

Establishing a Telecoms Unit for Dublin

Connectivity that Matters

SEPTEMBER 21

DCCTelecoms@dublincity.ie



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



Background:

Digital connectivity infrastructure, both fixed and wireless, plays a critical and increasingly important role in Dublin's economic development. Covid-19 has reinforced the importance of connectivity in our cities and towns. Having the right type of connectivity is also essential for Dublin's future competitiveness. We are entering a new era of super connectivity with the emergence of fifth generation (5G) mobile networks.

A recent discussion document entitled '**Future Connectivity and 5G**', which the City Council developed in partnership with the CONNECT Research Centre for Future Networks and Connectivity at TCD, emphasises the role that local authorities will be required to play in supporting the rollout of telecoms networks and future 5G services. www.smartdocklands.ie/5g The City Council will need to take a more proactive role in opening up its assets such as ducting, buildings, lighting columns etc. to facilitate deployment of telecoms equipment (including small cells).

A number of EU regulations have necessitated a more proactive approach to telecoms within DCC. Examples include the following:

- Regulation (EU) 2020/911 of 30 June 2020 pursuant to Article 57(2) Directive (EU) 2018/1972, which established the 'European Electronic Communication Code'. The Code deals with the 'Deployment and Operation of Small-Area Wireless Access Points'. This Regulation was transposed into Irish Law by the end of 2020 and will mandate the use of public assets to support deployment of small cells where appropriate. This use will be exempt from planning subject to a number of specified criteria.
- The Broadband Cost Reduction Directive¹ 2014/61/EU which was enacted into Irish Law by SI 391 in July 2016. This Directive was designed to facilitate and incentivise the deployment of high-speed electronic communications networks by reducing its cost. It includes measures, such as the sharing and re-use of existing physical infrastructure

Establishing a Telecoms Unit:

Dublin City Council is establishing a telecoms unit to accelerate Dublin's economic recovery potential and also to leverage the broader innovation potential of gigabit and 5G connectivity². While the unit will also ensure compliance with EU regulations and national directives. It will also build on learning from projects such as

- The 'Smart Docklands' neutral host 5G testbed deployment which was delivered with CONNECT research centre and DenseAir
- The Connected City Infrastructure project to explore new models of street level telecoms deployments in cities - a partnership with the telecoms infrastructure project (TIP)³ - a global representative telecoms body and a number of industry partners including Cellnex.

The unit will consolidate the learnings of the docklands ducting project with Novagen⁴. Led by the Docklands area office this project has delivered a shared ducting model that allows better usage of City Council assets in the wider docklands area. This project was designed to reduce the costs for telecoms deployments across the district as well as improve the quality of telecoms connectivity.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/cost-reduction-measures>

² <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/technology/increase-in-5g-adoption-could-provide-42bn-boost-to-state-1.4280696>

³ www.smartdocklands.ie and <https://telecominfraproject.com/>

⁴ <http://www.dublindocklands.ie/telecommunications-0>

Other benefits of this approach include a reduction in road openings and a long-term cost recovery / revenue stream for the city council.

The telecoms unit within DCC will support the deployment of telecoms, creating a central point of contact within the organisation and allow for better use of city council owned assets. The remit of the unit will ensure that all future capital investments and infrastructure projects are telecoms proofed.

The unit will work alongside the city council's Smart City unit to make sure that there is an associated innovation work programme that leverages these investments. The telecoms unit will reduce the time it takes to deploy telecoms and 5G and in turn will encourage and increase private telecoms investment to Dublin. The telecoms unit will also play a role to ensure fair access to city council assets while ensuring connectivity investments benefit with wider city council administrative area.

