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A review of DCC BETA – options for scaling impact

November 2020

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Context

New and innovative thinking is a prerequisite for a successful 21st century public institution. The needs of residents are becoming increasingly complex and ever changing. To anticipate and respond to residents' needs, local governments must adopt new approaches to innovation and ways of thinking about how to implement change.

At the same time, external factors, for example COVID-19, and limited revenue streams have **increased the pressure on already constrained budgets**. The Dublin City Council (DCC) had forecast over €357 million in rates revenue this [year](#). Yet, around €250 million of the remains outstanding. Other revenue streams have also decreased substantially—a trend that will likely continue for at least the short-medium term.

Now, more than ever, any **public expenditure needs to be excellent value for money** and **purposeful targeted** into areas where the council can be confident that it will have a positive impact.

Context

"Dublin City Council BETA provides us with a concise methodology to anticipate and answer the needs of residents and businesses." – **Chief Executive**

This review has been commissioned to help DCC understand where there are **opportunities to use Beta to embed design-led transformation** as a way of working with residents and communities to deliver better, lower-cost and more-efficient public services.

Recognising the need to be more responsive to change as a city, DCC established **Dublin City Council BETA** (hereafter "DCC BETA") in 2012 as an "initiative to imagine, trial and establish solutions to improve the liveability of [the] Capital".

DCC BETA is an attempt to help DCC **experiment with new ideas outside of the traditional corporately-adopted policy and execution processes.** More specifically:

- The "**BETA Model**" The BETA Model seeks to provide a new approach and methodology to experimentation and innovation for neighbourhood liveability issues

- "**BETA Projects**" are used to trial issues and challenges the council wants to better understand and provide an improved way of engaging with the residents of Dublin.

Context

"Facilitate staff to adopt innovative approaches in their work through the continued development of initiatives such as DCC BETA" – **Dublin City Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024**

DCC BETA operates on a small scale within the council. Currently, **1 full time employee works on developing strategy and leading projects**, and is supported by cross-departmental input from staff on an ad hoc, project-specific, basis. To date, DCC BETA has spent €48,000 on 28 projects. Over 450 project ideas have been submitted through the BETA process.

The challenges brought by COVID-19 have required the entire council to work in a more agile way and rapidly change how it delivers services to its residents. DCC has been trialling new initiatives and learning in real-time **on a much larger scale than pre-COVID**. However, the **approach and methodology** for conducting trials by different departments in the council has, to date, been **inconsistent**.

The need for DCC to **adopt more innovative approaches** such as DCC BETA had already been recognised in its Corporate Plan.

The purpose of this review is to provide:

/ Clarity on whether DCC BETA has achieved its intended results, and whether these results are scalable.

/ Clear recommendations for how to increase the impact of DCC BETA.

Two key questions

1. Does it work?
2. How might we scale to increase impact?

To answer whether DCC BETA "works", we:

/ Undertook a desktop review of the original proposal for BETA projects.

/ Completed a high level review of inputs (e.g. resources committed and activities undertaken), outputs (e.g. what was delivered), and outcomes (e.g. early or medium term results).

/ Interviewed 10 council and external staff to canvas their perceptions of DCC BETA and experiences working on different BETA Projects.

/ Made a rapid assessment of whether there is a causation link between the inputs and the results.

To answer how BETA could scale to increase impact, we:

/ Conducted an options appraisal for how to scale, where to invest, and what roles recruit to deliver these

/ Developed a roadmap for how to deliver these options.

Question 1 – Does it work?

DCC BETA

The original proposal

DCC BETA was conceived as a solution for helping DCC be more responsive to the **changing needs of Dublin City**. It had been observed that **new ideas were received with caution** in the council and there was a need to test concepts in a less **costly**, **lengthy and bureaucratic** way.

The need for DCC to adopt more innovative practice was also seen in the broader context of the limited effectiveness of business-as-usual processes to implement change in Dublin City due to:

- **decreasing** staff morale, budgets and services available 'in house';
- **increasing** staff workloads and public expectations;
- **decreasing** resource availability and trust in authorities; and
- **increasing** population growth and inequalities;

The **vision** **for DCC BETA** was to establish a mechanism that would enable DCC to:

- be more ambitious for Dublin City
- think differently as an organisation; and
- better manage change.

