

Retail Forum Working Group Minutes: Future of Retail – TCF and NTE

4 September 2024

Meeting 12

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 Chair welcomed attendees.

Item 2: Presentation from the National Town Centre First Office with an update on Town Centre First Policy

- TCF Office updated members on progress of actions under the Town Centre First Initiative with 15 of the 33 actions completed and 7 actions in hand.
- TCFO referred to Action 12 of the TCF - *Identify agreed data measurement requirements with respect to social and economic outcomes, digitalisation skills and climate action* - regarding collection of data from towns and how to measure data in terms of economic output.
- TFCO informed members present that the TCF Office are about to engage consultants to look at this. This project is also linked to the development of a data portal which is expected in Q1 2025.

Comments Arising:

- Member noted that there are data projects being undertaken in Ireland and other countries that collect data on various data points.

Actions:

DETE to invite members to submit feedback to TCFO on this action.

Item 3: Presentation on Meanwhile Use legislation for vacant buildings.

- Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) presented on this topic.
- DHLGH is seeking feedback from relevant stakeholders on their paper on meanwhile use legislation for vacant buildings with a view to its potential application in Ireland.
- The current consultation and engagement with various sectors (deadline 27 September for feedback) seeks to further examine the issues that impact on meanwhile.

Comments Arising:

- From earlier consultation it was noted that the commercial rates system may be a disincentive to meanwhile use.
- The licencing system may be more appropriate than the planning system.
- Sometimes negative perception of pop-ups.
- Links to UK examples in the document circulated. Meanwhile use lease and guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Member detailed two previous experiences of meanwhile use in Ireland.
- One member noted that there is a need to provide incentive to landlords when approaching vacant commercial property owners.
- Mixed-use properties and bank lending was raised.

Actions:

Members invited to submit feedback on consultation by 27 September to DHLGH.

Item 4: Update from NTE unit in DTACGSM

The Night-time Economy unit provided an update on progress of actions in the Plan.

- 29 actions of 36 completed
- 15 actions are ongoing
- NTE unit are doing some work on the data collection piece and are liaising with the TCF office.
- Meanwhile use is also an action in the NTE. It has been reported that a high level of vacancy gives rise to a perception of lack of safety.

Comments Arising:

- A member commented on the work of the Night-time Economy advisors and wished to compliment them.

Actions

Night-time Economy Action Plan to be circulated.

Item 5: AOB

The Chair thanked members for their time and closed the meeting.

Actions:

- Copy of the presentations to be forwarded to Working Group members.

**Retail Section
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
20 September 2024**

Appendix A

Retail Forum Working Group: Future of Retail – TCF and NTE

Attendees

Organisation	Representative
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Chair)	Manus O'Donnell
Chambers Ireland	Margaret O'Brien
LGMA	Michael Quinn
HABIC	Margaret O'Rourke Doherty
IPU	Jim Curran
Dublin Town	Richard Guiney
IBEC/Retail Ireland	Elizabeth Young
Sligo BID	Gail McGibbon
UCD Centre for Irish Towns	Philip Crowe
LEO Network	Aileen McGrath
Primark	Aidan O'Connor
.IE	Oonagh McCutcheon

Presenters

Organisation	Representative
Town Centre First Office	Mairead Hunt
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Deborah Lawlor
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Deirdre Currivan
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Louise Purcell
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Pauline Riordan

Apologies

Organisation	Representative
RGDATA	Tara Buckley