SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



**REPORT OF THE ARTS, CULTURE, GAEILGE, HERITAGE & LIBRARIES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7th September 2022**

**Venue: MS Teams Meeting**

**In attendence:**

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| **Members** | **Council Officials** |
| Cllr. Alan Edge (Chair) | Jason Frehill | Director of Service |
| Cllr. Peter Kavanagh  | Paul Fusco | County Librarian |
| Cllr. Mick Duff | Paula Murphy | Staff Officer, NCL |
|  | Sean Rafferty, | Senior Library Assistant, NCL |

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| **Sectoral Members** |
| Elaine Vince O'Hara |

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| **Representatives** |
| Carla Fazio, Consultant |
| Jennifer Webster, Tallaght Community Arts |
| Tony Fegan, Tallaght Community Arts |

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| **Apologies** |
| Cllr. Alan Hayes, Cllr. Kenneth Egan, Cllr. Teresa Costello, Ms. Freda Manweiler, Ms. Orla Scannell, Ms. Rosaleen Dwyer |

**The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Alan Edge.**

Chair Cllr. Alan Edge opened the meeting at 17:33.

**Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes**

The [minutes](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76048) of Arts, Culture, Gaeilge, Heritage & Libraries SPC meeting held on 4th May 2022 were proposed by Chair Cllr. Alan Edge and seconded by Cllr. Peter Kavanagh. **Agreed.**

**Item 2: Libraries Development Plan Update**

Paul Fusco, County Librarian, presented a [report](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76049) on the most recent information prepared by Actionable Consultants, offering a summary of the staff and public surveys carried out to date.

Six consultation sessions were completed across the network, with an overall good level of attendance and engagement across varying age groups. The staff survey, which has closed, returned 46 responses, which accounts for almost 50% of staff. Highlights from these responses indicate many positives, including an openness to change and evolution and a staff focus on service, working with the public and meeting people’s needs.

Approximately 800 responses to the public survey have been gathered to date, with a target of 1k. The survey has been promoted through the PPN, and library non-users have been specifically targeted. In-person interviews with non-users revealed varying attitudes to library services and spaces. The overall Net Promoter Score, which measures loyalty and brand advocacy, was 58. While strands of library service are being developed as themes for the draft plan, the question of built heritage offers opportunities for future focus.

Following the presentation, questions were invited from the members.

Cllr. Alan Edge expressed his thanks for the information and the work done to date. Commenting on the responses gathered from non-users, Cllr. Edge asked whether the responses were geographically spread throughout branches.

Cllr. Peter Kavanagh commended library staff on the work done to promote the survey and questioned whether, in the interests of targeting non-users, it would be possible to extend the closing date for public surveys to allow elected members to complete the survey at their upcoming Council meeting.

Paul Fusco responded to questions asked and agreed to have both the electronic and paper versions of the survey live until the requested date. He is to meet with the consultants over the coming weeks and the current intention is to present to the SPC in November and to the Council in December.

The report was **Noted**.

**Item 3: ‘Comfort, Entertainment and Inclusion’ – Community wellbeing initiatives by South Dublin Libraries**

Paul Fusco, County Librarian, presented a [report](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76050) on the representation of South Dublin Libraries at the recent IFLA World Library and Information Congress held in Dublin. 1700 attendees from around the world gathered in the Convention Centre for the event, at which South Dublin Libraries was the only Library Authority to present.

Paul Fusco commended those staff members involved and offered an overview of the ‘Libraries Under the Lid’ outreach initiative, which received DAF funding to create over 150 bespoke library care boxes for older people in South Dublin who were cut off from the library’s services due to Covid-19 in 2020, before handing over to Paula Murphy and Sean Rafferty from NCL who presented on the ‘[Reader Project’](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76050), a shared reading initiative in South Dublin Libraries.

While NCL carries out library outreach, staff have found it difficult to engage adult readers. The library received funding to roll out a ‘Shared Reading’ project, making it the first public library in the Republic of Ireland to offer shared reading, which is a shared live read-aloud experience facilitated by a trained leader. Staff completed training in August and the first session is planned for October 25 in NCL, who will work with local organisations and partners to identify and target participants.

Following the presentations, questions were invited from the members.

Cllr. Alan Edge offered his congratulations on the initiative and noted the potential of staff-driven initiatives as being key to staff development. Cllr. Edge enquired as to how the initiative is being advertised.

Cllr. Peter Kavanagh noted that it is a privilege of being on the SPC to see such initiatives in their early stages and noted that he has received positive feedback on the ‘Libraries Under the Lid’ project.

Ms. Elaine Vince-O’Hara congratulated staff on a great project and, noting the importance of literacy in shared experiences of reading, stated that she will share information on the undertaking. Ms. Vince-O’Hara also noted that the DDLETB AES is currently collaborating with South Dublin libraries, providing tutors for a number of adult education courses.

Paula Murphy responded to the questions raised.

Chair Cllr. Alan Edge once again thanked all those involved.

The report was **Noted**.

**Item 4: Creative Ireland Update**

Carla Fazio, Strategy Consultant, presented a progression [update](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76051) of the Culture and Creative Strategy 2023 – 2027 Plan.

Offering a brief overview of the make-up and work of the Creative Culture Team, Ms. Fazio noted that 7 priorities have been identified and that a draft vision identifies the importance of culture and creativity as a powerful agent for change, solidarity, wellbeing and sustainable community development. Ms. Fazio noted that this vision will be achieved by building on key strengths in the following areas: Nurturing Space, Shared Identities, Equal Voices and Leaving It Better.

The next steps in the Plan are a general public consultation, focus group consultations and continued meetings with the Creative Culture Team and further drafting of the Strategy. This needs to be completed by the end of November in order for the draft to be brought forward to Creative Ireland.

Following the presentation, questions were invited from the members but Chair Cllr. Alan Edge asked that they be held until after the next headed item.

The Update was **Noted.**

**Item 5: Creative Places MacUíllíam**

Tony Fegan and Jennifer Webster from Tallaght Community Arts presented on [Creative Places MacUíllíam](http://intranet/cmas/documentsbyitem.aspx?itemid=76052), an Arts Council initiative which received an 18-month research funding award to build a local arts programme to benefit those living in the estate.

Funding of €40k was awarded in July 2021 and work began in September 2021. Mr. Fegan and Ms. Webster presented an overview of work carried out to date, of the connection established with residents and of a number of challenges encountered during the delivery of the programme, including the lack of a dedicated physical space for larger groups, the continuing impact of Covid-19, those social issues experienced by participants which have made it difficult to connect with all communities within the estate, and the responsiveness of young people while adults have been less engaged.

A number of further activities are planned for the 6 months remaining in the research project timeline.

Chair Cllr. Alan Edge thanked both Tony and Jennifer.

The report was **Noted**.

Following the conclusion of Headed Item 5, Chair Cllr. Alan Edge informed the members that the meeting was no longer quorate, and that questions arising from Items 4 and 5 would be addressed to the relevant parties directly.

**Item 6: Action Items**

No Action Items were recorded.

**Item 7: Any Other Business**

No other business was noted.

**The meeting concluded at 18:44.**