitate study visits that align with the two cities' respective walking and cycling festivals (Dates to be confirmed)

Visit to Dublin by Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Monitoring Committee

On 3rd April, 2023 a delegation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities visited Dublin City Council as part of their ongoing monitoring of commitments undertaken by Council of European member states who have signed and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The delegation was composed of two co-rapporteurs on local and regional democracy Mr. Vladimir Prebilic (Slovenia) and Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen (Norway) who were assisted by Dr Anders Lidstrom, member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Sweden) and Stéphanie Poirel, Head of Statutory Activities Division and Secretary to the Monitoring Committee of the Congress.

The Dublin City Council delegation who met with them was led by Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy with Cllr Claire Byrne, Chief Executive Owen Keegan, Law Agent Yvonne Kelly, Head of Management

Accounting Fintan Moran, Executive Manager Darach O'Connor, Senior Executive Officer Ruth Dowling and Head of International Relations Fanchea Gibson.

Topics discussed included:

- Anything improved from implementation of Local Government Act 2014?
- Independence / non-independence of funding
- Role of Local Representatives
- Is it attractive to be a local representative?
- Representation of women in political life – both local and national
- Co-operation with Regional and National Government
- Directly Elected Mayor for Dublin
- Capital City and ability to deliver functions under current system
- Co-operation with other Dublin Local Authorities

Following the meeting they forwarded a questionnaire for further comment and will circulate the draft report before it is formally presented to Congress for adoption.



Eurocities Economic Development Forum 2023

Councillor Tom Brabazon and Juliet Passmore of Dublin City Council's Economic Development Department attended the Eurocities Economic Development Forum 2023 which was held in Helsinki from 22nd – 24th March 2023. The Forum 2023 explored cities' role in tackling pressing global challenges and enabling a fair digital and green transition.

On Day 1 the discussions centred on innovation, entrepreneurship, financing (EIB), co-operation with businesses and tackling the climate emergency. Focus was on city testbeds, innovation ecosystems and incubating SMEs. There were parallel site visits to a start-up centre, an education technology hub and the Urban Environment House including a tour of the centre for the environment in Helsinki which is a nearly zero-energy construction building.

Day 2 was dedicated to strategies for future proofing the workforce to mark 2023 European Year of Skills. There were presentations on the EU skills and attraction policies highlighting the twin transition to Green and Digital jobs that to date is policy rather than market driven. The aging demographic of the EU was emphasised and the active migration policies of Riga (online platform to attract skilled labour) and Stockholm (language skills for migrants) were highlighted. Quality of life was seen as important to skilled migrants and integration was seen as key by cities.

The Forum's political track (Day 2) discussed the impact of proposed European initiatives, such as the review of the EU economic governance framework, on channelling more funding into the local infrastructure including green loaning at cheaper lending rates. Some examples included funding for renewables, flood taxes and biodiversity restoration.

There was input from officials and politicians from a variety of cities including Helsinki, Amsterdam, Milan, Eindhoven, Tallinn, Lille, Genoa, Riga, Stockholm as well as from private organisations, the European Commission and the EIB.

Key takeaways included Helsinki's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, sustainable tourism strategies which included ongoing design of a Carbon Footprint Measurement.

For further information and a link please see <https://linktr.ee/eurocities>