



An tArdmhéara Comhairleoir Eimear Uí Choistealbha
Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr. Emer Costello

DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHES LORD MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON EMPLOYMENT

SPEECH BY CLLR EMER COSTELLO, LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN AT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON 7TH SEPTEMBER 2009

I am pleased to announce here tonight the establishment of the Lord Mayor's Commission on Employment, which I first signalled the night I was elected Lord Mayor in June.

I said that night that I strongly believe that City Council, that is, the elected members of the City Council, must be the driving force of policy formation for the City. The results of the local elections showed that people want change and that they want leadership from their elected representatives on the City Council that makes the most of the talents of its citizens. .

Over the course of the election campaign, unemployment was the single biggest issue on the doorsteps. The human stories behind those workers losing their jobs came to the fore as people described their fears about losing their homes, being unable to provide for their families and despairing for their children's future and also losing their sense of self-worth because of losing their job. I strongly believe that Dublin City Council has a major role to play in stimulating the local economy and stated that "Jobs for Dublin" would be one of my key priorities.

The greater Dublin area accounts for four out of every ten jobs and half of all goods and services produced in Ireland. Dublin is the engine of our economy. It must also be an engine of economic recovery. The priority must be job creation and the retention of existing employment.

Unemployment nationally stands at an all time high of 12.4% compared with 6.8% last year. Nationally, the number of redundancies this year to date, stands at almost 55,000 up 135% from this time last year. Dublin like the rest of the country has been haemorrhaging jobs. The stark figure of a 140% increase in the number of people signing on in the Capital in the past two years (from 42,000 in June 2007 to 101,000 in June 2009) tells its own story.

I am also conscious that over the summer I joined with workers on the picket line workers who were fighting to protect their jobs, including companies such as Thomas Cooke and Direct Holiday, MTL and more recently Coca Cola. I know the members of City Council care deeply about the situation as I met fellow councillors also lending their support to these workers on the picket lines.

Dublin needs strong and creative leadership, with a clear vision for the future of the City, to get its economy moving again. We need to prioritise the protection of existing employment and the creation of new jobs.

To this end I am establishing the Commission on Employment to examine how Dublin City Council can facilitate growth in the local economy. It is my intention that all the political parties and independents in the City Council together with the communities they represent will take ownership of this Commission. It will examine the scope of the problem, identify the unemployment blackspots; it will meet with and take submissions from the key stakeholders in all relevant sectors; it will engage with local community groups, hold public workshops and take public submissions.

The Commission will focus on four thematic areas namely, a) employment and unemployment, b) education skills and training, c) business entrepreneurship and finance and d) volunteering and the social economy.

Through each of these themes we will work to develop policies and create conditions which will generate new jobs. We will identify issues and gaps in the education, skills and training systems to support Dublin's performance as a hub in the Smart economy. We will identify existing or future opportunities for employment creation and enterprise growth. We will explore opportunities in potential growth sectors, for example, in the green economy, creative industries and cultural tourism heritage enterprise. We will ascertain mechanisms to support enterprise, particularly small to medium sized enterprise and will identify potential sources of funding. We will also examine the role of the voluntary and community sector and the potential benefits to the exchequer of people being employed through Community Employment and the social economy.

It is important that this Commission is not another talking shop and that it will produce real and tangible outputs. The work of the Commission is timely in that it will link with and support the delivery of the recently launched Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region. Moreover, the recommendations from the Commission will help inform the policies of the new Dublin City Development Plan (2011-2016) and issues coming through the Commission can be actively pursued by each of the Strategic Policy Committees. In this way, the work of the Commission can be sustained well long beyond the lifetime of this Lord Mayor.

All Councillors are welcome to participate and it is envisaged that Councillors from the different groups will act as convenors of the working groups on each of the thematic areas. Meetings will be held at times to facilitate all Councillors so that no Councillor should be excluded from this important body of work. The Commission will meet at least once a month and working groups will meet between Commission meetings as necessary.

The work of the Commission will be supported by the Planning and Economic Development Unit, under Assistant City Manager Michael Stubbs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Manager, and Lorna Maxwell from the Economic Development Unit, for the work that they have done on this Commission to date.

I have circulated a document summarising the key elements of the Commission and a draft work programme. Councillors who are interested in participating should contact the Lord Mayor's Office, by lunchtime Wednesday 9th September, to signal your interest following which the inaugural meeting will be arranged.

I believe that this Commission will mark an important milestone in the development of City Council policy and look forward to working with you on this in the coming year.

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