



# 2023 Annual Report





## Chairman's Address 2

It was a privilege to be asked to chair DublinTown in March 2023. Throughout the year, the board and executive redoubled their efforts to guide our business community through an evolving urban landscape characterised by hybrid working, climate imperatives, and digital innovation. We have embraced these challenges proactively - engaging with peers across the globe, contributing to policy dialogue, and forging new partnerships at home, while deepening our engagement with existing partners. Our collective goal remains unchanged: to secure the best outcomes for our city, our business members, and our customers.

In the year ahead, we will continue to pilot initiatives that foster a vibrant mid-week and night-time economy, champion a truly sustainable energy district, and re-imagine underserved areas such as Talbot Street through urban regeneration. I extend my gratitude to our outgoing chair, Cól Campbell, whose leadership during the pandemic was invaluable, and to our dedicated staff whose passion for service fuels every DublinTown success.

**– Billy Reid, Chairman**



## CEO Address

This past year has tested our resilience, as the first full year after the pandemic brought ongoing challenges. Mid-week footfall has yet to fully recover, with hybrid working patterns continuing to reduce lunchtime and early-evening visits. Yet, our city's businesses have shown extraordinary adaptability and determination.

The events of November 2023 reminded us how vital public confidence is. In response, DublinTown presented Government with a constructive four-point plan designed to reignite the city centre. Our proposals address every aspect of the visitor experience - from strengthening safety and improving access, to refreshing public spaces and introducing a more efficient waste-management model that benefits both businesses and residents.

Most importantly, we have called for the establishment of a Government-led City Centre Task Force. By bringing together State agencies, local authorities, businesses, and community groups, this Task Force will, we believe, coordinate efforts and ensure that every partner plays its part. With joint commitment and clear direction, we are confident Dublin will re-emerge stronger than ever, reclaiming its place as a vibrant, thriving heart of business and culture.

**– Richard Guiney, Chief Executive**

# Dublin Town's Four Point Plan To Rejuvenate the City

Dublin city centre continues to struggle to re-establish itself following the pandemic. The barriers to regeneration are complex and inter-linked. It is clear to us that we need to act collectively to resolve all of the issues which we face.

The state and its agencies have a role in understanding how people feel about Dublin City Centre and working with the city based stakeholders to re-establish Dublin city as the pre-eminent urban centre on the island of Ireland.

We believe that the responses required will need full co-ordination between both national and local Government.

Dublin city centre's challenges are not unique. Many cities across the world are grappling with similar issues. Work from home has reduced the urban customer base, and post-pandemic, in many urban centres, cities appear increasingly dangerous and foreboding. While crime stats are in many cases down on pre-pandemic levels, people are expressing increased anxiety and safety concerns, with such concerns being amplified through media channels.

However, no matter the source of public concern, the reality is that these concerns exist and are impacting on city trade. We must address them if Dublin is to successfully re-emerge from the pandemic period.

In this regard, our Four Point Plan, we believe, identifies the challenges that we face and provides practical and actionable solutions. We call on all parties to work with us to deliver for the people of Dublin and the visitors to our city.



# Dublin Recovery

**An insight from Dublin Town, Dublin City Centre's Business Improvement District December 2023**

## **Context**

The events of 23<sup>rd</sup> November brought into sharp focus, issues which have beleaguered Dublin city centre for some time. Research confirms that the public believe that the Dublin experience is deteriorating. These issues, which reflect poorly on Dublin and Ireland, have led to a diminution of the city experience and a loss of footfall. In a global economic environment, the loss of public confidence will lead to reduced economic performance well beyond the city's traditional retail and hospitality trades.

This summary sets out Dublin Town's perspectives on the issues and solutions arising. To succeed, the proposals require multi-agency collaboration. Dublin Town is actively engaged with both public and private sector partners to deliver upon this constructive agenda, and we believe that there is a need for greater co-ordination through an interagency and cross departmental task force to deliver an integrated plan.

## **Safety**

The core issue to be addressed is the fact that people do not feel safe in Dublin city centre. A 2021 research piece revealed that 84% of Dubliners said feeling unsafe has impacted on their willingness to visit the city centre.

The solutions required are:

### **1. Increased Garda presence.**

- a. Research regularly confirms that increased Garda visibility is the intervention most likely to yield increased footfall in Dublin city. The post 23<sup>rd</sup> November increase in Garda presence quickly resolved many public safety concerns and led to an enhanced city experience.
- b. We would advocate for the re-introduction of Small Areas Policing, which was very successful previously.
- c. While increased Garda visibility is welcome, we would also like to see the retention of experienced Gardaí within the city, at least in the short term.



# Dublin Recovery

## 2. Managing our social challenges

Dublin like all modern cities faces social challenges. However, Dublin does not manage these challenges as well as comparative cities.

- a. There is an over concentration of emergency accommodation and drug services within the city's commercial district. As noted in the Better City For All report of 2012, this is inconsistent with best international practice and does not best serve the needs of service users, as well as having wider societal impacts.
- b. Numerous unregulated charities, are providing services to vulnerable people without Garda vetting on city streets. It is not clear how the provision of food or clothing in public view is optimum or fully respects the dignity of service recipients. Dublin Town believes that all such services should be licensed by the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and should require appropriate vetting and analysis of need.

## 3. Juveniles

- a. Post pandemic, Dublin, in line with peer cities, has experienced challenging behaviour from groups of Juveniles. There is a need to address challenging behaviour of some young people where the JLO system has not resulted in a positive change in behaviour. Alternatives should be considered such as exclusions and curfews for individuals who are not responding to the opportunities presented to them.

## 4. Judicial System

- a. City businesses are concerned with the number of cases where they and their staff have been terrorised by individuals who re-appear on the street shortly after being detained by the Gardaí. The public often find it difficult to comprehend how such repeat offenders are offered bail or receive suspended or short sentences. The lingering feeling is that the anxiety felt by victims of crime is not given sufficient consideration in the judicial process.
- b. There is a strong sense that many repeat offenders feel above the law and that potential punishments are not acting as a deterrent.



# Dublin Recovery

## 5. Aggressive begging

- a. Members of the public are often intimidated by aggressive and persistent begging. Dublin Town advocates a revisiting of the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 2011, to add provisions in relation to persistent begging and intimidation.

## Transport and access

1. Research shows that the public believe that the city is becoming increasingly difficult to access. They believe that the current traffic and transport proposals published by Dublin City Council and National Transport Authority will make it even more difficult to access the city.
2. Many of the transport solutions required are contained in the NTA's plans to 2042. However, we simply cannot wait for a further 20 years for basic transport provision and still meet our transport related carbon emission targets.
3. The current transport and traffic proposals are giving rise to significant concern in relation to access to the city; deliveries; maintaining services such as plumbing, construction etc. We advocate a detailed workshop with businesses to consider the proposals and how business/public concerns can be accommodated within the overall scheme.
4. We see scope for furthering shared deliveries to and from premises. We believe that shared deliveries from the city would facilitate people using sustainable transport to access the city, and to enjoy the hospitality/entertainment offering while having their goods forwarded to their homes or a collection depot in local suburbs.
5. The success of 24 hour bus routes shows that there is a demand for night transport. We believe that this service should be broadened to include all transport modes.
6. Car parks could be used at night as taxi hubs with security and lighting where people can wait for taxis with a greater degree of safety. We would like to follow the lead of some German cities, where technology is used to facilitate safe taxi sharing at peak periods to help patrons of the night time economy leave the city more efficiently.
7. We see scope for the use of vacant/under utilised buildings to house a concierge service, bag minding and paid public toilets.



