

## **Planning and Property Development Strategic Policy Committee November 2016**

### **Review of the dublinbikes Strategic Planning Framework (Expansion Strategy) – Next Steps**

The existing developmental plan for the growth of the Coca-Cola Zero dublinbikes scheme, the 'dublinbikes Strategic Planning Framework 2011-2016' anticipated a 14 Phase geographical expansion programme across the city.

Due to the difficulties involved in identifying suitable advertising sites to fund the operational costs of expansion phases, the scheme has not yet progressed beyond the current city centre Phase 2 catchment, despite continual and growing demand for significant expansion.

The original 2009 'dublinbikes' scheme was funded through outdoor advertising on a cost neutral basis to the City Council. Under the Concessionary Contract there is an outstanding requirement for Dublin City Council to provide four additional advertising sites to fulfil contract obligations to JCDecaux. There is also an annual operational deficit in running the scheme each year (€370,000 in 2015) arising from the most recent Phase 2 expansion during 2014.

At the recent November City Council meeting, the Members approved four Part 8's for advertising units. When the units are constructed, commissioned and operational, this will represent the fulfilment of the Concessionary Contract. In tandem, discussions have commenced regarding a recalibration of the current membership fees for the scheme in order to address the current and ongoing operational deficit associated with the running of the scheme.

If the scheme is returned to a cost neutral basis to the City Council during 2017 as it was originally provided, there will be an opportunity to review and update the existing dublinbikes Strategic Planning Framework to provide for future growth. Such a review will include a re-examination of the original advertising funded business model, as well as the concepts underpinning the original scheme design and its spatial expansion. Any such review will

have the potential to reshape the future spatial expansion of the scheme to recognise a number of the urban villages along the key transport routes extending from the city centre.

Future expansion will require a sustainable longer term funding model of significant order of magnitude over the current business model in order to deliver an operationally successful bike scheme beyond a city centre catchment. The development of a number of high profile and strategically located digital advertising sites would likely have the potential to generate the quantum of revenue required to fund such an expanded scheme and will form part of any future review. A key pillar of the review will be the requirement to ensure that funding measures receive statutory planning approval in advance of any expansion. Going forward therefore the key issues are:

- Addressing the operational deficit of the scheme through an increase in membership fees.
- Construction of 4 approved advertising units to fulfil the Concessionary Contract.
- Commencing review of the dublinbikes Strategic Planning Framework during 2017, to also include sustainable longer term funding measures based on outdoor advertising that will allow for the expansion of the bike scheme while remaining cost neutral and without adversely affecting the City Council's budget.

**Paul Clegg**  
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