DCC BETA

Establishing an **"innovation ecosystem"** in the Dublin City Council

DCC BETA uses **"BETA Projects" to experiment and trial new solutions** to different neighbourhood liveability issues. Through completing these projects, DCC BETA has developed the **"BETA Model"** as a **consistent and standardised approach for experimentation and innovation**.

This "innovation ecosystem" within the DCC was intended to help staff to become familiar with **evidence-based trialling** and the **use of design methodologies** to address key issues that the council was seeking to understand, before implementing on a city-wide scale.

DCC BETA – a "theory of change"

This diagram illustrates the how DCC BETA could have impact. FutureGov developed this "theory of change" for DCC BETA to link its activities to the intended short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes for the council and Dublin residents.

Activities	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
"BETA Projects" & "City Challenges"	Better understanding of issues facing Dublin residents.	Solutions are identified that can be scaled and locally implemented across the city.	New services and policies that improve residents lived experiences in Dublin.
Engagement with citizen via Social Media	New ideas are trialed at a very low cost and limited risk	Project learnings can be used to improve other business-as-usual processes in the council	Better and more cost effective services, helping DCC deliver more value with every € spent.
Innovation weeks, workshops & project teams	Develop "BETA Model" to help DCC staff become familiar with experimentation and evidence-based learning	Design-thinking is better embedded into how DCC trials new ideas	An "innovation ecosystem" for DCC staff to innovate in a controlled environment and undertake evidence-based trials
	Increased cross-department collaboration	Increased understanding between departments of how different workstreams interrelate and willingness to collaborate.	Established links with universities and other entrepreneurial and service design talent, that the DCC can leverage for future work
	Increased citizen engagement in DCC work	Stronger relationships with residents, business and other stakeholders to work together on issues in Dublin city.	

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DCC BETA has completed **28 projects** to date. This has been delivered on **€48,000 project-related expenditure**.
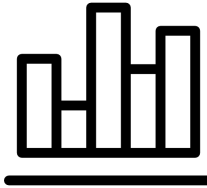
What's been achieved – the highlights
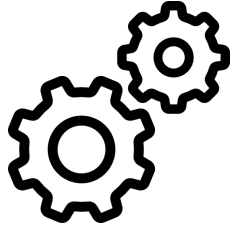
Inputs
DCC staff time and project expenditure

- **1 part-time ›› full-time employee** (Assistant Professional grade)
- **~60 project-related part-time staff involvement**
- **€48,000** on the delivery of projects (DCC + BETA contributions)
- **Volunteer time:**
  - BETA Squad equivalent value €35,000
  - NCAD equivalent value €91,000

Outputs
BETA Projects and City Challenges

- **28 BETA Projects** completed
- 4 solutions have progressed to **scaling**
- 2 solutions have been **implemented at Dublin regional level**
- **1 City Challenge** ("Dumping & Waste")
- 7 **Quarterly Staff Workshops**
- A **systematic methodology** for evidenced-based trialing
- A **prioritisation framework** for new BETA Projects + **5 prioritisation workshops**

Outcomes
Benefits to DCC and Dublin residents

- **2 new services/solutions** (BikeBunkers and Dublin Canvas)
- Other estimated **monetised benefits**:
  - Advertising equivalent value €185,000
  - **12,000** Social Media Followers
- A **"Go to" network of 100+ staff** across the council and **relationship with NCAD**
- A **bank of 450+** BETA Project suggestions.
- **€3 million+** in earmarked funding from DCC Departments & partners

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Several other key outcomes can be **linked** to DCC BETA.

These are summarised below, drawing on interviews with **DCC staff and staff from other organisations** and **previous reports**.

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DCC BETA has been very successful at engaging with the residents of Dublin and there is high visibility of BETA Projects. The "BETA" brand is now well recognised in the city. DCC BETA has over 12,000 followers on social media and received 600+ citizen submissions for new projects. Councilors consider DCC BETA to be a great mechanism for showcasing some of the council's work to residents (as recognised by DCC BETA's inclusion in the Dublin Agreement: 2019–2024).

BETA's resident-centred approach to designing services and solutions is considered to be a really positive change from how the council normally works. It is considered that DCC BETA has established a more effective way of interacting and consulting with residents on neighbourhood liveability issues. The engagement techniques used in DCC BETA have potential wider applicability for dealing with challenging issues in the city.