# Dublin Recovery

## Regeneration

1. Dublin Town welcomes the ongoing investment in the city's public domain and lighting enhancements. We would like to address specific under performing districts.
2. Talbot St.
  - a. Talbot Street is the centre of public transport on the city's northside. Yet it is also the street that has one of the lowest perceptions of safety. Less than one in ten people feel safe by night on the street.
  - b. Dublin Town believes that the arts can be used to regenerate the area as has been done in other cities internationally. The proximity of the Abbey Theatre and the LAB would assist in redefining the area.
  - c. We would like to see artists studios being brought to the upper floors and galleries/craft shops being introduced at ground level. We believe that this would assist in rebalancing tourist footfall and spend, which is currently heavily concentrated on the south side of the river.
  - d. We believe that there is scope to introduce art to Connolly Station and Bus Aras to enhance the ambience and also welcome people to an artistic district.
  - e. We would like to enhance the walkway connecting the IFSC to Talbot St. via Connolly Station to increase the engagement between the two districts.
  - f. The area is ideal for increased "Living Over the Shop", which will require a more practical approach to conservation and implementation of fire regulations.
  - g. We believe through multi-agency and property owner engagement that the district can achieve a significantly higher potential than is currently the case. This experience could be shared in other parts of Dublin city and around the country.
3. We see scope for increased use of parklets and meetings spaces on traffic free streets to facilitate the use of the city as a meeting point.
4. We need to encourage alternative uses such as residential, leisure, amenity and hospitality through the reviewing of the current Category 1 and Category 2 retail street status. This planning allocation is inconsistent with modern city uses and should be addressed.

## Waste collection

1. The current waste collection regime is not working. Bags are left on the street late into the night presenting a poor impression of the city for the evening & night time economy and adding to safety concerns.
2. We advocate for bye laws to reduce the window in which waste can be collected by waste management companies.
3. We believe that the feasibility of the Council becoming active in waste collection again should be considered.

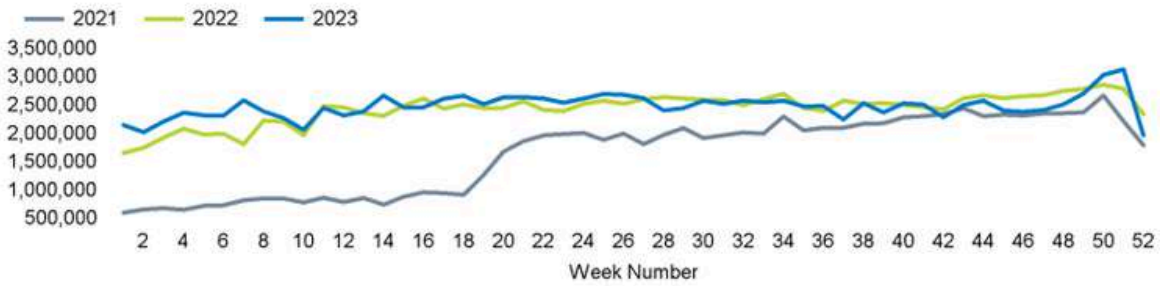


# Footfall

Footfall was up 4.7% in 2023 when compared with 2022. However, it was down 12.1% from the level recorded in 2019, the last year before the pandemic. This is largely due to work from home but it also reflects a change in patterns of city use.

Retail has declined as a draw to the city and we have seen an increase in the number of people who use the city as a meeting place, something that was very marginal before the pandemic. This has resulted in a reduction in the correlation between footfall and spend and to some extent the value of footfall as an indicator of economic performance.

**Footfall Counts by week**



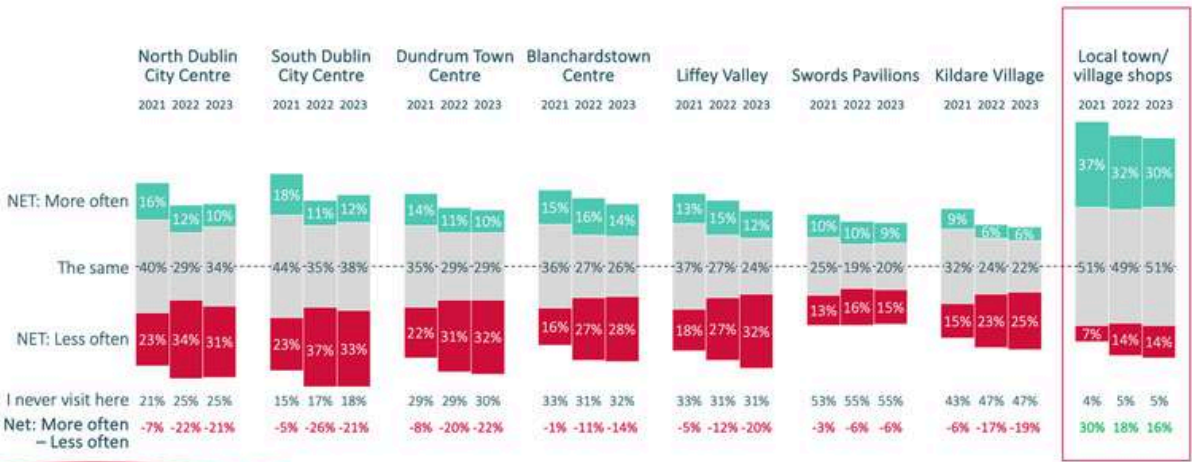
Before the pandemic, the city was pulling back market share from out of town shopping centres. This trend has now completely reversed, with the city performing poorly in comparison with other destinations.

## Shopping Comparison

### Visiting various shopping areas sees no change since last year

A third are visiting city centre less often these days and appear to rely more on their local area for shopping. This impacts the city centre businesses and see less footfall into the city. Consumers remain cautious of spending.

Change in visitation of shopping centre/area



Q6 (Base: All greater Dublin residents 18+; n= 1,014)

The pandemic gave a significant boost to online retail. While this has moderated slightly, it still represents a huge challenge to traditional shopping locations.

### Propensity to shop on-line



### What is attracting people?

Dining remains the biggest draw into the city. However, since the pandemic we have also seen a large increase in the number of people who use the city as a meeting place. It will be interesting to see if this trend persists or if it is linked to the end of the pandemic. Post pandemic we have seen an increase in the number of people attending the theatre and cinema, though it still remains behind its pre-pandemic levels.

### Dining, catching up & drinking main reasons to visit city centre

Browsing and shopping is also a popular reason to step into the Dublin city centre for 1 in 3.

