

**MINUTES**  
**Meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum**

**Room 110, Kildare Street, Dublin 2**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018**

**Chair:** Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, TD

Attendance and apologies at Appendix 1.

**1. Welcome and Opening Comments**

The Minister welcomed those in attendance explaining that there was a busy agenda with the main agenda item being Brexit. The Minister highlighted that she is bringing legislation through the Dáil to strengthen the powers of PIAB to ensure a multi-pronged approach to tackle insurance costs.

The minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were approved.

**2. Brexit**

**Part (i) – Brexit Update**

Minister Humphreys gave an update on the Brexit negotiations. She explained that the Department is currently considering the detail of the Withdrawal Agreement.

**Part (ii) Brexit – an importing perspective**

The Minister called on **Mr Thomas Burke, Director of Retail Ireland** to provide an update on the retail sector Brexit preparations. Mr Burke said that a lot of work is being undertaken but businesses are showing signs of unease as the lack of clarity surrounding Brexit remains.

He outlined how Retail Ireland launched a policy paper *'Brexit – Putting Consumers First'* on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018, which sets out the challenges facing the retail sector in relation to Brexit. The challenges include supply chain, regulation, confidence and people. Mr Burke added that retailers may be unable to implement new measures until there is more clarity in relation to Brexit.

Minister Humphreys departed the meeting temporarily due to pressing Dáil Business. Mr Declan Hughes, Assistant Secretary, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, (DBEI) assumed chairing the meeting.

Mr Hughes called on **Mr Owen McFeely, Director Retail and Consumer, PriceWaterhouseCooper** for an update from his perspective. Mr McFeely said that retailers are dependent on the highly lean UK supply chain model. He is aware that big brands are holding more stock in Ireland.

In response, Mr Burke said that there are limited alternative options in relation to shipping routes. He added that the demand is not there yet for additional routes to be added.

Mr Hughes called on **Ms Celine O'Neill, Brexit Unit, Revenue Commissioners** to update from a Revenue perspective.

A copy of Ms O'Neill's presentation is attached.

Ms O'Neill noted that her presentation was from an east to west perspective. Post Brexit the United Kingdom will be a 'third country' and 'third country' rules will apply. Revenue want to minimise delays at ports and keep the process as streamlined as possible.

Mr Hughes then called on **Ms Jane Dempsey, Brexit Unit, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (D/AFM).**

A copy of Ms Dempsey's presentation is attached.

Ms Dempsey highlighted a few tips for importers.

- Know your supply chain;
- Know your CN codes;
- If you are importing goods that include food products make sure that they are at the front of the container. Talk to your UK distributor;
- If you are importing goods on wooden pallets ensure that the wood has been certified by NSAI, if not consignments could be refused entry;
- there will always be physical checks on items such as poultry (40%).

Mr Hughes called on **Mr Cormac Kennedy, Head of Property, Dublin Port Company** to advise the Forum of Dublin Port's preparations from an infrastructure perspective.

A copy of Mr Kennedy's presentation is attached.

Minister Humphreys returned to the Forum and assumed Chair.

The Minister thanked all presenters and opened questions to the Forum.

Comments arising:

- Mr Jim Curran, Irish Pharmacy Union highlighted the vulnerability of his sector including medicine labelling, delays, professional qualifications, recruitment and cross border prescriptions. He requested that further imposition eg VAT would not be applied to the sector;
- Mr Thomas Burke, Retail Ireland, noted the reliance of the Retail Sector on the UK market, especially the DIY sector;
- Ms Edel Clancy, Musgraves raised a number of points including how sealed trucks would move via the landbridge and how the movement of goods North/South would be affected?
- Mr McFeely, PricewaterhouseCoopers asked about logistical movements and about the possibility of trucks being checked on board the ferries;
- Mr Willie O'Byrne, Retail Ireland asked if detailed information is available in relation to volume of ferry traffic at Dublin Port.

Revenue/D/AFM response

- All checks are land based on arrival at Dublin Port for health and safety reasons;
- If all documents are in place before shipping, process would be smoother;
- Type of product would indicate the type of inspection; and
- There are approximately 4 peak arrival times and both Revenue and D/AFM hope to maintain the same level of service.

The Minister thanked everybody for their contribution.

### **Part (iii) Brexit - New Skills Needs**

The Minister said that her Department commissioned a report 'Addressing the Skills Needs Arising from the Potential Trade Implications of Brexit' from the Expert Group on Future Skills needs which was published in June 2018. The Report highlights eight recommendations. The Minister asked **Mr Sean Carlin, Retail Ireland Skillnet** and Chairperson of the Retail and Skills Working Group to engage with the Group on foot of the Report, and with a view to addressing new skills needs arising for the retail sector as a result of Brexit, to complete an audit of relevant skills needed.

- In response Mr Carlin advised the Minister that Retail Ireland Skillnet have initiated their own audit and it showed that supply chain, customs and logistics are the main areas of concern. Mr Carlin agreed to share this with the Retail and Skills Working Group.

Minister Humphreys again had to leave the Forum for Dáil Business. Mr Declan Hughes resumed as Chair.

Mr Hughes called on **Mr Alan Power, Labour Market and Skills Unit, DBEI** to update the Forum of the next steps after publication of the report 'Addressing the Skills Needs Arising from the Potential Trade Implications of Brexit'. Mr Power advised that an implementation group will be established shortly to disseminate information in the report. He offered to meet and discuss the report with Forum members.

#### **Actions:**

Mr Power to advise the Forum when the Implementation Group is established; and Secretariat to update the Forum following the Retail and Skills Working Group Skills Audit.

