

Introduction

The Local Government Reform Act (2014) sets out an enhanced economic role for local authorities in the areas of economic development and enterprise support. This paper will help inform the high level strategic priorities of our upcoming 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan. Over this period Dublin City Council will have an enhanced role to play in local economic development with the incorporation of agencies and functions such as the Digital Hub, Dublin Docklands Development Authority and the Dublin City Enterprise Board (DCEB). The Local Enterprise Office (replacing the DCEB) is now based in the Civic Offices supporting local enterprise and entrepreneurs. This plan is being developed using a strong data driven approach and draws on extensive research developed in partnership with University College Dublin and also developed through Dublin City Council's own multi year city competitiveness benchmarking programme. Parallel to the development of this economic plan we are also in the process of reviewing the city development plan, which includes the publication of an economic issues paper.

Setting the Scene

Dublin City and region with almost 30 per cent of national population and 42 per cent of economic output is central to Ireland's past and continued success. The purpose of local government, it has been argued, is to ***"give expression to local identity, to identify local concerns and to set local priorities."*** The city provides citizens with a place for living, working and recreation. The aim of economic development is to contribute to community welfare in both the short and long term. The immediate priority in 2015 is to **widen employment opportunities and engage in training and education** for both long term and youth unemployed citizens. In particular the role of small business and enterprises in widening employment opportunities is a key priority. The benefits of achieving fuller societal engagement also relate to achieving **a better balance in land use of the urban built environment**. This involves examples such as **bringing into use key vacant lands and underutilised buildings** in the city with **prioritisation of addressing housing needs in Dublin**. Local Planning drives the decisions of the four Dublin Local Authorities and planning, economic development and community service maintenance are key functions. A key strategic challenge is the importance of creating **a good place to be and a quality public realm**, and this is a priority that Local Government must continue to pursue. Creating high quality urban spaces and positioning city development works to the benefit of current citizens also attracts investment and talent. With the changing role of local government, and priority areas including housing, transport, education and place-making, there is a need to constantly input research and consideration of future potential scenarios. Whether in discussions of the economy or economic innovations there is a need to **constantly appraise the robustness of development planning for the various alternative futures** which may emerge. The national and local economy is recovering with significant opportunities and challenges arising. In particular renewed economic activity will place a further strain on movement in and around the city meaning that improving infrastructure is essential to **maintain and enhance the city's competitive position and quality of life**. A key legacy issue of the financial crisis is the lack of investment in social and community infrastructure. Arguments for the physical redevelopment of key underutilised land stocks are that their reuse has a double dividend of both **addressing current housing and community needs while reducing urban blight**, particularly where such sites act as focal points for anti-social activity and impact on public safety.

Issues and Challenges

Challenges include issues which involve direct use of DCC resources such as **improving the quality of streets, parks and critical infrastructure**, and other issues in which the city can influence statutory agencies such as transportation and connectivity. There is a need to **identify, protect and improve key public realm and infrastructure facilities** by ensuring the coordination of infrastructure and connectivity, and the integrated development of key spaces for the city including Dublin Port and Docklands/Grange Gorman/Central Business Districts. In doing so, the potential for an urban village network within the city is recognised and the economic potential through improved connectivity of underutilised inner suburbs must be realised. Suggested practical actions relating to key vacant sites in private and city ownership include **introduction of derelict sites tax** and a number of demonstration projects on DCC owned sites in both central area and underused suburbs where populations are declining. Economic innovation, employment generating activities and housing are potential uses suggested for derelict sites and underutilised buildings. This will involve **enhanced cooperation with agencies with responsibilities for key economic generators** including Tourism and related activities, IT, Financial Services, Social media, Construction and Education. This cooperation should move toward **shared implementation stages with shared staged objectives and periodic monitoring and evaluation**. Dublin uniquely houses sufficient levels of infrastructure and skills to fulfil a global city role and it is the preferred location in which Multinational Enterprises (MNE's) wish to locate. This is especially evident in the high-tech and high-skill areas where access to innovation clusters, universities and a large mixed-skill workforce is considered vital for operations. To continue this contribution to national economic development, **investment in Dublin should be prioritised as an innovative and smart city and as a magnet for inward investment and talent attraction**. Additionally, city and state agencies can play an important role in the nurturing and growing of business in particular micro businesses, start-ups and the creative industry sector.

Dublin City – Local Economic and Community Plan – 2016-2021

Emerging Strategic Goals

Plan and provide for Sustainable Economic Development for the City

- Ensure that urban developments are in the interest of citizens, city and governance systems and provide for sustainable economic development
- Cater for regional population growth of up to 200,000 by 2020
- Support the provision of affordable quality housing supplies
- Support improved economic development through the use of evidence-based analysis and technology
- Identify deficits and improve the quality of city services and critical infrastructure
- Ensure the planning function of Dublin City Council operates to provide sustainable economic development

Positioning Dublin as a place to live, work and invest in

- Championing investment in the national, regional and local economy. Enhance the role of micro business, small business and the innovative sectors in the city economy
- Identify key economic and employment generators for the city and support emerging sectors while minimising negative environmental impacts
- Support tourism as a priority sector with measures directly led by the council
- Ensure that national agencies are delivering enhanced provision of education/training/retraining to ensure a highly qualified and skilled labour force
- Support the creation of jobs in areas of social disadvantage
- Support the growing social economy sector including Non Government Organisations and Not for Profit Enterprises

Maximise the use of land and strategically improve the public realm in the city

- Promote active land management to bring into use key derelict sites and under-utilised buildings with prioritisation of addressing housing needs
- Increase infrastructure connectivity and access between the city's urban areas to support the regeneration and development of existing and emerging districts
- Deliver improved key public realm and infrastructure facilities to balance economic development
- Support the provision of both quality housing and commercial work space at affordable prices to end users.

Promote the role of Dublin

- Integrate effective regulatory and policy framework elements at national regional and local levels.
- Cooperate and influence governmental and statutory actors for transportation and connectivity
- Promote the contribution of Dublin to the economy through prioritising its role in the national economic development