#### Top Reasons for Visiting



48%

(-1%)  
Eat in restaurant/ bar/ cafe/ fast-food outlet



18-24 y.o. (55%)



41%

(=)  
Meet friends/ family



18-24 y.o. (50%)



41%

(+2%)  
Drink in restaurant/ bar/ cafe/ fast-food outlet



25-49 y.o. (47%)



38%

(-1%)  
Browse Shops



Females (42%)  
55+ y.o. (44%)



33%

(+3%)  
Shop for clothes/ shoes/ accessories



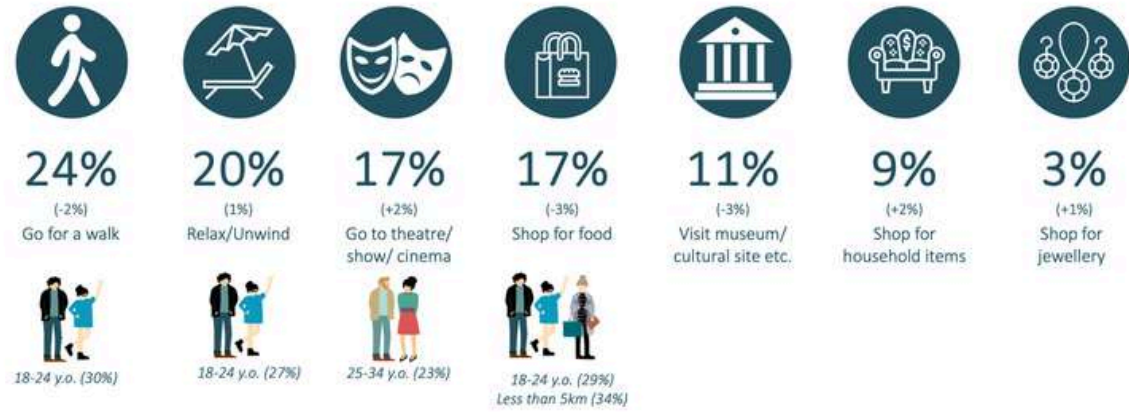
C2DE (39%)  
Females (38%)  
18-24 y.o. (43%)

# Young adults are visiting city to relax & unwind

While mid-aged are leading towards art and cultural activities.



## Other Reasons for Visiting



Q3  
 (Base: All greater Dublin residents 18+, n= 1,014)

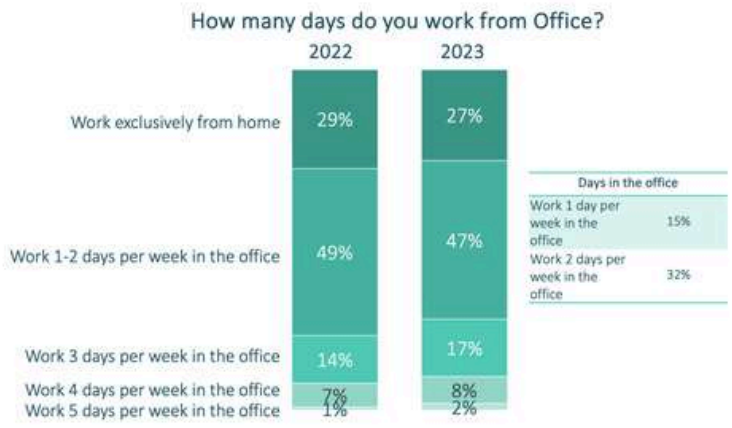
## A slow return to the office

Hybrid working has impacted city trade. We are seeing a trickle back to the office, but we must accept that hybrid working is here to stay, and develop policies to assist city traders to survive in this new reality.

### People are slowly going back to the office more

This presents an opportunity for the city and businesses as when working in the city they tend to shop, eat, drink, socialise etc.

Q23\_NEW  
 (Base: All who work from office and home; n=195)



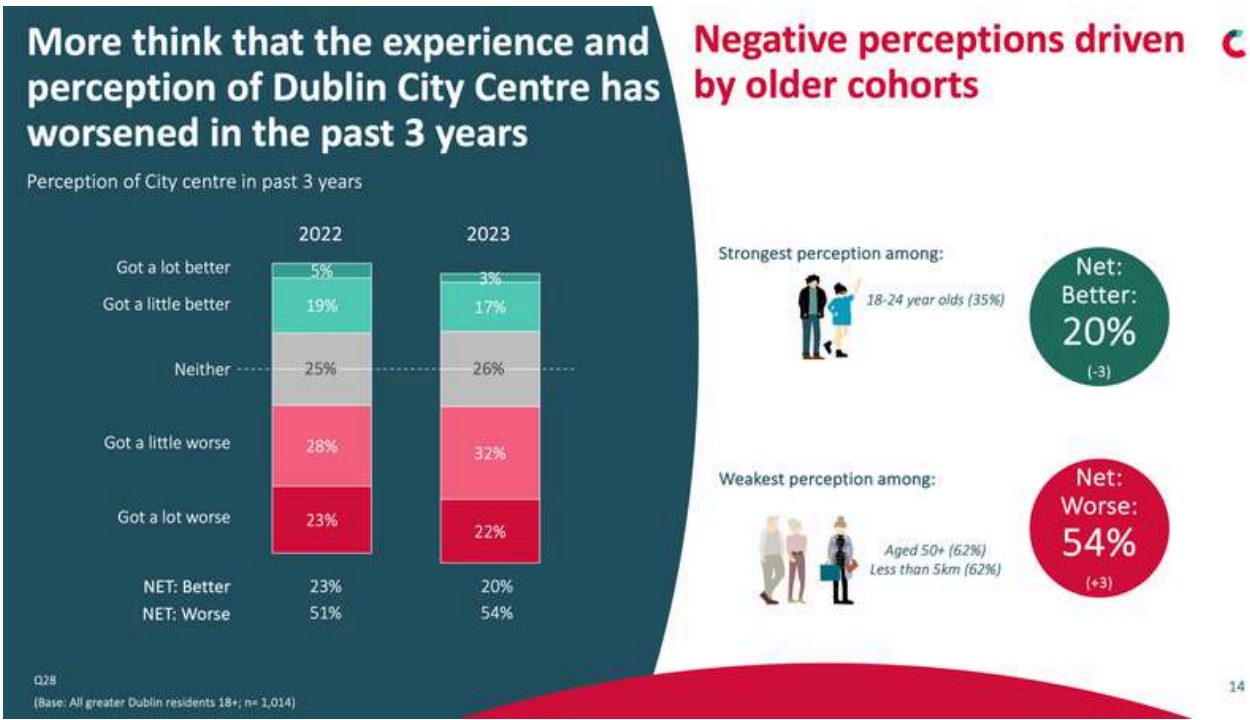
# Perceptions of the city

## Overall view of the city

Before the pandemic, more people felt that the city was improving rather than disimproving. This trend reversed post pandemic with more people now expressing negative sentiments about the city.

The main reason for this is the fact that a significant majority of people do not feel safe in the city. Tackling poor perceptions of safety is a key goal of Dublin Town.

