



Breviate of the Meeting of the Protocol Committee held on 22nd October 2020

In accordance with Standing Orders of the City Council, the Breviate of the Meeting of the Protocol Committee held **on 22nd October 2020** is submitted herewith.

1. Newcomen Bank - City Hall Proposals

Darragh Cunningham, the Newcomen Bank - City Hall Project Manager, provided a comprehensive report to the Members outlining the high level proposals for both buildings and the estimated costs and timescales involved. He confirmed that Newcomen Bank was suitable for cultural and public usage with the provision of exhibition spaces at basement and ground level as well as conference rooms and offices on the upper floors. The redevelopment of Newcomen Bank is a significant project as there are structural and remedial works required to maintain its integrity. It is estimated that the project will cost €9.4 million and would be completed by mid-2023. The Project team are currently investigating sources of funding, however that will be determined by the nature of the final usage.

Darragh reported that the current facilities for Councillors in City Hall are not adequate. The redevelopment of the basement area would provide significant improvements in the way of two additional party rooms, consultation offices and individual work stations as well as an exhibition space. The orientation of the new rooms would take advantage of the natural light coming in from Bernardo Square. There would also be provision for upgrades to the existing party rooms in terms of furniture and office equipment. The current restriction of activities in City Hall brought about by Covid-19 would provide an opportunity to complete the works with minimum disruption. It is estimated that the project will cost €700,000 and would be completed by the end of 2021. There is funding available in the capital budget to carry out the redevelopment.

Brendan Teeling briefed the Members on the existing exhibition on display in the basement of City Hall. In conjunction with Dr. Mary Clarke they carried out a thorough review of the exhibition and identified those artefacts with significant historical value which could be incorporated into the reimagined gallery space in the basement. He was satisfied that the new proposals would be able to accommodate a modernised exhibition which could take advantage of technology and provide an improved experience for visitors. Darragh confirmed that Brendan's report had been accepted by the Project Team and would be circulated to the Protocol Committee.

The Members thanked Darragh and Brendan for their presentations and were supportive of the proposals. They emphasised the need to provide enhanced facilities for Councillors and to ensure that Newcomen Bank would be used as a cultural and public space which would be accessible to the public, community groups and Councillors. They also stressed that functionality was a priority and should not be sacrificed for design in the final proposals.

The Members agreed that the project should be considered as two distinct segments – City Hall and Newcomen Bank. The plans for Newcomen Bank are substantial and will require significant resources which may involve a more medium term approach. The redevelopment of City Hall is a viable project which can deliver considerable benefits in the short-term.

Order: It was agreed that the Project Team should proceed with detailed designs for City Hall with a view to implementation in early 2021. The Protocol Committee to be updated on a regular basis as the project progresses.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September and matters arising.

Order: Minutes agreed.

Cllr. Feeney informed the Committee that she and Cllrs. Lacey & MacDonncha had met with Minister Burke and used the opportunity to emphasise the importance of Councillors in local government. They highlighted the fact that Dublin City is the largest local authority in the country and is the capital city yet the proposals do not reflect the significance of Dublin City Councillors and indeed have a negative financial impact on them. These concerns along with the input from the AILG on expenses and resources would be considered by the Minister.

3. Amendments to Standing Orders

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, on 20th October 2020 signed an order which will allow County and City Councillors to hold meetings and vote remotely. Although the Statutory Instrument supersedes standing orders and meetings can proceed remotely without the need to amend them it is important for standing orders to be updated to reflect the change in the regulations. As a result the following changes to standing orders have been proposed. Green denotes additional text and red denotes the removal of text.

8. Summoning of Meetings

The ‘place’ at which the meeting is held may be at:

- **the Council Chamber**
- **one or more Council buildings or rooms**
- **an external venue used to accommodate meetings of the council**
- **the location of the organiser of the meeting**
- **an electronic, digital or virtual location, web address or a conference call telephone number**

The “place” of the meeting could also be a number of these combined, with at least some of the elected members and the public and/or media (as provided for under the provisions of Section 45(3) of the Local Government Act 2001) attending remotely.

