

Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 17th November 2022

The Chair welcomed Victor Leonov, Acting Head of Financial Accounting, Finance Department, replacing Antoinette Power on her retirement. Antoinette's hard work with the SPC over the years was acknowledged.

1. Draft Minutes of the Finance SPC meeting held on 22nd September 2022.

The draft minutes were proposed by Cllr. Paddy McCartan and seconded by Cllr. Dermot Lacey. The minutes were adopted.

2. Matters Arising.

- a) Charging Policy Report was agreed by the Elected Members at the November Meeting of the City Council
- b) Kathy gave a verbal update on Crowdfunding.
 - Tender document received and being reviewed.
 - Questions being put to relevant parties
 - Almost at final part of the process

3. Correspondence.

Noted.

- a) Letter from AILG regarding Rent Arrears
- b) Letter to John Flanagan requesting report on illegal dumping
- c) Reply from Brian White, Waste Management, re report on illegal dumping
- d) Reply from Derek Kelly, Area Office, re report on illegal dumping
- e) Reply from Derek Farrell, North Central Area Office, re report on illegal dumping

4. Accommodation Tax extract circulated as requested at September meeting of SPC

Noted.

The committee discussed the contents of the extract and made the following observations:

- Better option to lobby for a tax per room per night rather than per person per night so as not to penalise families and be easier to administer
- Ensure that the monies accrued from this tax is ring-fenced for the Council's use and not retained nationally
- Members asked what the delay was in initiating this charge noting it came to SPC in 2019
- Kathy advised that DCC doesn't have the legislative powers as yet to introduce this tax. It is not clear whether the Government wishes to give local authorities the capacity to collect it or collect themselves

Report noted.

Agreed to: Provide report on two scenarios of charging

- Charge based on 1% of accommodation fee and
- Charge based on €1 per stay

5. Presentation on Community Wealth Building Update - John Heneghan, CLES

Presentation Noted.

John updated the members on the initial phase of CWB in Dublin City Council.

- Approach taken to the initiating the Implementation Plan (IP)
- How CLES will support the roll out – expert advisor, coach, facilitator and support to the work of the CWB Working Group Strengthening the Council's capacity to act and deliver
- Phase 1 – Nov 22 to March 23 using pilots and area based action
- Phase 2 – April 23 to March 24 Using Social Value Framework to test and evaluate activities and more pilots
- Full Day Workshop to be facilitated towards end of IP (18 months) with Working Group to capture progress made

The committee discussed the contents of the presentation and queried:

- What are the KPI's from this pilot?
- What successes can be expected and in what timeframes

John advised that KPI's are a critical part of developing a Social Value Framework and that there are priorities for DCC built into the Framework with a very quick timescale.

Kathy said that CLES were a great support to the Working Group giving them a clear sight of what's ahead. She advised the members of works being undertaken:

- DFB Recruitment process for fire fighters slanted towards marginalised areas of city. This has included specifically sited information events with the partnership companies
- Tender process under way to for small minor works which will focus on smaller construction companies that may be locally based and open to CWB principles.
- It is hoped to have a PIN on eTenders this week to invite people in social enterprises to engage with us on what they can offer DCC. The PIN may also encourage organisations to consider a greater use of social enterprise.

Agreed to: Present CWB presentations to Area Committees following presentation in March 2023. Consider holding a virtual workshop (half day duration) for Finance SPC Members and all Elected Members on CWB

6. Report on Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery in Agenda Park. Presentation by Frank d'Arcy with the following update:

- Arrears as at 14/11/2022 - €37,899,702 (€37,895,467 in Dec 2021)
- 61% of accounts in arrears are in a performing agreement.
- 32% of those in arrears - most are making some payments.
- 7% not paying towards arrears
- No increase in arrears this year – ship is steadied
- Engaging with all tenants to reduce arrears

Some observations noted by the committee on the contents of the report:

- ✓ Congratulations on the progress being made but disturbing figure of rent arrears and very slow collection - €19m in 2009 and currently €38m
- ✓ Section 53 of Housing Act, rent deduction at source – preference of some tenants but why is it not initiated
- ✓ Is there legal action being taken against tenants not paying anything
- ✓ Non-payment of rent unfair to those paying in the private sector – we should introduce zero tolerance and evict non-paying tenants
- ✓ Suggested that contracts be reviewed to include penalty clauses and charge interest for non-payment

Frank updated members:

- Section 53 Deduction at source is the Governments decision
- 2 evictions in previous 2 months – duty of care to be equitable to all tenants
- 61% engaged to pay arrears – agreement is reached mostly on a one to one basis

Agreed to:

- Write to Minister again re Section 53, Housing Act to allow deduction of rent at source and ask for update on Differential Rent Scheme. Report requested back for next SPC.
- Write to Attorney General's office to come to next SPC to give guidance as to how DCC can be strengthened to bring in arrears due
- Report requested from Housing and Community Dept. on possible introduction of penalty clauses around arrears

Report Noted.

7. Report on Commission on Taxation Report.

Kathy commented on some of the report:

- Site Value Tax possibly replacing Commercial Rates arguments for and against
- Focus on climate and congestion charge in key urban areas
- Making parking more expensive
- LPT values needs to increase to be a larger share of total revenues
- Surcharge for vacant properties

Members opposed any powers on LPT being removed from Councillors and queried if there were proposals to increase charges on Tom Clark Bridge. Kathy advised this might be discussed by the Transport SPC over the course of 2023 with any outcome coming into place in late 2023/2024.

Agreed to:

- Write to Minister to see if there is a plan to implement any of the recommendations on the Commission on Taxation Report.
- The Chair to request a joint meeting of Finance and Transport SPC's on the issue of congestion charges

8. Signed minutes of Audit Committee Meeting – June 2023

Report Noted.

The workload and output of the Committee was acknowledged.

9. AOB

10. Correction to next meeting date announced at meeting. Next meeting will be on Thursday 19th January 2023 at 2.30pm.(Hybrid)

Signed: Councillor Séamas McGrattan
Chairperson

Date: 21st November, 2022

List updated attendance – Sophie

Members Present

Cllr Seamas McGrattan (Chair)
Cllr. Daryl Barron
Cllr Mary Callaghan
Cllr Anthony Connaghan
Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr Paddy McCartan
Cllr Christy Burke
Cllr Darcy Lonergan
Eric Fleming, ICTU
Sohini De, Dublin Chamber of Commerce
Professor Caroline McMullan, DCU
Philip O'Callaghan, PPN Nominee
Aidan Sweeney, IBEC

Officials

Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance
Victor Leonov, A. Executive Manager, Financial Accounting
Mary Curran, A. Senior Staff Officer
Sophie Kelly, A. Staff Officer
Christian Kavanagh, Clerical Officer
Frank d'Arcy, Executive Manager, Housing and Community Services
Tara Robertson, Administrative Officer, Housing and Community Services
Ursula Donnellan, Senior Executive Officer, Housing and Community Services

Guest

John Heneghan, CLES

Apologies

Cllr. Nial Ring
Cllr Alison Gilliland
Cllr Daithi De Roiste
Cllr James Geoghegan
Alan Robinson, Docklands Business Forum

DRAFT