We need to convince Government to invest in greater Garda visibility but we also need to tackle underlying reasons as to why people don't feel comfortable in Dublin city centre. We believe that the issues identified in our Four Point Plan must be delivered upon.



Perceptions of safety remain shockingly low. We know from previous research that safety concerns impact on four out of every five visits to the city.

Simply put, we will not regenerate the city until we successfully address public levels of anxiety in the city.

# Perceptions of the city

## The sense of safety in North Dublin City has deteriorated further

Safety in Dublin City centre is a real issue, especially at night time and especially on the North side. This has to be addressed if we are to battle with COLC to get people back into the city.



### Access

Following a number of years when the public believed that the city was becoming increasingly difficult to access, there appears to be a levelling of this factor. However, there is still a general belief that the city continues to be difficult to access, with a perceived lack of taxis also hindering visitation during the night time.

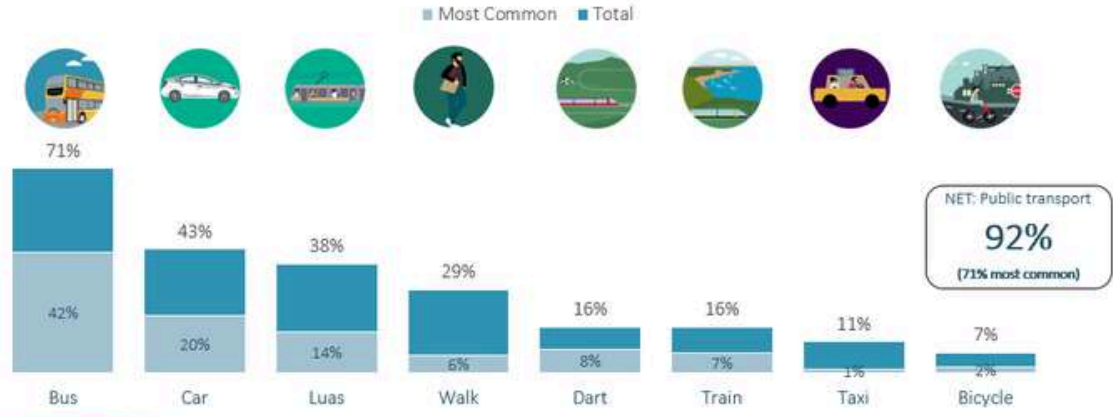
### Modes of transport used to access the city

We continue to see an increase in the number of people using public transport to access the city with a consequent reduction in the number of people who use their cars.

## Car is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular mode of transport to get to the city

While bus is the most common mode of transport to get to city. Over 2 in 5 ever use there car to get to the city and being the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular mode highlights its reliance for people travelling in and around Dublin

Mode of transport used to access Dublin City Centre

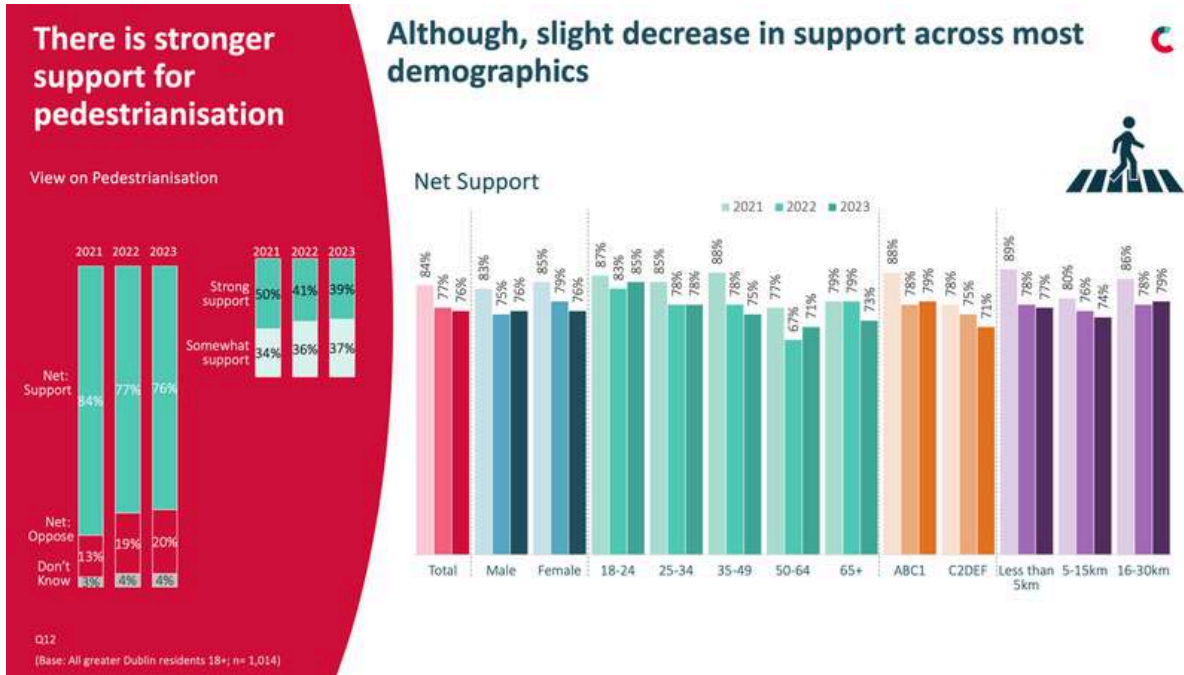


Q4 & Q4s  
(Base: All greater Dublin residents 18+, n= 1,003)

# Traffic reductions

## Views on pedestrianisation

The greater pedestrianisation of the city continues to have considerable support.



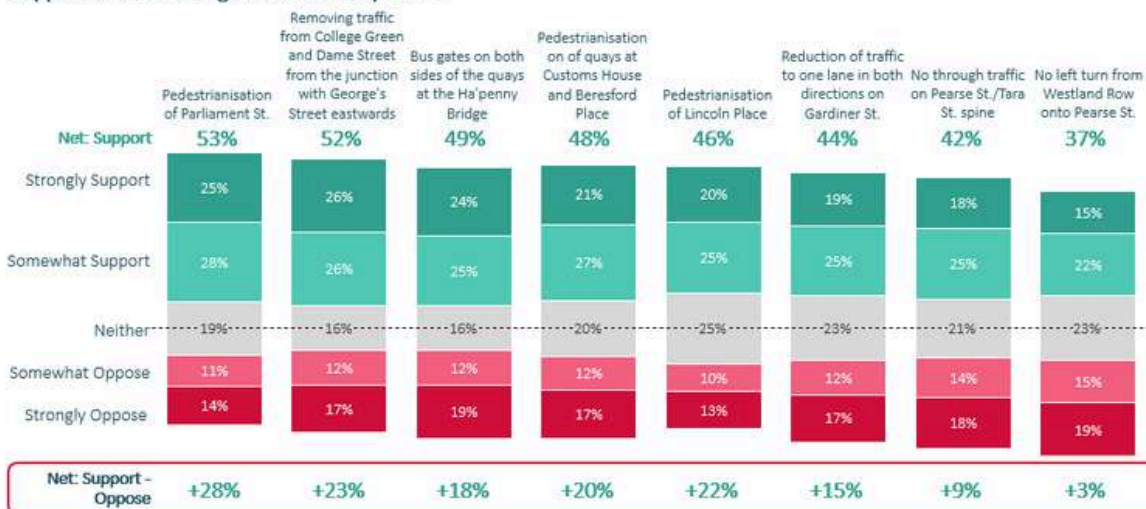
## Support for traffic reductions

In November 2023, Dublin City Council and the National Transport Authority introduced proposals to restrict car access to the city. These have been controversial. Most businesses do not support the restrictions, however, the proposals have garnered support from the general public.

