

Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Economic Development & Enterprise

Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd November 2016 at 15.30pm

In the Council Chambers, City Hall, Dublin 2

Members Present:

Cllr. Paul McAuliffe (Chair), Cllr. Paddy Bourke, Cllr. Deirdre Heney, Cllr. Anne Feeny, Cllr. Noeleen Reilly
Cllr. Greg Kelly, Cllr. Norma Sammon, Ms. Denise Brophy, Ms. Geraldine Lavin.

Officials:

Declan Wallace, Assistant Chief Executive, Dublin City Council.
Mary Mac Sweeney, Senior Executive Officer, LEO, Dublin City Council.
Steven O’Gara, Senior Enterprise Development Officer, LEO, Dublin City Council.
Norman Thompson, Business Community Manager, LEO, Dublin City Council.
Fiona Richardson, Administrative Officer, International Relations, Dublin City Council

External:

Ger Casey, CEO, Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA)
Kathleen McCann, Employment and Training Co-ordinator, Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA)

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 6th Sept 2016 & Matters Arising

Proposed by, Cllr. Bourke, Seconded by, Ms. Brophy

2. Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA) Project – Mr. Ger Casey CEO of GDA (Kathleen McCann)

Following the presentation from Mr. Casey a question was raised about the project and how it would affect the local community in terms of the proposed public library, the provision of student accommodations and the existing National School. Mr. Casey responded by saying that the Public library is intended to proceed after phase 3, and they have been in discussion with DCC. However, the exact nature of this is still to be agreed and it is likely to be after the Central Library project is complete. DIT would have liked to deliver student accommodation sooner however; they are constrained by the public procurement processes. In relation to the primary school provision, there is currently a temporary Educate Together National School onsite and this will be enlarged to a 24 classroom school permanent facility.

Ms McCann said that while the focus has been on construction the Labour and Learning Forum is currently identifying sustainable employment opportunities to create pathways into permanent jobs for the local residents. In terms of business supports they are looking at opportunities for synergies with DIT hothouse and to create a supportive agenda providing hard and soft supports and linking in with LEO Dublin City.

Mr. Casey was asked how DIT was affected by the Rathmines land not being rezoned. Mr. Casey stated that the decision devalued the land value by about 25% and that ultimately the development funds would be reduced, and this in turn would reduce the scope of the works that could be achieved by the GDA.

The Chair thanked Mr Casey and Ms. McCann for their presentation.

3. Café & Restaurants Report – Mary Mac Sweeney, LEO Dublin City.

The Chair welcomed the new manager, Mr. Declan Wallace to the committee and said that the issue before the committee was the report and recommendations on the Café & Restaurants Sector. Ms. MacSweeney said that the main element of the report, proposed the creation of a new Working Group with a specific function to explore the feasibility of the recommendations and report back to the SPC by mid 2017.

A number of concerns were raised such as the request from businesses for the removal of the requirement of planning notice in public newspapers, the request that benches outside of properties be exempt and the request to seek an increase in the numbers of Garda on public streets to address public safety issues. Also, who is the compliance officer? Ms. MacSweeney said that a number of employees have enforcement powers. The working group can make it clear the roles played by various staff and can also address the concerns raised and recommend any changes to national legislation that are required.

The Chair confirmed that the report was agreed and expressed his thanks to all those involved in preparing it and requested that the Working Group should report back to the SPC by the summer of 2017. He recommended that the report be forwarded to the January Council meeting for noting. The Chair also said that an opportunity now existed to identify a new sector of the economy for review, and recommended that a exercise could focus on a different sector, such as infrastructure.

Following on from this the Chair asked Ms. Brophy to give a brief update on the work of the Tourism Working Group. Ms. Brophy stated that it was still a work in progress but that they had already identified the lack of accommodation as a significant barrier to competitiveness in the tourism market. It was also highlighted that the effects of BREXIT would have a significant impact on tourism in terms of exchange rates and the attractiveness of Dublin to UK tourists. The group is also looking to bring together the various departments of DCC that are directly involved in tourism to avoid duplication of work.

4. Economic Development & Enterprise Management Update – Mary MacSweeney

The Chair highlighted the issues from the Economic Monitor surrounding infrastructure in the City and made a suggestion to the SPC then they might consider holding an “Infrastructure Summit” later in 2017 similar to that held in 2016 on BREXIT. A discussion then began surrounding the provision of a Christmas Market for Dublin City. A number of the Committee were highly supportive of a Market for the City while others felt that it negatively impacted businesses and traffic movement in the city. The Chair pointed out that this issue related to the ongoing Market Strategy and that the Manager has committed to bring the report to the Committee as soon as possible.

The Manager said that because of the LUAS cross-city works, it would not be feasible to hold a Christmas Market this year in a city centre location and that the issue should be considered carefully. International experience would indicate that these types of markets evolve over many years and do not happen overnight. Ms. MacSweeney highlighted that the Dublin Designer Market being held at College Green in conjunction with Plato included craft producers supported by LEO Dublin City and that support of this was crucial. Ms. MacSweeney also highlighted the Christmas Flea market in the Point Village which is being supported by the Economic Development Office which is accessible on the LUAS Green Line.

5. Dublin Region Enterprise Strategy – for noting – Mary MacSweeney

Noted.

6. International Relations Report – Delivered by Fiona Richardson, Administrative Officer with International Relations Unit (IRU).

The Chair acknowledged that the report provided in the agenda was prepared by the new SEO of international relations, Ms Mary Foley and that as the new head of IRU a full review was currently taking place particularly with twining of cities, events and international delegations. As Ms. Foley was unable to attend this meeting, the SPC is grateful to Ms. Fiona Richardson for attending and answering any questions that the committee had. Ms. Richardson stated that IRU was mainly involved in establishing bi-lateral agreements with international cities, supporting events coming to Dublin City and supporting business tourism, for example; Dublin City in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland recently hosted a tourism delegation from Mexico City. This type of work represents the bulk of the unit’s work.

The importance of transport links in relation to bi-lateral agreements as they are fundamental to the movement of tourists was highlighted. It was observed that poor links exist with San Jose and that this was a major issue with twinings. Dublin has very good links with Barcelona and Liverpool which assisted in facilitating these relationships. A direct route to San Jose is proposed to commence in 2017. The Chair highlighted that this was most likely a direct result of previous lobbying efforts. A question was raised asking if there is any analysis of how competitive Dublin is in relation to business tourism and what connection there is with other agencies.

Ms Richardson responded that the main issue facing the City in terms of Business Tourism is Hotel spaces and that is being raised e.g. at Connect 16 the issue was raised by the DAA and Dublin Conference Bureau, a sub section of Fáilte Ireland that would keep us aware of how competitive we are. They will continue to maintain close links with all stakeholders in the Dublin City Region. The Chair said that the committee might hold off on some of the questions until Ms. Foley was available for the next meeting of the SPC when IRU will have more work done on the future direction of the department.

7. A.O.B:

Dates for SPC Meetings in 2017

31st January	Formal SPC Meeting addressing LECP 2017
4 th April	Formal SPC Meeting
23 th May	Proposed Infrastructure Summit
25 th July	Formal SPC Meeting
5 th September	Provisional Date
21 th November	Formal SPC Meeting