### **3. Retail Online (Pilot) Competitive Scheme**

**Ms Deborah Dignam, DBEI** updated members on the scheme.

- The call closes for the pilot phase of the scheme on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018;
- So far there is good uptake – 30 applications;
- The fund is €1.25m i.e. €10-€25,000 per project; and
- Ms Dignam asked the group to share information about the scheme with their members/colleagues.

#### **Actions**

Members to share information about the Retail Online (Pilot) Competitive Scheme  
Secretariat to give an update on the Retail Online (Pilot) Competitive Scheme at the next Retail Consultation Forum Meeting

### **4. Cost of Insurance**

Mr Hughes said that the Minister has initiated the PIAB Bill as recommended by the Cost of Insurance Working Group. He called on Ms Eadaoin Collins, Principal Officer, Company Law Unit, DBEI, to update the Forum on the progress of the Bill.

Ms Collins informed the meeting that the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (Amendment) Bill 2018 was published on 13 August 2018. Second Stage was completed on 8 November 2018 in Dáil Eireann. Committee Stage is scheduled for 4 December 2018.

Progress update on the Cost of Insurance Working Group can be found on [finance.gov.ie](http://finance.gov.ie).

*Comments arising:*

- Ms Buckley, RGDATA said that they supported the practical recommendations but want to ensure that the Bill is prioritised as Insurance costs currently remain at a high level;
- Mr Curran, Irish Pharmacy Union also supported the Bill as this issue is recurring;
- Mr Vincent Jennings, CSNA proposed that the State should appeal insurance costs awarded;
- Mr Burke commended the Minister on the Report and the Bill and hopes that it will remain a priority. He also highlighted that Insurance companies may pay settlements too quickly;
- Ms Clancy also proposed that the Bill be a legislative priority.

In response Ms Collins said that she will bring back the comments raised. Mr Hughes thanked Ms Collins for her time and advised that the Secretariat will continue to engage with her Unit on this important issue.

**Action**

Ms Collins to update the Secretariat on the progress of the PIAB Bill at the next meeting of the Forum.

## 5. Framework for Town Centre Renewal

Mr Hughes called on Ms Dignam, D/BEI to update the Forum about the Town Centre Renewal report.

Ms Dignam said that with changing landscape including the Project Ireland 2040, it might be opportune to update the toolkit for stakeholders at town level. She said that she will be contacting Forum members about refreshing the Town Centre Renewal Report.

*Comments arising:*

- Ms Buckley said that Towns found the Health Centre checks hugely beneficial but that they need support.

**Action**

DBEI to contact members about contributing, where relevant, to the refresh of the Town Centre Renewal Report.

## 6. AOB & Date of Next Meeting

### 1. EU directive on Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs)

Mr Burke said that he wanted to raise an issue about the EU directive on Unfair Trading Practices that is of concern to his members. He said that Amendments 35 and 56 will have a significant effect on retailers. He has raised it with Ministers Creed and Hogan. Ms Buckley added that these amendments could have huge implications on a variety of buying groups. Mr Hughes said that the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine are the lead Department on this directive. The Department will pass on the concerns of the Retail Sector to DAFM in relation to this.

### 2. Date of Next Meeting

Members will be advised of the next meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum.

**Actions**

Secretariat to advise DAFM about retailers concerns relating to Amendments 35 and 56 of the EU Directive on Unfair Trading Practices.

Secretariat to advise Forum members of the date of the next meeting

**Deborah Dignam**  
**Secretary to the Retail Consultation Forum**

**Appendix 1**  
**Retail Consultation Forum Meeting, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018**  
**Attendance/Apologies List**

**Members Attended**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Minister Heather Humphreys	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Tara Buckley	RGDATA
Thomas Burke	Retail Ireland
Willie O'Byrne	Retail Ireland
Sean Carlin	Retail Ireland Skillnet
Jim Curran	Irish Pharmacy Union
Vincent Jennings	CSNA
James Kiernan (on behalf of Ian Talbot)	Chambers Ireland
Elizabeth Bowen (on behalf of Sven Spollen Behrens)	SFA
Wayne Tobin (on behalf of Neil McDonnell)	ISME
Richard Guiney	Dublin Town (BID)
Keith Rogers	ECCO Ireland
Edel Clancy	Musgrave Group
Rebecca Harrison	Fishers of Newtownmountkennedy
Céline McHugh	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Leon Quigley (on behalf of Ronan Hession)	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Claire Gordon	Department of Health
Gary Ryan	Department of Housing Planning and Local Government
Pamela Malone	Department of Taoiseach

**Members Apologies**

Eoin Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick Wholesale	Colin Fee, Mace Blackrock
Maria Melia, D/Transport, Tourism & Sport	David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence
Anne Marie Harte, Hardware Association of Ireland	Helen O'Donnell, Dolmen Catering
Aidan Candon, Euronics Ireland	Brendan O'Connor, D/Finance
Dr Stephen Brennan, D/Communications, Climate Action & Environment	Emer O'Gorman, Local Government Management Agency
Finola Moylette, D/Rural & Community Development	Phil O'Flaherty, Department of Education and Skills,

**Guests Attended**

Owen McFeely	PricewaterhouseCooper
Celine O'Neill	Brexit Unit, Revenue Commissioners
Jane Dempsey	Brexit Unit, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
Cormac Kennedy	Head of Property, Dublin Port
Eadaoin Collins	Company Law, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
David McNamara	Department of Taoiseach
Ciaran Delargy	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Sandra O'Reilly	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

**Guests Apologies**

Luke Redmond, D/Taoiseach
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**Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation**

Declan Hughes	Deborah Dignam, Secretary to the Forum
Kieren Mee	Helen Keane-MacDonough