13. Quorum

The Quorum for the City Council is 17. **Members attending physically and remotely will together constitute a quorum.**

56 Remote Meetings

- Committees of the Council may host remote meetings through video conferencing **and also hybrid meetings through a combination of physical and remote attendance, provided they do not make legally binding or statutory decisions.** Committees should adhere to the “Remote Meetings Guidelines” as approved by the Protocol Committee on 7th May 2020 **as amended**, when conducting such meetings.
- The agenda and minutes of remote meetings should be produced and published to the same extent as physical meetings.
- Meetings held remotely should be recorded and published subsequent to the meeting.
- **Any member participating in a meeting remotely must, when they are speaking, be able to be heard (and seen, where practicable) by all other Members in attendance, and the remote participant must, in turn, be able to hear (and see, where practicable) those other Members participating.**
- **The Cathaoirleach will at the outset and at any reconvening of a meeting conduct a roll call of participating members and ensure that they can see and/or hear those in attendance. Any member participating remotely should also inform the meetings administrator if they lose connection.**
- **Every reference to quorum contained within the standing orders shall be construed as permitting councillors participating remotely to count towards a quorum when Committees of the Council are hosting remote meetings.**
The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council’s Standing Orders will also apply to a remote meeting. Members attending physically and remotely will together constitute a quorum.
- In the event of any apparent failure of the video, telephone or conferencing connection to one or more members, the Cathaoirleach should immediately determine if the meeting is still quorate. If there is no quorum, then the meeting shall adjourn for a short period specified by the Cathaoirleach, to allow the connection to be re-established.
- Should a Member’s remote connection fail, the obligation is on the Elected Member to inform the meeting of this fact. If the connection is successfully re-established, then the remote member(s) will be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment
- If the connection cannot be restored or an alternative method of communication established within the time specified by the Cathaoirleach, the meeting should continue, provided the meeting remains quorate.
- If a connection to a member is lost during a statutory vote, every effort will be made to re-establish a connection. If, a connection cannot be restored within a reasonable timeframe the onus is on the member to indicate to the meeting his/her voting intention by the agreed alternate method.

Order: Agreed and recommended to Council.

5. Information Technology Update

Brian Curtis provided a comprehensive review of the various remote video conferencing platforms that are available to the City Council. The main focus was on Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Teams is embedded as part of Office 365 which is a corporate application and is designed for collaboration. Zoom is a dedicated video conferencing application and has a more intuitive user interface. There were issues regarding the security of Zoom meetings, however these have largely been resolved. The decision on which application to use is largely determined by the nature of the end usage. Both applications are supported by DCC IS Department.

The decision as whether the November City Council meeting proceeds as a remote meeting or as a hybrid physical and remote meeting will be made by the Lord Mayor and Group Leaders. The manager reported that there are significant challenges in hosting a hybrid meeting.

The Modern.Gov meeting management system has been upgraded and can provide the option for electronic voting within the application. The Chief Executive's Office in conjunction with the IS Department are investigating if this new feature can be utilised for Council meetings.

Order: Report Noted.

The tender process to provide a new CRM system has been concluded. It will contain a dedicated Councillor portal. The Protocol IS Working Group will be involved in the development of the portal and will report back to the Committee. It was agreed to invite Councillor Declan Meenagh on to the IT working group to replace Councillor Dermot Lacey.

Order: Agreed

6. Vacancy of the selection panel for the portrait of Caitlín Bean Uí Chléirigh following the resignation Cllr. Criona Ni Dhalaigh

It was proposed by Cllr. Anthony Connaghan and second by Cllr. Mannix Flynn that Cllr. Micheal Mac Donncha be appointed to the Kathleen Clarke Portrait selection panel.

Order: Agreed. Cllr. Michael Mac Donncha was appointed to the selection panel.

7. Women and Diversity in Local Government

The Members thanked Ruth Dowling and Eileen Quinlivan for their involvement in the development of the proposals which were broadly welcomed. Members recommended that the proposals be amended to reflect that diversity in local government extends beyond elected representatives and should take account of the role of women in the Community and Voluntary sectors and also within local government management structures. They emphasised the importance of inclusivity and the need to ensure the opportunity for participation.

Order: The Manager to amend the proposals to reflect the views of the Members. It was agreed that the Women's Group would co-ordinate the initiative going forward.

8. Manager's Report

The Manager reported that a new corporate Dublin City Council website would be launched next week. She will contact all Councillors in due course to provide further information on the launch and usability of the site.

Order: Noted.

Councillor Anne Feeney

Chairperson

Thursday 22 October 2020

Attendance:

Members:

Anne Feeney (Chairperson)
Racheal Batten
Joe Costello
Dermot Lacey
Naoise Ó'Muirí

Members:

Anthony Connaghan
Mannix Flynn
Darcy Lonergan
Cat O'Driscoll

Members:

Donna Cooney
Deirdre Heney
Micheal Mac Donncha
Noeleen Reilly

Officers

Darragh Cunningham
Michael Gallagher
Brendan Teeling

Brian Curtis
Donncha O'Dúlaing

Ruth Dowling
Deirdre Ní Raghallaigh

Apologies:

Michael Pidgeon

Non-Members:

Cllr. Mary Freehill