



THE DIGITAL HUB

Sarah Cremin
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

25th January 2021

Ref: S0712 PAC33

Dear Ms Cremin,

I am responding to the Public Accounts Committee's query into a vacant site levy which has been paid by Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA). The vacant site levy in question relates to a site owned by the DHDA on the corner of Watling Street and Bonham Street in Dublin 8.

The DHDA is a State Agency charged with, among other things, the regeneration of our sites and lands in the Liberties area of Dublin for the benefit of the community, society and the economy. We are a successful digital enterprise campus supporting digital and technology companies responding to important societal needs and challenges.

The DHDA has always been strongly committed to urban regeneration of its lands in Dublin 8 and has successfully repurposed a number of 18th and 19th century industrial buildings into modern offices. The site on which the levy has been imposed is vacant and derelict, and the DHDA lacks the resources necessary to develop it on its own. The DHDA was pursuing plans to develop that site and the remainder of its portfolio in cooperation with the Land Development Agency (LDA).

With the Government decision in April 2021 to transfer all its property assets to the Land Development Agency, the future masterplan for the site becomes the responsibility of the LDA.

Pending its formal dissolution, the DHDA will continue to provide support and office accommodation to emerging companies. It will also continue its extensive community and social programmes including: The D8 Surfers Club (a digital literacy initiative); The Liber8 Music Project (an after-school creative

GNIOMHAIREACHT FORBARTHA AN MHOIL DHIGITIGH

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programme); the Future Creators Cadets (an outside school STEAM programme); and Smart D8 (a programme to improve the health and wellbeing of Dublin 8 through collaboration with the local health and tech ecosystem).

I can confirm the following payments were made to Dublin City Council (DCC) relating to the vacant site levy on the corner of Watling Street and Bonham Street:

- €97,500 relating to 2018 Vacant Site Levy, paid on 15th of February 2019.
- €227,500 relating to 2019 Vacant Site Levy, paid on 4th of March 2020.
- €227,500 relating to the 2020 Vacant Site Levy, paid on 4th of March 2021.

It is anticipated that €227,500 will be invoiced to DHDA in February 2022 relating to the 2021 Vacant Site Levy. Inclusive of this sum for 2021, DCC will have been paid a total of €780,000 in respect of Vacant Site Levies up to and including 2022.

If you or the Committee need any further information on the activities of the Digital Hub Development Agency, I would be delighted to furnish it.

Yours sincerely,

Fiach Mac Conghail

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CEO