

# THE LIBERTIES DUBLIN

Setting Up Business



**THE LIBERTIES**

[www.libertiesdublin.ie](http://www.libertiesdublin.ie)

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Liberties Dublin, one of the city's most dynamic and lively neighbourhoods. The Liberties Business Area Improvement Initiative – supported by Dublin City Council and local businesses and organisations - is working to make this area more attractive to investment and new enterprise.

This handy 'doing-business' guide will provide you with some of the relevant information you need to start a new business in The Liberties. It sets out what might be expected of you as an establishing business-holder, and some of the offices and agencies who can assist you to set up in Dublin 8. The guide should not be read as definitive information, but it should set you on the right path.

Welcome to the neighbourhood!

# GET STARTED

Setting up a new business can be challenging, so it helps to know how to access basic services and who to talk to if you require permissions or licences.

Some things to think about before you set up shop include: the need for planning permission, commercial rates and how to pay them, licences for outdoor terraces or furniture on the street, assistance from LEO – the Local Enterprise Office.

This guide offers a potential business-owner a brief overview and details of where to go for more detailed information. It's not the definitive view on these matters but it should set you on the right path.

# WHY CHOOSE THIS LOCATION?

The Liberties is one of Dublin's oldest areas, but also among its most distinctive and dynamic. There's a new energy about the place; with cutting-edge IT, new media and creative enterprise in centres such as The Digital Hub, The GEC and National College of Art & Design, major infrastructural developments such as the new National Children's Hospital and public transport improvements, and the continued growth of tourism and cultural activities all contributing to an air of renewal and optimism for the future. This is Dublin's 'must-see area' and a great location for your business.

Over 23,000 people live within The Liberties with the population of the area increasingly diverse and international. New residents to the area are increasing the opportunities for shops, cafes and services. However roots are strong in The Liberties and the neighbourhood remains one of Dublin's most authentic with a high proportion of independent family-run retailers and businesses and a long history as one of Dublin's main market areas.

Thomas Street forms the main commercial spine of The Liberties and is also part of the new Dublin tourism route through the city centre from Parnell Street to Kilmainham. Francis Street is a centre for creative enterprises and is best known as Dublin's Art & Antiques Quarter. Meath Street typically comes to life from Thursday to Sunday with its bustling street market and well known butchers and greengrocers. Cork Street and Newmarket to the south, though quieter, are the focus for enterprise and markets such as Dublin Flea, The Food Co-op and The Green Door.

# DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

Planning permission from Dublin City Council is usually required before you undertake any development work in the city. Development is usually understood as:

- Constructing a new building or other structure, e.g. house, factory, monument, playground, etc.
- Making physical changes to an existing building or property e.g. an extension, new floor, new signage etc.
- Changing the way in which a property is used, e.g. to change a shop into a restaurant.

Some developments do not need planning permission. These are called 'exempt developments', and usually relate to minor works and routine maintenance. However, in the instance of buildings located within Architectural Conservation Areas or protected structures, the right to undertake exempted development is usually curtailed.

Much of The Liberties is located within the Thomas Street & Environs Architectural Conservation Area – a designation under law that protects the architectural quality of an area and features of note. In addition, Thomas Street and James Street in particular, include a large number of protected structures; buildings which are protected by law in order to conserve their architectural or social value. These designations do not preclude new development or new uses of buildings, but they do place additional restrictions on the types of development that can take place.

If you are unsure as to whether or not you need planning permission or about the planning process, it may be useful to engage a planner or architect for pre-planning assistance.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

An application for planning permission requires a range of documentation including maps, plans and drawings of the development, completed forms and supporting statements (where required) and the payment of a fee. These are specified by regulations and the Planning Department can offer you further advice on what exactly is required.

You may be required to discuss the development in advance with relevant staff in the Council. These pre-planning consultations can usually help you to address any problems before they arise during the assessment of your application.

A decision to grant or refuse planning permission is usually made within 8 weeks, with a final decision following 4 weeks later. In some instances, the Planning Authority may request additional information. Any third party can make their views known on a planning application and where they have done so, have the right to appeal decisions. Where the decision of the Planning Authority is appealed to An Bord Pleanála, a decision in that regard may take up to 18 weeks or longer.

You will find full details on making a planning application and the planning process from Dublin City Council Planning Department, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8.

# YOUR RATES

Commercial Rates are property-based taxes levied by Dublin City Council on commercial or industrial premises in their area. Rates contribute to the provision of services in the city and are payable to the City Council via the Rates Office.

Commercial rates are based on the value of your property and a rate is 'struck' each year by the City Council. Rateable valuation of property is determined by a statutory agency, the Valuation Office and set out in a valuation list. The last year in which valuations were determined in Dublin was 2013 and you should submit a request for reassessment to the Valuation Office if you believe your property to be inaccurately valued.

