



Retail Forum Working Group Minutes: Future of Retail – Town Centre First / Night Time Economy

7 June 2023

Meeting 7

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

Item 1: Welcome

The new Chair, Ms. Mary Cullen, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) gave an introduction and welcomed working group members to the meeting.

Item 2: Update from the Night-Time Economy Unit, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (D/TCAGSM)

Ms. Deborah Lawlor, Night-Time Economy Unit, (D/TCAGSM) updated members on progress made to date on the Night Time Economy (ENTE) initiative including NTA, Vulnerability training (D/TCAGSM have a number of Policy Templates available for use in relation to Safety Issues), Department of Justice's Night Safety Charter, pilots towns, night time advisors and proposed and occurred cultural activity, including the NTE 'Late Night at the Museum Scheme' launched recently. She added that in relation to Action 15 in the Report of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce, they are proposing revised wording of Action 15.

Action 15 currently states:

Work with the Retail Forum to examine the types of interventions required for late retail opening. Establish a Retail Forum working group to discuss this along with the Town Centre First initiative.

Proposed revised wording of Action 15:

Work with the Retail Forum working group to examine the types of interventions required for late retail opening. Explore the development of pilot night-time enterprise zones for the rural NTE Pilot Towns.

Comments arising:

- *Agreement on the revised wording of Action 15*
- *Due to lower levels of footfall mid-week, it is difficult to encourage retailers to operate later opening hours.*
- *To encourage increased footfall in the NTE, it would be welcomed if the Luas operated until 2am in Dublin.*

- *Scope to look at implementing a home delivery system that people who access the NTE using bicycle / public transport can avail of.*
- *Needs to be a strong link between the NT Advisors and Town Rejuvenation Officers.*
- *Employment cost considerations is a big factor in determining whether a retailer will choose to stay open later.*
- *There needs to be clear communication and sufficient lead in time provided to retailers regarding upcoming events to enable retailers to plan for later opening hours around the events. Retailers can also support the promotion of events e.g. in shop windows.*
- *Important that night time event offerings don't compete with existing retail businesses. Night time events such as markets need to have a complementary and varied offering.*
- *Purple Flag teams across the country have a lot of experience and have data available that can be shared and feed into D/TCAGSM and the Town Centre First (TCF) National Co-ordination Office. (The representatives from D/TCAGSM and the Town Centre First (TCF) National Co-ordination Office who were in attendance at the meeting welcomed this)*

Item 3: Update from the Town Centre First (TCF) National Co-ordination Office

Ms. Mairead Hunt and Mr. Donal O'Murchadha, provided members with an update from the TCF National Co-ordination Office.

Ms. Hunt advised that 24 out of the 26 Town Rejuvenation Officers (TROs) are now in situ, and 14 Town Centre First Plans are on target. The National Co-ordination office has produced a progress report and an implementation plan, and are reaching out to City Councils (Dublin, Galway / Cork) to request that these Councils also nominate an individual in a similar role as a TRO.

Mr. O'Murchadha provided members with an overview of the policy context of the Town Centre First approach, the role of Town Teams, progress to date, and next steps. Mr. O'Murchadha advised that peer-to-peer learning between towns is key. Members were shown an example of Roscrea's Town Centre First Plan which is available online [Roscrea Town Centre First Masterplan | Tipperary County Council \(tipperarycoco.ie\)](#) and the link to Tullow's Town Centre First draft plan was also shared with members as an example [Tullow Town Centre First - Draft Plan | Carlow County Council's Online Consultation Portal](#).

Ms. Hunt advised that a priority for 2023 is to scale up the Heritage Council's Health Check model.

Comments arising:

- *TCF National Office to engage with Purple Flag teams.*
- *Health Check model is well developed. No need to start over. (Ms Hunt clarified that the scaling up of the Heritage Council's Health Check model is to take into account changing commuter patterns, evolving work / life balance considerations, climate change etc.)*
- *The Chair reminded members to forward any useful data they may have to D/TCAGSM and the TCF National Co-ordination Office.*

Item 4: AOB

Comments arising:

- *The need for education in relation to upskilling opportunities for businesses. There's a skills gap that needs to be addressed.
(Members were advised that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment webpage [Retail sector in Ireland - DETE \(enterprise.gov.ie\)](https://enterprise.gov.ie) contains information which they may find useful in relation to information on Skills)*
- *The Chair reminded members that the next Working Group meeting is scheduled for 6 September, and the meeting after that is scheduled for 15 November. The Secretariat will be in contact with members regarding the next meeting in due course.*

Actions:

- Copy of presentations to be circulated to members of the Town Centre First / Night Time Economy working Group

**Retail Section
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
12 June 2023**

Appendix A

Retail Forum Working Group: Future of Retail – Town Centre First / Night Time Economy

Attendees

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Chair)	Mary	Cullen
Chambers Ireland	Margaret	O'Brien
Dublin Town	Richard	Guiney
HABIC/ISME/Image Skillnet	Margaret	O'Rourke Doherty
Sligo BID (CEO)	Gail	McGibbon
LGMA	Michael	Quinn
Retail Excellence	Duncan	Graham
Retail Ireland	Samira	Nicolo
RGDATA	Tara	Buckley
TU Dublin	Damian	O'Reilly
UCD Centre for Irish Towns	Philip	Crowe
.IE	Oonagh	McCutcheon
LEO Network	Aileen	McGrath

Apologies

Organisation	First Name	Surname
IPU	Jim	Curran

Presenters

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Night-Time Economy Unit, DTCAGSM	Deirdre	Currivan
Night-Time Economy Unit, DTCAGSM	Deborah	Lawlor
National Town Centre First Office	Mairead	Hunt
National Town Centre First Office	Donal	O'Murchadha