01
Engagement with Dublin residents

DCC staff consider the DCC BETA Approach to be robust and an effective way at building an evidence-base for solving city issues. Through BETA Projects, the council has been able to learn more about the practicalities of implementing different solutions, helping to identify what will work, and what won't.

Having an evidence-base has helped the council to increase support for change in the city. The learnings from a BETA Project have been used to alleviate many stakeholder concerns about the implementation of a new solution in their neighbourhood.

02
Evidence-based learning

BETA Projects have provided staff with an opportunity to work on solving a city issue they are particularly passionate about. This has provided an outlet for staff creativity and a way to pursue new ideas outside their 'core' workload.

The emphasis on resident-centred design has required a change in thinking for many DCC staff. DCC BETA is considered to have helped develop service design and delivery capabilities in the council.

Cross-departmental contributions are encouraged when developing new BETA Projects. This has increased staff collaboration and a shift in mindset from working only in their department silos. DCC BETA is credited with facilitating general networking between DCC staff, which has lead to many learning about new roles and services within the council.

03
Enabling council staff

BETA Projects provide a cost-effective way for the council to experiment with new ideas. By "thinking big, but starting small" and ensuring that all trials are both "flexible to change and also easily removable" DCC can trial new ideas on a smaller scale first. This reduces the risk of investment being poor value-for-money when scaling new policies.

DCC BETA is considered to have established a better way for the DCC to manage change with stakeholders. Because residents understand what the DCC BETA Approach, they are more willing to have the council trial different solutions in their neighbourhood. This helps reduce the risk that new ideas or services will be reacted to poorly before they can be tested.

04
Reduced risk and cost-effective experimentation

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DCC BETA has developed links with several universities in Dublin, allowing students to undertake projects related to BETA Projects. This has meant students benefit from having real-life, external project experience, while DCC BETA gets to tap-in to new creative input. This has also led to DCC supporting 8-week "BETA" projects with post-graduate students.

DCC BETA has partnered with several other organisations across Dublin to support the development and delivery of various BETA projects. This has helped increase the profile and reputation of DCC BETA, as well as the willingness from external organisations to collaborate with the council on developing new and innovative solutions that meet the changing needs of Dublin residents.
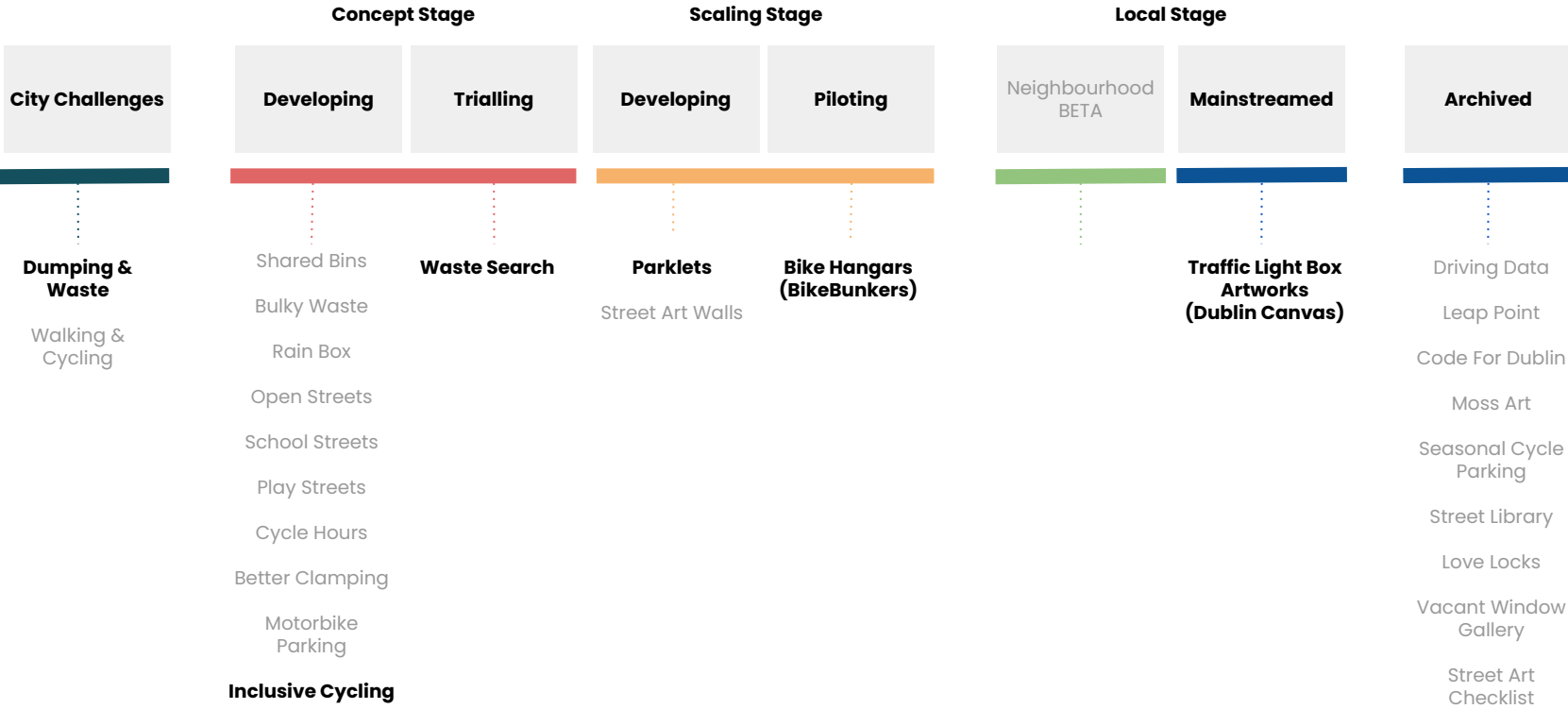
05