## There is considerable support for some of the proposed changes

However, equally we need to bear in mind the levels of opposition which is highest for bus gates on the quays, no through traffic on Pearse/Tara street and no left turn from Westland Row

**Support towards changes to Dublin City Centre**



Q7  
(Base: All greater Dublin residents 18+, n= 1,003)

# Car Access

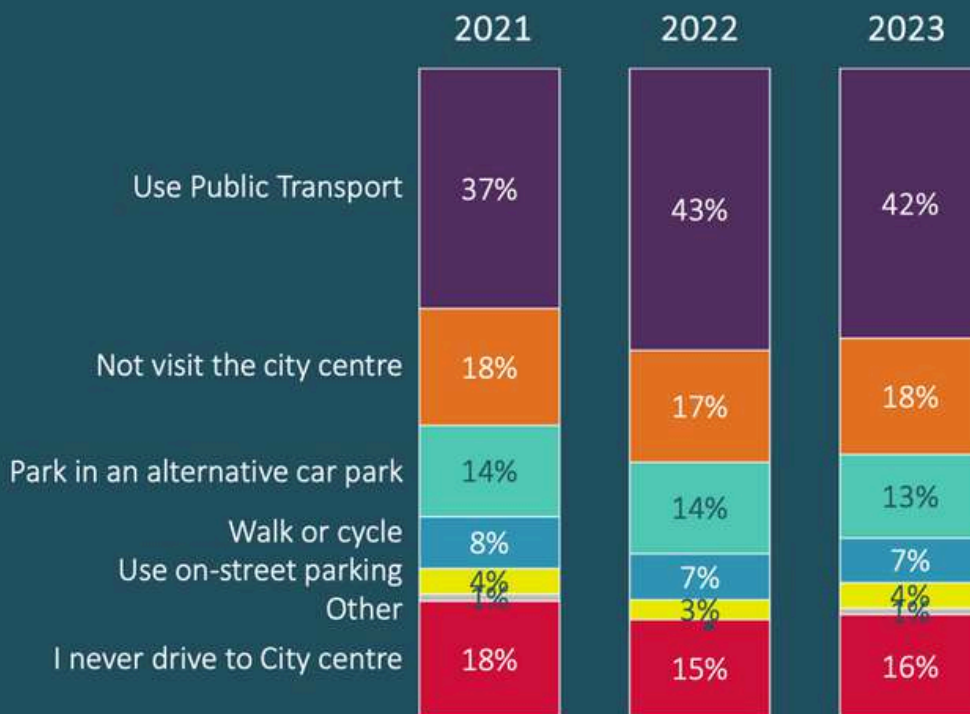
## What would you do if your car park of choice became inaccessible?

It is possible that traffic restrictions may lead to some car parks becoming increasingly inaccessible. In that instance we would like to understand the impact on overall city economic performance. Over the years we have seen an increase in the number of people who say that they would opt for public transport in this circumstance.

In overall terms, just short of 20% of car borne customers note that they would be less inclined to visit the city centre where their car park of choice became unavailable.

# Many would move to public transport if car park wasn't available

If Car park of choice wasn't available



Q14

(Base: All greater Dublin residents 18+; n= 1,014)



16



# Rebuilding Footfall – Marketing and Communications

## Combining city strengths

A consistent and valid criticism of Dublin city has been that there are too many voices and messages which are not acting in consort. Dublin Town agrees with this sentiment and has therefore welcomed the creation of the Office of City Co-ordination within Dublin City Council. We have worked closely with this office since its inception to co-ordinate the marketing of the city and engagement with the public. We believe that this co-ordination and co-operation will yield results as we collectively work together to enhance perceptions of the city, which are currently not where we would like to see them be.

## Lunar new year

The Lunar New Year of the Rabbit commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023. Dublin Town celebrated this key event with our members of South East Asian heritage and invited the Irish public, who turned up in their tens of thousands to participate in the rich tapestry that is South East Asian culture. The event consisted of traditional Dragon processions, drumming, music, dance and exhibits of fabulous costumes from China and beyond.

## Summer in Dublin

The Summer in Dublin campaign is a perfect example of the city coming together to create a welcoming environment for all. The 2023 campaign centred on creating family fun over a four week period. The idea is to create events that engage people as they make their way through the city to enhance their experience and foster a sense of fun for all the family. This year, our success was marked by over 20,000 visitors across the four week campaign.



# Rebuilding Footfall – Marketing and Communications

## Dublin By Night Fest

Dublin city centre has had Purple Flag status since 2013. Purple Flag is an award for excellence in the management of the evening and night time economy. To maintain Purple Flag, which is formally assessed every two years, a vibrant partnership between the Local Authority, Police, Business Community and other key partners must be demonstrated. This demonstration resulted in a major celebration of the city's evening and night time economies on Drury/South William and Capel Streets on the evenings of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 with live musical performances, both of traditional and contemporary music, drag artists, cinema, cooking demonstrations augmented by stalls housing city businesses providing an engaging evening for all ages.

The evening and night time economy in Dublin, in line with many large cities, has struggled to re-establish itself following the pandemic. However, there are increasing signs for optimism as the city's restaurants, bars and cultural venues put their best foot forward and as outdoor dining becomes embedded into the city's fabric. A key public concern is the need to get home safely. Dublin Town continues to engage with the National Transport Authority to increase the availability of taxis at night in the city and to work with the Gardaí to provide a safe and secure destination after dark.

This year's event brought over 26,000 members of the public to join in the festivities!



# Rebuilding Footfall – Marketing and Communications



## Believe in Dublin

Following the riots in November 2023, the Government provided a marketing budget to Dublin City Council to market the city centre over the vital Christmas period. Dublin Town worked with the Council to deliver an engaging programme of activations across the city to enhance the city experience and to revive footfall.

The programme was a success. Despite concerns at the end of November, footfall and sales in the city surpassed 2022 levels and exceeded budgets for many traders.

## Supported events

Over the course of the year, Dublin Town partnered with a host of events and agencies to promote activities taking place in the city.

This included Pride, Movember and Failte Ireland's international marketing programme.

## Christmas lights

During the pandemic, Dublin Town had a reduced budget and therefore could not invest in new lights or infrastructure repair. This has resulted in the need for increased investment which we incurred in both 2022 and 2023 and are likely to continue in the coming years. In 2023 we invested €702,858 in repairs, renewals, erection and maintenance of our Christmas lighting stock.

