

Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Economic Development & Enterprise

Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 at 15.30pm

In the Council Chambers, City Hall, Dublin 2

Members Present:

Cllr. Paul McAuliffe (Chair), Cllr. Alison Gilliland, Cllr. Noeleen Reilly, Cllr. Greg Kelly, Cllr. Anne Feeney, Cllr. Greg Kelly, Cllr. Nora Salmon, Ms. Denise Brophy, Mr. Martin Harte.

Officials:

Brendan Kenny, Assistant Chief Executive, Culture, Community, Economic and Emergency.

Greg Swift, Head of Enterprise, Dublin City Council.

Mary Mac Sweeney, Senior Executive Officer, LEO Dublin City.

Steven O’Gara, Staff Officer, LEO Dublin City.

Bryan Coughlan, Assistant Staff Officer, LEO Dublin City.

External:

Mr. Eoghan O’Mara, CEO, Irish Tourist Industry Confederation

Minutes:

1. The chair proposed the minutes of the previous meeting, 2nd February 2016. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Reilly and Ms. Brophy.
2. Management Update of Economic Development Unit & Local Enterprise Office Dublin City:

Ms. MacSweeney gave an update on the work of the Economic Development Unit (EDU) for a range of topics including; the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), the receipt of a number of FDI related awards for Dublin City, the Dublin Economic Monitor, the DIT Grangegorman Development, the Dublin.ie project and the Action Plan for Jobs.

This was followed by a presentation from Mr. Swift on the work of the Dublin City Local Enterprise Office (LEO) covering the current position of the M1 grants, totals for the trading online voucher and export grants. Mr. Swift also relayed the total job creation as a result of the grants and noted that there had been no change in the budgets for 2016 LEO M1 grants.

Mr Swift also updated the SPC on a number of projects and events including; Design4Growth, Showcase 2016, Local Enterprise Week 2016, National Enterprise Awards 2016, the results of the LEO Employment Survey 2015, formation of a new Mentor Panel, Publication of the LEO e-zine and the Training programme for 2016.

Cllr. Gilland asked if LEO Dublin City tracked the grant applications in relation to socio-economic profile. Mr. Swift responded that LEO did not.

Congratulations were also extended to the Dublin.ie team, in particular Mr Peter Dee and Mr. Anthony McGuinness, for their work on the project to-date.

The Chair asked Ms. MacSweeney if an update could be provided at the next SPC, on the Design4Growth pilot program.

3. A report on the Markets Strategy for Dublin City 2016 was prepared for Mr. Brendan Kenny, Assistant Chief Executive and circulated at the meeting. The report outlined that a working group have been formed to produce a markets strategy designed to “regularise and develop markets as an economic driver within the city” and for the benefits of all stakeholders and citizens.

The Chair asked if the bye-laws were likely to be amended and if so advised the SPC that members were likely to be lobbied in relation to proposed changes. Cllr. Reilly asked about the enforcement powers in this regard and Mr. Kenny responded that they were limited, with only 1 officer covering both the North and South of the City at present.

Mr. Harte asked for clarification on what a Market actually was and the Chair responded that there are a number of market types and providers and one of the issues related to the land the market is held on; Waterways Ireland and the OPW can hold markets on their land that are not subject to the same licensing arrangements. Indoor markets are subject to change of use in the planning process. DCC does not have an input into a number of markets if they are not covered by planning or licensing arrangements.

Cllr. Reilly noted an increase in illegal dumping and Mr. Kenny noted that 2 additional inspectors have been appointed to combat this. Cllr. Kelly noted that there were problems with the Christmas Market at St. Stephen’s Green in 2015.

The Chair asked that a previous report relating to markets, prepared by Coilin O’Reilly, be re-circulated to the committee. Cllr. Reilly also noted the difficulties experienced in running a market in Ballymun. The Chair highlighted a report by Mary Portas on the effect of Markets, which may be of use to the Committee.

4. The Chair introduced Mr O’Mara (ITIC) to present the committee with a presentation on the economic impact of Tourism for Dublin. Mr O’Mara gave a comprehensive overview on the situation, highlighting an 87% occupancy rate of Dublin hotels (significantly higher than other EU cities) and that a net increase of 8,000 rooms by 2020 is need in order to meet the projected tourism demand.

Cllr. Reilly highlighted that DCC spent €25M housing homeless people in hotels and asked if this was reflected in the high occupancy rate figures, also, that the standard of Hostels in Dublin was poor in comparison to other capital cities. Mr. O'Mara conceded that the figures did include homeless although it was a small relative to the market and that the standard of Hostels could indeed be improved.

Mr. Harte highlighted a number of issues for consideration; multiplier effect of direct employment, effect of BREXIT on tourism, tourism hotel Tax, exchange rates and AirBnB. Cllr. Kelly highlighted that improved transport links would improve access to Hotels outside of Dublin City Centre. Concerns were raised about the location and targeting of the Dublin Brand.

Mr. O'Mara responded by clarifying the role of ITIC as a lobbying group on behalf of tourism stakeholders but was unsure why "Dublin, A Breath of Fresh Air" was being advertised in Dublin Airport, which is also seen in English and German airports. It was also noted that ITIC have a position paper concerning the proposed BREXIT on their website, that exchange rates were favourable to tourists in Dublin and the emergence of AirBnB accommodation has helped to alleviate the effect of hotel room shortages in the Dublin region.

Ms. Brophy noted that some key pieces of infrastructure were in place but significant investment was required for the City to progress further. A working group has been established to assess issues relating to tourism and it will report back to the SPC when its' work is completed.

5. Mr. Kenny provided an update on Dublin City Councils winding up of Temple Bar Cultural Trust and the transfer of its functions, responsibilities and assets to Dublin City Council. A Temple Bar Steering Group is being established consisting of representative of the Arts Culture and Recreation SPC and the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC. Nominations were sought for the four members of this SPC to join the group and the following nominations were agreed:

Mr. Harte

Ms. Brophy

Cllr. Kelly

Cllr. McAuliffe (proposed as Chair of Temple Bar Steering Group)

6. Mr. Swift provided an update on the Local Economic & Community Plan
7. The submissions made to the Café Working Group will be examined and a report will be prepared and presented to the SPC.
8. Bedroom Tax: Finance SPC to consult with Economic Development SPC on the issue.
9. Next meeting will be held on the 24th May 2016 at 3.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber