

Finance Strategic Policy Committee

Draft Minutes of Meeting Held 16th March 2023

The Chair asked the Members if they might use a ‘cúpla focal’ during the meeting for Seachtain na Gaelige

1. Draft Minutes of the Finance SPC meeting held on 19th January 2023.

The draft minutes were proposed by Aidan McSweeney and seconded by Cllr. Anthony Connaghtan.

The minutes were adopted.

2. Matters Arising.

The Chair asked, on behalf of Jackie O'Reilly in Ballymun Area Office, if there were any members interested in meeting one of the groups, benefiting from the BSRF, to please advise and arrangements would be made for a visit.

3. Correspondence.

Noted

- a) Letter to Chair of Planning and Urban Form SPC re Application and use of Development Contributions Report 27/02/23
- b) Letters to Chairs of 5 Area Committees re Application and use of Development Contributions Report 27/02/23
- c) Letters to Finance Representative of Political Parties re Accommodation Charges
- d) Letters to An Taoiseach and Government Department re Ballymun Social Regeneration Fund 28/02/23
- e) Letter to Paul Keeley, Fáilte Ireland re Dublin Tourism Spend and invite to attend next SPC 01/03/23
- f) Replies from Finance Representatives of Political Parties re Accommodation Charges
- g) Replies from Ministers re Ballymun Social Regeneration Fund
- h) Reply from Minister O'Brien re Housing Rent Arrears and Enactment of legislation 15/02/23
- i) Reply from Office of the Attorney General re Request to attend next meeting of the SPC 12/01/23
- j) Reply from Minister McGrath re Commission on Taxation and Welfare 17/01/23
- k) Reply from Paul Keeley, Fáilte Ireland, re Dublin Tourism Spend and invite to attend next SPC 080323

4. Report on Rates Debtors at 31st December 2022

Noted.

Anthony O'Donoghue, Senior Executive Officer, Rates Office, updated the Committee on the status of commercial rates arrears at the 31st December 2022 with tables and data showing:

- Commercial rates funding
- Rates Collection Performance Y2018 – Y2022
- Covid -19 and financial support

- Level of arrears during the period 2018 – 2022
- Age Profile of the 2022 arrears
- Analysis of the 2022 arrears accounts
- Analysis of the 2022 arrears by rate description category
- 2022 arrears schedule status
- 2022 arrears by Electoral Area
- Conclusion

Members commented on the collection of rates arrears being remarkable in the aftermath of Brexit and Covid and asked if there were any plans to introduce on line payments. Anthony advised the Members that Online Payments is an ongoing project. Members asked for reasons for Write-Offs and Anthony explained that they would apply as a result of vacancy or demolition but that there was specific criteria to be met. Kathy advised that the arrears figure of €30.7 at the start of January 23 has been reduced to €24.6m as of March 23 when the report was prepared and that the collection for 2023 was on target.

5. Presentation on Submission of Dublin City Council to the Review of Baseline Local Government Funding – Kathy Quinn

Noted.

Kathy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed submission, requested by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, who are commencing a review of baseline local government funding. (Terms and Conditions of the Review to be circulated to local authorities after the initial meeting on 9th March and to be concluded in late April). If agreed the document would be submitted.

The report highlighted

- the unique role of Dublin as the driver of the national economy
- the importance of tourism with Dublin being the gateway to the country - Dublin Airport and Dublin Port
- the importance of a good quality of life in our City when we are trying to attract international business
- The failure of the current funding model for Dublin – when LPT was introduced it was seen there would be extra funds which is not the case – it simply replaces other funding – extra funds have not been generated
- Continuing impacts of Covid on the City's economy
- Ability to deal with inflation without reducing vital services
- The future of Dublin City

Members commented that, in order to make our submission stronger, we might highlight the following in the submission:

- The increase in the population of 20% since 2006, and need for increased services
- Dublin being disadvantaged after the introduction of LPT which has not benefitted the citizens of Dublin but is responsible for our funding problems
- Current funding system unfair – consider showing that over the past 3 to 5 years the value of LPT attributed to DCC and the gap in funds which is not being passed on but substituted for other grants

- The report might specify what funding changes DCC would be happy with and the requirements for the city over the next few years.
- Important to note that the SPC has tried to introduce additional funding through requests for the introduction of Hotel Bed Tax etc
- Consider if a recommendation could be made around abolishing the LPT basic rate variation
- Give greater consideration to what the Council *has control over* such as Planning in the Docklands for example and lack of apartments which can generate more LPT and business more rates etc.
- The response of DCC to the survey on funding issued to the CE's of the local authorities by the Department of Housing

Kathy advised Members to have any comments for the submission returned by next Tuesday 21st March.

The Chair thanked the staff for the huge amount of work put into the report

Agreed to:

- Write to the Department stressing the importance of the Elected Members being represented on the Baseline Review Committee.
- Table to reflect the funds that came to Dublin via LPT in the submission showing the gap in funding not being met
- Share the Dublin City Council Submission with other Local Authorities.

AOB

- Request Smart Dublin to attend our next SPC when Fáilte Ireland will present to the Committee on Tourism Spend in Dublin City.
- The Chair thanked Christian Kavanagh, on his departure from Dublin City Council, for his contribution to the administration work of the Committee and welcomed Zoe Flood who will be joining the Secretariat Team.

Next meeting: Thursday, 18th May, at 2.30pm

Signed: Councillor Séamas McGrattan
Chairperson

Date: 20th March, 2023

Members Present

Cllr Séamas McGrattan
Cllr Dermot Lacey
Cllr Daryl Barron
Cllr Mary Callaghan
Cllr Anthony Connaghan
Cllr Alison Gilliland
Cllr Christy Burke

Cllr Paddy McCartan
Cllr Daithi De Roiste
Cllr Darcy Lonergan
Alan Robinson, Docklands Business Forum
Sohini De, Dublin Chamber of Commerce
Aidan Sweeney, IBEC
Dr. Caroline McMullen, DCU
Philip O'Callaghan, PPN
Eric Fleming, ICTU

Officials

Kathy Quinn, Head of Finance
Fintan Moran, Executive Manager, Finance
Enda Currid, Senior Executive Officer, Finance
Anthony O'Donoghue, A. Senior Executive Officer, Finance
Mary Curran, Finance Secretariat
Sophie Kelly, Finance Secretariat
Christian Kavanagh, Finance Secretariat
Zoe Flood, Finance Secretariat

Apologies

Cllr. Nial Ring