Dublin does Christmas well. Each year we get customers, who don't visit throughout the year, coming to the city to enjoy the unique atmosphere of the city under the array of Christmas lights on 30 streets.

## Ultimate Guide To Dublin

With so much to attract people to the city at Christmas, Dublin Town with support from Dublin City Council and Failte Ireland, engaged with the Irish Independent to produce the Ultimate Guide to Dublin, which highlighted all that can be done, seen and heard in the city over the Christmas period. The magazine, which was delivered with 90,000 copies of the Irish Independent in November was also available to Dublin Town members to share with their customers. The magazine's success has ensured that it will be a key element of the city's marketing package in the years to come.



# Rebuilding Footfall – Marketing and Communications

## Dublin Town and Dine in Dublin Vouchers

Dublin Town has created a voucher scheme for city businesses. The costs associated with the scheme are absorbed completely by Dublin Town meaning that participating businesses receive 100% of the income.

This year, voucher redemptions generated over €300,000 for participating businesses.

Member feedback highlighted increased customer acquisition, higher average transaction values, and improved mid-week trade - directly addressing the challenges posed by hybrid working patterns.

The commission-free model proved particularly valuable during a challenging economic year, with businesses reporting that vouchers not only drove immediate revenue but also introduced new customers who returned for regular purchases. Plans for 2024 include enhanced digital integration and seasonal promotional campaigns.

## Media engagement

Dublin Town regularly speaks on behalf of the city's business community on radio, TV and in the print media. Our commentary is respected by Government, politicians and civil servants. We have shifted the narrative for Dublin city centre, through clear objective and verifiable contributions.

This is a vital part of our members work that is often not fully understood. However, the reality remains that if Dublin is to progress we, as a business community, need to convince the decision makers of the accuracy of our arguments and reliability of our insights.



# Enhancing the City Experience – Safety and Cleanliness

On September 8th, Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD and Minister Paschal Donohoe TD launched the Dublin North Inner City Local Community Safety Plan, outlining 50 actions across five priority areas.

DublinTown is involved in several aspects of the plan, including:

- Working with Dublin City Council on tackling illegal dumping
- Supporting the Community Safety Wardens initiative operating in areas such as Wolfe Tone Square and O'Connell Street



We were delighted to re-engage a full cleaning complement for 2023. This has allowed us to return to street washing and lane cleaning in addition to our emergency response work and graffiti removal. The DublinTown Clean Team, is not a substitute for the City Council's cleaning crew but is available to meet specific business needs on a timely basis.

The cleaning crew works in the early morning with the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and the Gardaí, to clean outside business premises which may have been used by homeless persons at night. The homeless persons are encouraged to visit locations where they are provided with breakfast and washing facilities, while the cleaning crew wash down the area and remove litter or any sharp or dangerous objects which may have been left behind. The crew have also worked to remove abandoned tents in the city. Overall, DublinTown has worked with the DRHE to identify locations where rough sleeping is taking place so that professional teams can engage with the people on the street to advise them of services available to them and to encourage them to take up the offers of support and accommodation that are available.

# Advocacy

## Taskforce for Dublin

Dublin Town is constantly advocating on behalf of members and for the enhancement of the city in general. We were pleased to see the contents of our four point plan being well received by both Dublin City Council and Government. It was particularly pleasing to see the Government agree to the establishment of a Taskforce for Dublin city centre and for Dublin Town CEO Richard Guiney, being asked to join the Taskforce. The Taskforce is due to publish its report in September 2024.

## Safety

Safety is key to winning back market share for city centre businesses. When asked what would persuade people to spend more time in Dublin city, the answers are overwhelmingly related to safety concerns, from wishing to see more Gardaí on the streets to addressing social challenges.

Dublin Town believes that an increased Garda presence on its own will not address safety concerns in the longer term. We need an integrated approach to create the space where people want to be.

This will require informed responses to dealing with our social challenges, from drug related issues to homelessness and vulnerability. Dublin Town is not convinced that the current approaches are working for anyone, neither those in need of support nor the wider society. We believe that we must have an approach that respects the dignity of all where integrated supports are provided that meet not only the results of vulnerability but also the underlying causes.

We believe that city design should meet with CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.



# Advocacy

## Residential uses

It has become almost cliché to note the amount of space above the shop that is either un-used or under-utilised. Many European cities have brought such space back into productive use utilising sophisticated fire and sprinkler systems while recognising the need to take a practical approach to regulations which were not considered at the time that the buildings were first built. Dublin Town recommends a similar practical approach for Dublin city centre and indeed Ireland's other urban centres. The legendary Jane Jacobs, while fighting to preserve Greenwich Village in New York noted the importance of such residential communities in creating safe and vibrant spaces. We need to adopt a mixed use approach to maximise Dublin city's potential. Achieving this will take leadership and now is the time for those leaders to emerge.

## Lane Gating

Dublin Town has gated a number of lanes throughout the city, where the lanes and adjacent streets have become prone to anti-social behaviour. We see this gating as a temporary measure and wish to re-open the lanes in due course for public use. This could include new uses for example as outdoor dining locations, residential use and green spaces within the city. We look forward to the time when the safety concerns which have given rise to the need for gating have dissipated and we are in a position to re-purpose these lanes for pro-social use.



## Waste collection

Dublin Town opposed the privatisation of waste collection in the city as we foresaw many of the issues which have now arisen. Simply speaking, these issues did not arise when the Council collected waste from city centre premises. Dublin Town therefore, advocates for the re-municipalisation of waste collection. However, we recognise the legal impediments which exist in achieving this objective. We therefore believe that the Council should tender for waste collection in specific districts and that the contractors in these districts be held accountable for efficient waste collection.

Dublin Town supports the elimination of plastic waste bags, however, we believe that a workable alternative to these bags must be found. We do not believe that it should be the responsibility of businesses to find these workable alternatives. Businesses will co-operate with a practical new regime but they cannot be responsible for the outcomes of market and regulatory failures.

Dublin Town advocates for provision of compactors which can be placed on streets at specific times in the evening and which will be removed in a timely manner allowing for an evening trade that is free from the scourge of torn and unsightly litter bags.

# Advocacy

## Sustainability

We all have an obligation to reduce our carbon emissions and to reach the stated carbon targets on our way to net zero. Ireland cannot afford to miss these targets and be penalised with severe fines. As a city we are also conscious that our out of town competitors will have an advantage in achieving climate targets as they are generally under single ownership and will have the space to provide PV panels and geo-thermal options.

To help the city meet our carbon targets, Dublin Town with grant support from SEAI has set out to establish our current carbon benchmark. We are working with members to help them reduce their energy usage and obtain grants to continue their path to net zero. We have begun working with IES to create a digital twin which will establish our current carbon emissions and set a path for reducing these over time. This is an ambitious project but one that we believe is necessary. We have been recognised as a sustainable energy community by SEAI and have been provided with a mentor to help us on this path. Ultimately, we believe that Dublin city centre can become a Positive Energy District. We believe that this will ultimately, be an objective for key city based Business Improvement Districts and one that will have real and long term impacts for both businesses and the wider community.

