

Minutes
Retail Forum Working Group
Future of Retail – Town Centre First/Night-time Economy (TCF/NTE WG)
Meeting 3
16 May 2022

CHATHAM HOUSE RULES APPLY

Attendees: Appendix A

Minutes: The minutes from this meeting are to be agreed under Silence Procedure and will be available on www.enterprise.gov.ie

Objective: The **Future of Retail – Town Centre First/Night-time Economy** working group is tasked with identifying a set of achievable actions to feed into a Retail Action Plan that will be presented to the Minister for Retail, Damian English T.D. at the Retail Forum meeting on 08 June 2022.

1. Agenda Items

The Chair welcomed attendees and advised that this is the final meeting of the Working Group and that the short/medium and long terms actions agreed by this Working Group will be included in the Retail Action Plan. She added that the Retail Action Plan will also include agreed actions from the Digitisation and Skills and Green Transition Working Groups and recommendations from the Retail Sector Study. The Retail Action Plan will be presented to Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English TD at the next meeting of the Retail Forum on the 08 June.

Night-time Economy

Action 1: Encourage members to submit proposals to the Night-time economy WG

Action 2: Collaboration between NTE and TCF initiatives where appropriate. Ensure linkages between offices

Action 3: Current initiatives that work. Consider the development of a pilot Night-time Economy (NTE) project for independent retailers on one day a week from 6pm to 8pm and roll it out in a few Purple Flag towns (e.g., cultural companion programme for over 55's)

Comments arising:

- *To drive activity in towns in the evening and to encourage retailers to open later it is necessary to have an attraction e.g., market as regular events would attract more regular and cost-effective footfall than occasional one-off impact events*
- *Later trading hours has cost and staff contract implications for retailers and personal implications for retail workers e.g., transport, safety*
- *Purple Flag accreditation is a good model to use – support and funding would be helpful – is there scope to widen parameters?*
- *Clear communications on Purple Flag, BIDS etc activities and more joined up recognition across Government of what is working*
- *Liaise with ATCM (Association of Towns and City Management) in UK*
- *Suggestion for NTE - additional cultural night in February to align with new St Bridget's Day bank holiday.*

Night-time Economy actions ongoing

Town Centre First

The chair gave an update on the creation of the National Town Centre First office and advised that a National TCF Coordinator is currently being recruited and due to be appointed in June 2022. Following the recruitment, the Office will then be established with a budget of €500,000. It is intended that the National Oversight and Advisory Group will be convened later in 2022.

Action 4: Retail sector to engage with the Town Centre Office (TCO) at an early stage to contribute to the development of town plans and any skills programmes/capacity building programmes for town teams that might be developed under TCF

Action 5: Consider how the Retail sector can support the recruitment of Town Regeneration Officers (TRO)

Action 6: DATA - Better understand what data sets are in existence and what data policy going forward is to open up Gov data. National Land Register - Dataset - PSB Data Catalogue. Should TRO lead on data collection? Development of a gap analysis for data required for town centres.

Action 7: Retail sector and business community to collaborate with Town Centre First Office on the development of a new national Toolkit to support the implementation of the TCF Policy by providing a range of examples of best practice and available resources to guide implementation as per Action 6 of the TCF Policy.

Action 8: Retail sector and business community to work with TCF Office to help promote existing exemplars and current models which illustrate successful Town Centre living and explore how to encourage behavioural change as per action 15 of the TCF Policy.