The City Council's Rates Office is located at Cork Hill, Dublin 2. You can also find full details on rates and ways to pay them at [www.dublincity.ie](http://www.dublincity.ie)

The Valuation Office is located on Lower Abbey Street in Dublin 1. Full details of the valuation process can be found on their site [www.valoff.ie](http://www.valoff.ie)



## PAYING WATER CHARGES

All water services are now under the control of Irish Water – the national water utility. Business that are required to pay non-domestic water charges include the following:

- Offices and shops
- Pubs, restaurants and hotels\*
- Agricultural and food production
- Schools, churches and community services

\*Additional regulations and charges apply to trade effluent and the disposal of fats, oil, and grease from food products.

Water charges are calculated on a per cubic metre of water usage rate, so minimising the amount of water you use and applying good maintenance are important to help keep your charges to a minimum. The prices applied by Dublin City Council for water services in 2013 will continue to be applied by Irish Water from 1st January 2014. At present, all queries relating to water bills and payments are dealt with by Dublin City Council under contract to Irish Water.

You can get further details on Irish Water services and prices to businesses in Dublin city at [www.water.ie/business](http://www.water.ie/business)

# CASUAL TRADING

Street trading and markets are a traditional feature of commercial life in The Liberties. Casual trading takes place on Thomas Street and Newmarket within defined areas specified under the Casual Trading Byelaws.

A Casual Trading Licence is required under the Casual Trading Act to sell goods in a public place and its offence to trade without a licence. Casual trading also continues to be bound by other sales law and trading standards. There are separate provisions for designated trading (i.e. maintaining a regular pitch at a designated location) and event trading (i.e. trading associated with a once-off event or activity).

You can obtain more information on casual trading pitches, licences, fees and standards from Dublin City Council Casual Trading Office or by emailing [casualtrading@dublincity.ie](mailto:casualtrading@dublincity.ie)

# STREET FURNITURE

Outdoor seating can make your business more inviting to passing customers. Good quality terraces can include colourful furniture, umbrellas and screens and planting. Outdoor seating areas on the public footpath are regulated under licence to Dublin City Council. Where a premises owns an area of footpath outside, setting out a terrace or outdoor seating area is considered a development and requires planning permission.

Cafes, restaurants, hotels and bars can apply to DCC for a licence to put tables and chairs on the footpath. There must be sufficient space outside the premises to accommodate the seating without impeding pedestrians. Various fees apply, depending on the extent of seating proposed. Businesses must also give notice to the public of their intention.

# SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES

Dublin City LEO (Local Enterprise Office) is the city agency established to assist small enterprise and business. The LEO provides a 'one-stop shop' service including enterprise supports, financial incentives and micro-grants and loans, training and advice to small and growing businesses. Find out more information on LEO and how it can help your business at Dublin City Local Enterprise Office.

Ireland is a state company established to provide additional lending to start-ups and small businesses. Applications to Microfinance Ireland are made through the Dublin City Local Enterprise Office and are subject to terms and conditions

# GETTING ONLINE

Customers increasingly look to their phones or tablets for information on where to shop, what to buy and what services to use. A range of supports are available to assist small businesses seeking to go online: websites can often be developed at modest expense while social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter are free to use and hugely effective to promote your business.

Trading Online Vouchers are now available through the Local Enterprise Office to assist small businesses seeking an online presence. Vouchers offer up to €2,500 towards the cost of a website, trading software or marketing. For more details visit Dublin City Local Enterprise Office.



## CONTACTS

Local Enterprise Office  
01 222 5611  
[info@leo.dublincity.ie](mailto:info@leo.dublincity.ie)

DCC Planning Department  
01 222 2149  
[planning@dublincity.ie](mailto:planning@dublincity.ie)

DCC Rates Office / Water Charges  
01 222 2171  
[ratesoffice@dublincity.ie](mailto:ratesoffice@dublincity.ie)

DCC Roads and Traffic Department  
01 222 3802  
[traffic@dublincity.ie](mailto:traffic@dublincity.ie)

DCC Casual Trading Section  
01 222 2165  
[casualtrading@dublincity.ie](mailto:casualtrading@dublincity.ie)

Liberties Business Forum  
01 222 5180  
[forum@libertiesdublin.ie](mailto:forum@libertiesdublin.ie)

The Liberties Business Area Improvement Initiative is a partnership between Dublin City Council and local businesses and stakeholders that is working to transform the commercial heart of Dublin 8 through public and private sector investment, to create a more vibrant and attractive city neighbourhood.

More about the Initiative at [www.libertiesdublin.ie](http://www.libertiesdublin.ie)



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