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Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee Update on Community Wealth Building (CWB) Phase 2

Background

Community Wealth Building (CWB) was adopted by Dublin City Council at its meeting in October 2021. Community Wealth Building is an initiative of the Finance Strategic Policy Committee. Dublin City Council has engaged the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to assist in the implementation and mainstreaming of CWB. CWB is an approach to making changes which will result in wealth building opportunities for those individuals and communities who are marginalised with less options than others. Moving towards equity in opportunities for employment, access to facilities, lifestyle opportunities are all central tenets of CWB.

CWB Priorities for 2024

The CWB Steering Group, supported by CLES, identified five key priorities for 2024 as:

1. Deepening awareness and understanding of CWB
2. Engaging anchor institutions
3. Growing values-based recruitment
4. Supporting the implementation of social value
5. Piloting in Cherry Orchard

Deepening awareness and understanding of CWB

Deepening awareness and understanding of CWB across Dublin City Council is likely to support the delivery of deeper impact. It is planned to deliver a series of training workshops to Dublin City Council colleagues, tailored to individual Dublin City Council departments setting out the relevance of CWB to each departments work. This training may have more relevance in some departments than others, yet there is value in building awareness of the concept of CWB across all staff.

A set of resources will be developed to work with Dublin City Council's online training platform to be deployed as part of all new staff's on-boarding process. This online learning module will be an interactive, video and quiz-based learning module, building CWB understanding and awareness in all future recruits. A simplified version would be developed for frontline staff.

Departmental leads will be identified and supported to develop a deeper understanding of how CWB principles could be developed within each department. With support these leads will develop internal departmental plans and would then convene into a CWB departmental working group.

Dublin City Council Comms Team will be supported to understand the existing mechanisms for generating, presenting and sharing information about the activity of the council to both internal and external audiences, so that Dublin City Council can best share and build understanding of the impact of CWB.

Engaging anchor institutions

It is planned to take two approaches to engaging with anchor institutions. Firstly, Dublin City Council will identify two or three anchor institutions where it is considered there will be a positive reception to CWB principles. Dublin City Council will engage on CWB concepts and ideas, giving examples of where anchor institutions elsewhere have engaged in similar activity. It is likely that a repeat or cascade of this information to multiple contacts within the institution to develop sufficient buy in to progress the conversation.

Secondly, Dublin City Council will host an event for a large group of anchor organisations where they would learn of Dublin City Council's experiences to date, with CLES providing a presentation of examples from elsewhere, promoting collaborative approaches to tackling the challenges the City.

Once a group of interested anchor institutions is established, Dublin City Council will convene the group to develop an understanding of shared challenges and priorities, seeking to identify a space for collective action.

Growing values-based recruitment

Dublin City Council has successfully piloted a values-based and geographically targeted approach to the recruitment of general operatives. A second pilot programme is planned for Cherry Orchard. A number of Dublin City Council departments have expressed an interest in the approach, which may enable a scaling up of the second phase pilot.

Dublin City Council will be supported in 'telling the story' of this approach, why it's different and the impact it has on the lives of those it engages with (both from an employer and employee perspective). It is strongly believed there is value in documenting the approach qualitatively. This will demonstrate the impact of CWB quickly and also build understanding for wider anchor institutions seeking to adopt or engage with any future scaled up programme. Much of this work has been dependant on key individuals, and to sustain or embed this approach in policy will require a wider group of people to understand its value.

In addition to telling the human story of the approach, Dublin City Council will work to establish a quantitative approach to evidencing the impact of values-based recruitment over time. The HR department will be supported to develop a mechanism for tracking and monitoring staff recruited via this values-based approach vs general recruitment so that a measure of retention and progression can be developed. The development of a repeatable reporting process will support future evaluation.

Support implementation of social value

Dublin City Council has commissioned a spend analysis which will be reviewed so as to inform as to what the Dublin business base looks like, the relative contributions of the private sector/social economy, how procurement spend categories map onto the existing business base, in which sectors local businesses are and are not engaging with public procurement and any differences between departments in terms of local spend and support for the social economy.

It is accepted that public procurement processes can make access to supply chain opportunities difficult for small businesses and social economy businesses who often lack the

dedicated capacity for business development that larger businesses can draw upon. In understanding these barriers in greater detail, with a focus on sectors which emerge from the gap analysis, Dublin City Council will be supported to undertake a procurement documentation and process review, involving interviews with procurement and legal staff. Dublin City Council will engage with SME's and social economy representatives such as the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, IBEC, ICTU and social economy representation from support bodies such as Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Irish Social Enterprise Network. Following this review and engagement process, Dublin City Council will take on new approaches on the demand side, providing advice to procurers and commissioners on how to address barriers to the engagement of SMEs and the social economy in public sector supply chains. Also Dublin City Council will support SMEs and social economy businesses to engage with public sector procurement, which could include a series of seminars, video guides, and written resources.

So as to progress the use of social value, Dublin City Council will support the Social Value Framework on three live procurement exercises. CLES will work with Dublin City Council to identify three appropriate live procurement exercises with which the Social Value Framework could be applied. This will involve working directly with commissioners to design the three services and with procurers to embed the most appropriate questions and clauses into the tender documentation. CLES will support Dublin City Council in providing advice around the evaluation of the tender responses and developing approaches to contract monitoring. Dublin City Council will also explore how other cities across the EU have embedded social considerations into the design and tendering of similar contracts.

Piloting in Cherry Orchard

Cherry Orchard has been identified as a pilot area in Dublin to bring together the pillars of CWB. The Cherry Orchard Implementation Board is tasked with delivering a focus on this community. This pilot focus will involve engaging key stakeholder groups already operating with a focus on Cherry Orchard such the Implementation Board, engaging with Cherry Orchard Anchors (e.g., Wheatfield prison, schools and Iarnród Éireann), engaging with Cherry Orchard local community groups and local businesses. A programme of targeted recruitment is already planned for Cherry Orchard and awareness of this will be developed with locally based anchors who may be able to support and/or join the programme.

Summary

There is a comprehensive programme of work planned for the next 12 to 18 months intended to increase awareness of, participation in and benefits of Community Wealth Building.

Kathy Quinn
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With responsibility for ICT

18th January 2024