Comments arising:

- *In relation to data*
 - *sources include CSO, GEO, DataGov.ie (RELAND'S OPEN DATA PORTAL Promoting innovation and transparency through the publication of Irish Public Sector data in open, free and reusable formats companies)*
 - *Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) – provides a perspective of the town at a point in time and is important not just because it gathers data but also because it enables people to come together to talk about their town.*
 - *Essential to understand what data is sought and then to determine how best to gather and if there is a way to automate collection. – what data is necessary?*
 - *The Local Data Company - [The UK's most accurate retail location data business \(localdatacompany.com\)](https://localdatacompany.com).*
 - *Challenges in understanding who owns vacant properties.*
- *Could an action of the Retail Action Plan be the establishment of a dedicated working group on data?*
- *Could Didobi present to the Retail forum on data possibilities for Ireland? Didobi are a UK based data provider who recently presented at a TUD Retail Symposium in March 2022.*

Town Centre First actions ongoing

2. Draft Actions:

Night-time Economy

Lead	Action	Detail	Timeline
DETE	Encourage members to submit proposals to the Night-time economy WG.	Invite Working Group members to submit ideas. DETE to find out what support is available	Short-term

	Collaboration between NTE and TCF initiatives where appropriate. Ensure linkages between offices		Short-term
Chambers/BID/Town team lead. All members	Current initiatives that work. Consider the development of a pilot Night-time Economy (NTE) project for independent retailers on one day a week from 6pm to 8pm and roll it out in a few Purple Flag towns (e.g., cultural companion programme for over 55's)		Medium-term

Town Centre First

All Members/DETE	Retail sector to engage with the Town Centre Office (TCO) at an early stage to contribute to the development of town plans and any skills programmes/capacity building programmes for town teams that might be developed under TCF.	TCF/NTE WG to invite TCO office attend the Retail Forum to outline how retail and locally traded businesses can input into town plans/capacity building programmes	Short-term
DETE/BID WG member	Consider how the Retail sector can support the recruitment of Town Regeneration Officers (TRO)	DETE to consult with the Town Centre First Office on process of recruitment of TRO	Short-term
	DATA - Better understand what data sets are in existence and what data policy going forward is to open up Gov data. National Land Register - Dataset - PSB Data Catalogue. Should TRO lead on data collection? Development of a gap analysis for data required for town centres.	Consult with OGCIO, TCF. Members to identify what data the Health Check gathers and if feasible to gather any of that data which is collected manually through digital means.	Ongoing
	Retail sector and business community to collaborate with Town Centre First Office on the development of a new national Toolkit to support the implementation of the TCF Policy by providing a range of examples of best practice and available resources to guide implementation as per Action 6 of the TCF Policy	The Toolkit will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A TCF Web Portal to provide an accessible and central dashboard to navigate the TCF Framework including the National Toolkit, National Policies, Sectoral supports, available funding and specific enabling tools nationally; • Specific strands targeting key factors such as urban development, economic purpose, social function, digitalisation, 	Medium-term

		<p>sustainable mobility, accessibility for persons with disability or reduced mobility, community engagement and climate action;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national, integrated and scaled-up Health Check Model which utilises existing progress through the Heritage Council's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check approach and builds a national database on our towns; • A best practice model for developing a TCF Plan that can be adapted to suit the characteristics of all towns and inform future investment decisions; • Varied examples (Pathfinder Towns/ Case Studies) of successful, vibrant, revitalised town centres 	
	<p>Retail sector and business community to work with TCF Office to help promote existing exemplars and current models which illustrate successful Town Centre living and explore how to encourage behavioural change as per action 15 of the TCF Policy.</p>		Medium-term

3. AOB

The Chair agreed to forward a link to the Regional Enterprise Innovation Scoping Scheme 2022 to the Working Group.

Appendix A: Attendance list

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) (Chair)	Maedhbh	Cronin
Chambers Ireland	Margaret	O'Brien
Dublin Town	Richard	Guiney
Hair and Beauty Industry Confederation	Margaret	O'Rourke Doherty
LGMA	Michael	Quinn
ISME	Finbarr	Filan
Retail Excellence	Duncan	Graham
TU Dublin	Damien	O'Reilly
Retail Ireland	Samira	Nicolo

DETE Officials	Deborah	Dignam
	Sandra	Mullen
	Helen	Keane MacDonough
	Mary	Cullen
	Susan	McNamee
	Sinead	O'Brien

Apologies:

Organisation	First Name	Surname
RGDATA	Tara	Buckley
IPU	Jim	Curran