Core functions of DCC telecoms unit:

- Taking a corporate approach to telecoms across DCC - establishing a 'one stop shop' for all telecoms requests.
- Liaising across all relevant city council sections – legal, roads and traffic, street lighting, parks, property and development, public realm to ensure telecom opportunities are prioritised as appropriate
- To manage income and cost recovery over a longer term period circa 10 years.
- To manage rate card charges and collection of revenue
- Deliver a centralised data catalogue of relevant city owned assets that can be used for telecoms, maintain the catalogue and update internal and external sources
- To provide access to DCC assets where possible in a fair and transparent way and at reasonable cost.
- Design of streamlined business process to accelerate permits and permissions for telecoms (section 254s and other processes) Reducing the time to approval which is an issue the operators face⁵.
- Future proofing of all future capital and infrastructure investments in DCC admin area e.g large scale capital investments, roads and water infrastructure investment etc.
- Ensure planning conditions include for appropriate telecoms ducting provisions
- Creation of standardised legal frameworks / SLA's to facilitate telecoms deployments.
- Develop a future connectivity multi-year plan and will form a critical aspect of Dublin's recovery and resilience planning.
- Work alongside the Smart City unit to accelerate a broader innovation agenda for Dublin
- Input into relevant national and EU telecoms discussions

⁵ Review of MRL and the Purple Book for their "streamlined" process.

Areas of responsibility: Telecoms Unit

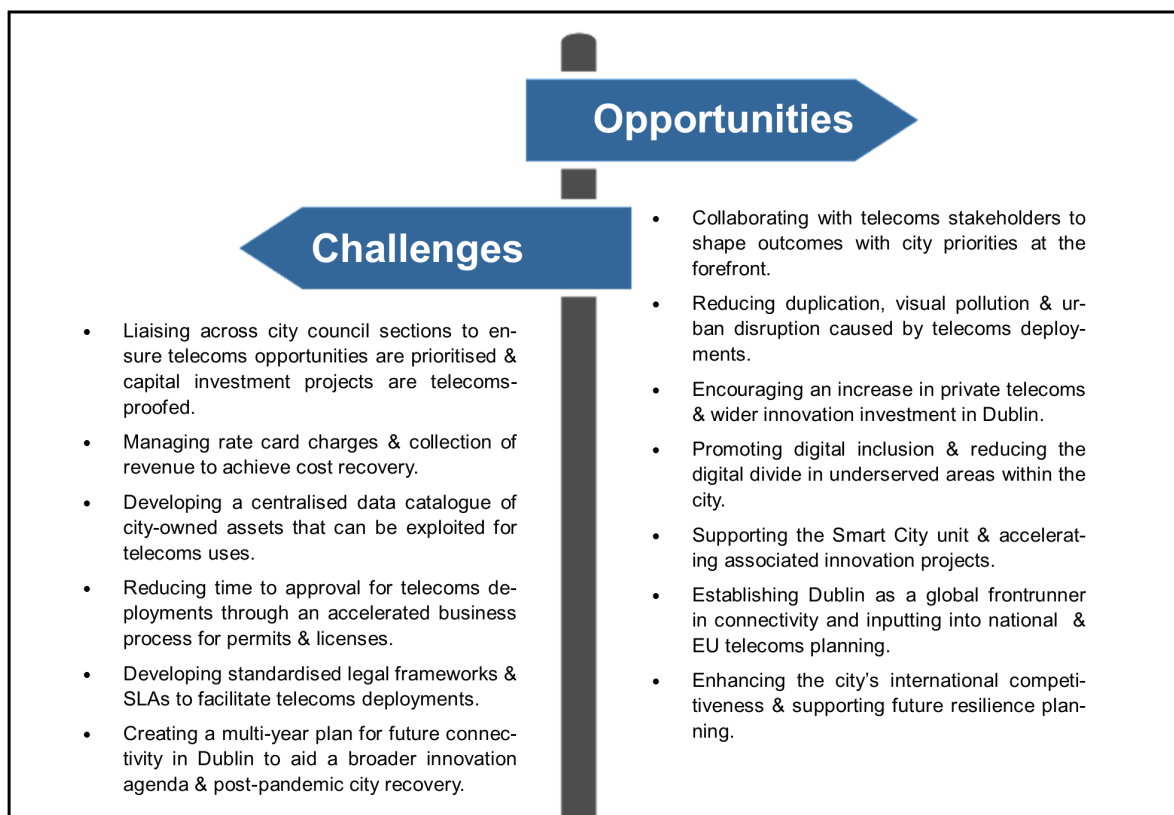
<p><i>Strategic Approach to telecoms and connectivity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a future connectivity strategy / framework for DCC • Coverage mapping and quality of service across DCC • Addressing blackspots and underserved parts of the city • Support future innovation / smart city collaborations - IOT, 5G/4G, Wifi rollout and pilot schemes. Collaborate with 'Smart Docklands' / Connect Centre for future networks and connectivity • Compliance with EU and National regulations in relation to telecoms • Represent DCC on national & EU policy developments • Ensure planning conditions include for appropriate telecoms ducting provisions and follow up with site inspections • Alignment of Capital projects City Plan against telecoms needs
<p><i>Managing Telecoms Supports / Requests</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One stop-shop for all telecoms requests (over and underground) • Co-ordinating internal departments and asset owners • Convening an internal stakeholder group / network to review requests within specified timelines. • Manage interaction between clients and the internal Engineering, operations, legal and financial departments • Manage rate card charges and collection of revenue (managed through an external telecoms partner) • Quoting, invoicing and collections • Sales and Marketing of DCC Assets including ducting
<p><i>Strategic Approach to Sub-Ducting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project managing the Docklands ducting project • Formulate SLAs for access to network, licensing and legal agreements (internal and external alignment) • Manage Support lines and on call services • Extending use of DCC ducting assets outside docklands • Future proofing new infrastructure investments and telecoms - Identifying new opportunities to deploy ducting across capital projects. • One Dig Policy – collaborating on one dig opportunities • Procure qualified sub-contractors to check for blockages in DCC duct runs, rope same and populate with sub duct where required

