

# NEW CIVIC HUB OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Within the first month of opening the doors to its new Civic Hub in June, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council received close to 20,000 queries by phone, email and drop-in customers, while the new fully inclusive Council Chamber was ready in time for the AGM.

**D**un Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's highly-trained customer service staff members have been on hand since June at the new Civic Hub to assist all visitors, complemented by a new generation of customer service systems and new online self service facilities.

The public waiting area now incorporates a child-friendly space with meeting rooms and separate private seating areas to discuss matters in a quiet environment. According to a press spokesperson for the council, "our new hub provides a comprehensive and integrated space to deliver a wide range of services to our customers; over 26,000 residents in 75,819 households, businesses with over 74,000 employees as well as visitors to the county.

"Trends show that there will be growth in service delivery using digital technologies. Our focus is on the benefits that can be gained from technology in order to deliver an excellent service to our customers and also to optimise the use of resources.

"The Council Chamber and the Civic Hub are at the heart of the council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019 prioritising for excellence in service delivery and transforming how we work," noted the press spokesperson.

## DESIGNS ON THE DEVELOPMENT

Local councillors were also welcomed to the new fully inclusive Council Chamber for the June AGM, which can also accommodate 40 members of the public, in addition to those whose mobility is impaired.

The development of the Civic Hub and the Council Chamber, located on the corner site on Marine Road, comprises of a complex of three buildings of various different styles. Pamela O'Connor, the council's main architect on site, told 'Council Review' that the County Hall project addressed the provision of a new customer service area and a new Council Chamber, where over 550 different local authority services currently available to the public.

"The management of these services generates a large volume of correspondence including personal callers, emails, letters and phone calls. This requires a multidisciplinary co-ordinated and highly efficient service.

"The new central location on the ground floor of County Hall provides a customer service counter, new IT terminals, PODs for meetings, in addition to new meeting areas – a 'one-stop-shop' for all," she added.



## FACILITATING INCREASED NUMBERS

"The original grey painted public walkway has been retained with a new timber floor in the public waiting area, while the original glazed roof has been replaced with a triple-glazed Velux roof, thereby allowing sunshine to permeate on to the ground floor."

Following the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the increase in the number of councillors from 29 to 40 meant that original council chamber could not facilitate the additional numbers, an increase in visitor numbers and the requirements of 21st century IT.

"The new and easily accessible Council Chamber, which has now been relocated to the central space over the new Civic Hub, can accommodate 40 councillors, 16 officials and 52 visitor and press spaces. The Chamber is connected to the original Town Hall and the offices by walkways at first floor," the project architect concluded.