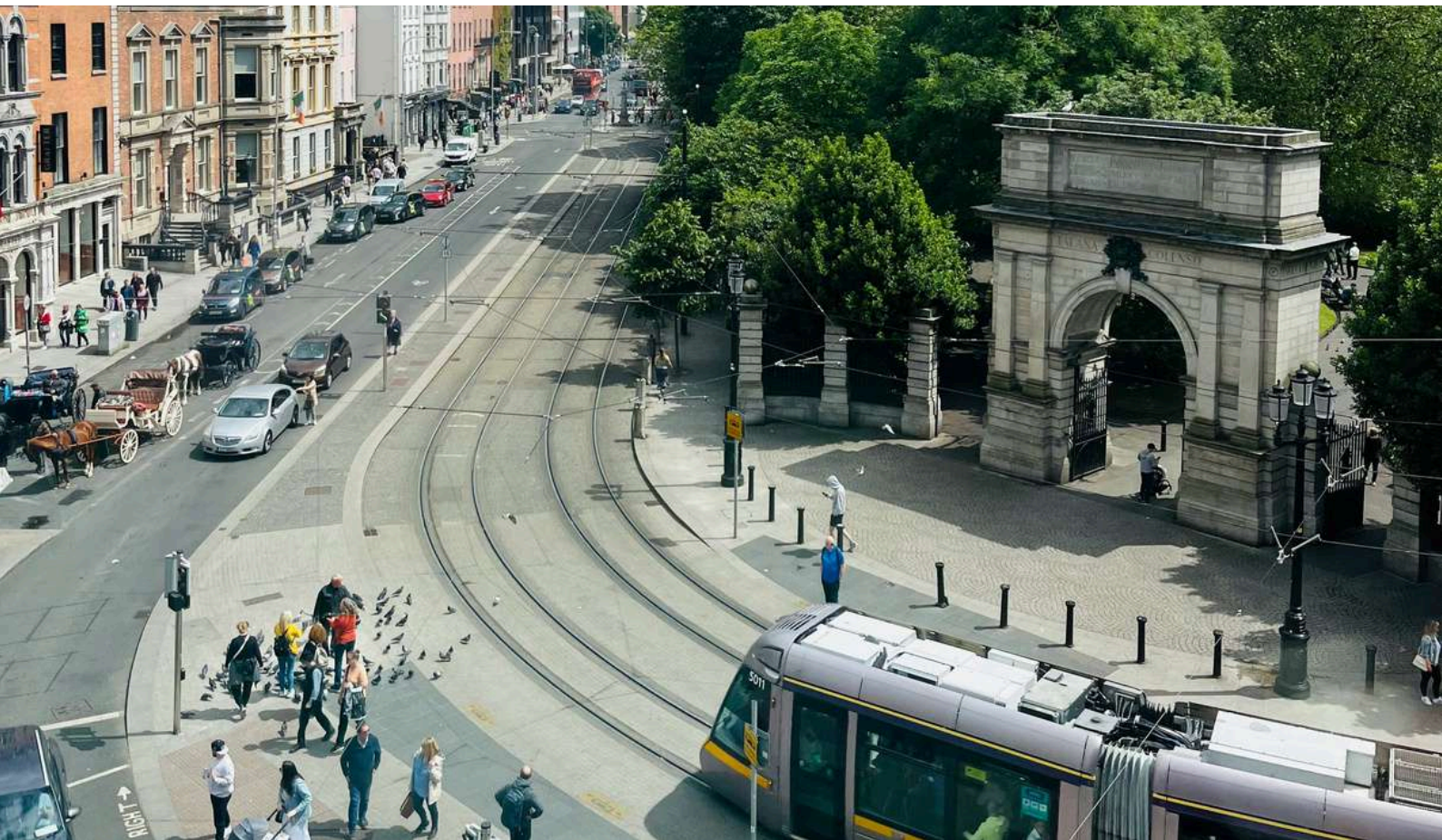


# Advocacy

## Traffic proposals

There will be less vehicles in Dublin city centre. This is EU, Government and Council policy. However, we need to ensure that practical considerations are taken into account in the realisation of this policy. In our submission on the traffic proposals we made the following observations:

- There is a need for detailed workshops with the business community to work through issues such as deliveries, waste collection and curb side uses
- The business community on Capel Street have noticed an increase in anti-social behaviour since the street was made traffic free. This has turned many businesses who favoured the elimination of traffic against such proposals now. We believe that a community safety programme with wardens should be introduced into streets which are made traffic free. This would be particularly important for College Green in our view.
- The public are largely unaware of the proposals. Large scale public engagement will be required to make a success of the proposals.
- We need to ensure that the reduction of traffic in city centre does not result in the same number of cars continuing to travel but now out to external shopping centres on the M50 ring. This would merely increase carbon emissions and would run contrary to the scheme objectives.



# Strategic Developments

## Policy Submissions & Consultations

Throughout 2023, DublinTown contributed to key planning and policy processes to ensure the voice of the city centre business community was heard. Our formal submissions included:

- Dublin City Centre Transport Plan submission – December 2023
- Zevi public charging design & locations submission – September 2023
- Duke Street & South Anne Street public realm scheme (Part 8) – January 2023
- DCC Draft Climate Change Action Plan 2024–29 – November 2023
- EirGrid “Powering Up Dublin” consultation – October 2023
- Pre-Budget Submission – August 2023
- Citizens’ Assembly on Drugs input – June 2023
- Dublin Port 3FM development consultation – April 2023

## Operations

### Graffiti removal

Dublin City Council does not remove graffiti from private buildings, however Dublin Town can remove graffiti from member premises. We engage conservation contractors to remove graffiti from heritage buildings and sensitive brick work and cladding.

### Floral arrangements

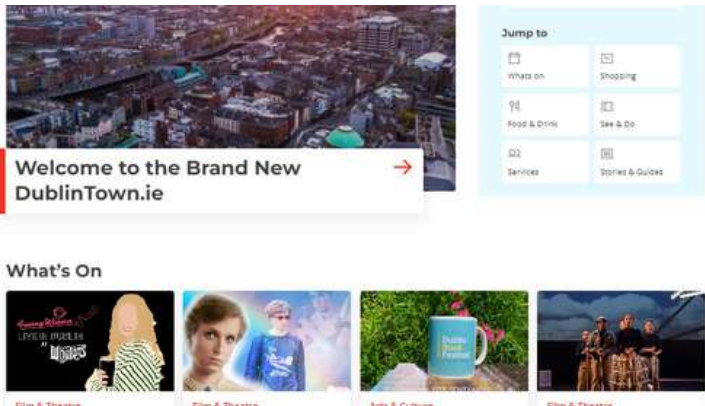
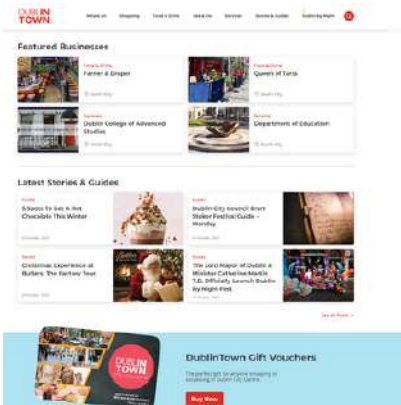
Dublin Town provides over 40 flower planters around the city. The flowers are sourced from Dublin Town member Mr. Middleton and cared for with true passion by Dublin Town team member Emanuel.