Data / Asset management

- Delivering an asset database of existing assets relevant to telecoms in DCC (Internal and External)
- Working alongside corporate data unit / departments
- Capturing new assets and infrastructure in standard GIS/digital formats (internal and external)

Outcomes:

- o Enhancing the city's international competitiveness and post-pandemic recovery & resilience planning.
- o Up-front investment required particularly for the first couple of years.
 - infrastructure survey and duct proving, then layer in sub-duct install or fibre break out
- o Cost recovery model over circa 10 years
- o Accelerating telecoms and 5G (making the city 5G ready)
- o Accelerating innovation and use case development – building on existing success dockland and smart city programme and growing business and jobs locally
- o Addressing digital divide and connectivity blackspots



© Dublin City Council

Appendix A:

DOCKLANDS FIBRE DUCTING

The Council owns a substantial telecoms ducting network in the Dublin Docklands area, as a result of it taking on the assets and liabilities of the DDDA (Dublin Docklands Development Authority) after the enactment of the DDDA Dissolution Act 2015. This network is of extreme economic importance, providing telecoms services to some of the world's largest financial services companies and a growing cluster of the most successful high tech companies in the digital media and internet sectors.

A decision was made by the Council after it took over responsibility for the Docklands that a more robust system needed to be put in place to manage the current infrastructure and to develop the network to meet the demands of the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ into the future. After a competitive procurement process. Novegen was chosen by Dublin City Council to manage the DCC telecoms infrastructure in the SDZ areas in the North and South Docklands. The purpose of the project is to develop a world class telecoms infrastructure in the Docklands and aims to support the needs of the corporate clients in the Docklands area by installing an open access platform to make it easier for telecom operators to access their customer base. It will also encourage competition among the telecom operators and this increased competition will lead to increased quality of services being offered. The project will support the Council's Smart City initiatives in the Docklands area and promote the Docklands as an area to locate business.