# Digital Transformation & Member Services

## Member Listing Updates

In September, we asked all members to check their business listings on DublinTown.ie, adding 120+ new business listings and updating existing profiles to improve discoverability and network connectivity.



## Consumer Website Revamp

On September 21st, DublinTown unveiled the revamped consumer website DublinTown.ie, designed to promote member businesses and the city centre. The new site welcomes millions of visitors from over 150 countries worldwide and features:

- What's On: Latest events, concerts, exhibitions and happenings
- Shopping: Diverse retail scene featuring brands and hidden gems
- Food & Drink: Thriving food culture and hottest dining spots
- See & Do: Journey through Dublin's history, culture, and attractions
- Stories & Guides: Insider insights and local knowledge

The website showcases over 1,500 businesses, with popular searches including Christmas, Music, Santa, Comedy, and Shoes.

# Member Engagement

## Face to face communication

Communication channels are constantly becoming more sophisticated, however, we have found that face to face communication is still the most effective way of engaging with members.

That is why we have maintained a Member Support Team to meet with members in their in their stores at a time that works best for them.

We have also maintained our District Meetings as means to engage with members to speak about our work and to listen to their concerns. We find that these two way conversations work best for us in adapting our work to best meet the needs of our members.

As part of our face to face engagement we have organised walkabouts with the Lord Mayor to visit the district and hear first hand business experiences of members from within their own stores. The Lord Mayors who have engaged in this process have advised that they have found the experience very worthwhile and that the experience has helped them shape policy to best enhance the city for all.



## E-mail Communications

The weekly e-mail from Dublin Town helps us keep members informed of what is happening in the city. This mail is for member benefit and we are always happy to take feedback on how this communication tool can be improved to better meet member needs.

In addition to the weekly communication, we also send mails to members on specific matters arising in the city.

# Member Engagement

## Member training programme

Based on member feedback we have undertaken a programme of member training. In many instances Dublin Town provides certified training in compulsory items such as health and safety, first aid and fire safety. This provides cost effective training for members to help meet their statutory obligations. We have augmented this with marketing, media and social media training to help businesses promote their offerings to the wider public.

## WhatsApp group

Given the busy on the go days that our members experience, we have found that WhatsApp groups are a great way for members to engage with Dublin Town and their neighbours. We intend extending the WhatsApp platform across the membership to enable better day to day engagement with members.



# Audit Committee

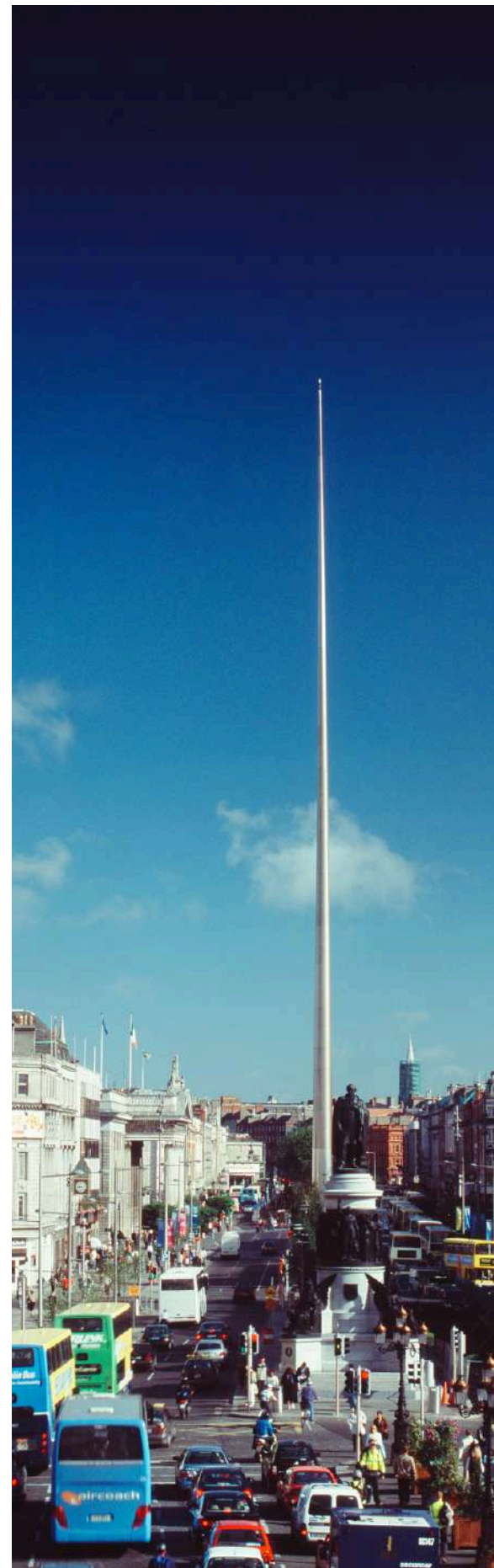
The organisation takes its corporate responsibility and governance very seriously. To this end, our audit committee, oversees the company's financial procedures and systems and its governance code.

The organisation is lucky to have two chartered accountants Pat Burke and Peter Hyland to serve on this committee together with company chairperson, Billy Reid.

Through this expert guidance that company came through the pandemic financially intact and ready for its new term which continues to 31st December 2027.

We know that the pandemic has been difficult for members and some have outstanding contributions. We would like to engage constructively with relevant members and establish a pathway to addressing such legacy debts.

The board's audit committee are engaging with businesses on a constructive basis and have waived contributions for the pandemic period where evidence of the financial distress caused by closures have been made available.



# Finance & Administration

<b>Financial Summary</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Levy Received	2,937,535	2,609,132
Sponsorship & Other Income	<u>388,870</u>	<u>43,791</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,326,405</b>	<b>2,652,923</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Cleaning and Maintenance, Landscaping	483,392	276,395
Marketing and Promotion	942,127	622,062
Research, Technology and Policies	98,354	121,988
Operations	442,906	255,384
Capital Projects and Improvements	832,261	674,459
Debt Collection	37,500	30,000
Administration	447,931	472,626
Depreciation	<u>35,823</u>	<u>49,295</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>3,320,294</u></b>	<b><u>2,502,209</u></b>
Net Surplus/(Deficit) after taxation	<u>6,111</u>	<u>150,714</u>

## Balance sheet as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

Fixed Assets	71,599
Current Assets	1,581,917
Current Liabilities	<u>(1,378,107)</u>
Next current assets/(liabilities)	203,810
Net Assets	<u>275,409</u>
Represented by capital reserves	<u>275,409</u>



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