Developed partnerships with external organisations

We undertook a **rapid audit** of all BETA Projects completed.

The purpose of this was to better understand the **outcomes achieved** by each project, the **types of benefit** they produced and **to whom these benefits accrued**.

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BETA Projects – status of completed projects

Concept Stage

Scaling Stage

Local Stage

City Challenges	Developing	Trialling	Developing	Piloting	Neighbourhood BETA	Mainstreamed	Archived

Dumping & Waste

Walking & Cycling

Shared Bins

Bulky Waste

Rain Box

Open Streets

School Streets

Play Streets

Cycle Hours

Better Clamping

Motorbike Parking

Inclusive Cycling

Waste Search

Parklets

Street Art Walls

Bike Hangars (BikeBunkers)

Traffic Light Box Artworks (Dublin Canvas)

Driving Data

Leap Point

Code For Dublin

Moss Art

Seasonal Cycle Parking

Street Library

Love Locks

Vacant Window Gallery

Street Art Checklist

Active | Inactive

Reasons for inactivity

Lack of resources and/or mid-level decision making

Shared Bins

Bulky Waste

Rain Box

Open Streets

School Streets

Play Streets

Cycle Hours

Better Clamping

Motorbike Parking

Street Art Walls

Love Locks

Project pivoted or learnings used for in DCC work

Driving Data

Seasonal Cycle Parking

Limited value identified

LEAP Points

Moss Art

Street Library

Code for Dublin

Vacant Window Gallery

Street Art Checklist

A rapid audit of BETA Projects

- **The majority of BETA Projects have at least some clear attributable benefits**. So far, these benefits have mostly been intangible. Multiple BETA Projects have however identified potential tangible benefits if the solution was to be scaled. Most of the benefits from completed BETA Projects have so far accrued to DCC; however many identified potential benefits for residents if the solutions were scaled.

- **Intangible benefits include a better understanding of issues in the city, the development of a strategy to address them, and an understanding of the practicalities for future scaling of potential solutions**. There were some instances where the learnings from a BETA Project could be traced to making tangible improvements in council processes.

- **The tangible benefits realised from BETA Projects have so far mostly been limited to identifying new projects.** Only a few projects have progressed to developing a solution that provides real cost savings to DCC and/or a new service that is valuable to Dublin residents. However, there appears to be significant potential to increase the scale of these benefits through implementing some of the solutions developed by DCC BETA.

A rapid audit of BETA Projects

Cont.

- **A number of BETA Projects appear to have the potential to scale and there is a clear path forward for many.** This would both broaden the distribution of benefits to residents, businesses and other organisations in Dublin, and increase the size of benefits to DCC.

- **Despite the identification of benefits and the potential to scale, a significant number of BETA Projects are currently inactive.** This issue is compounded with an increasing bank of potential BETA Projects.

- **The speed at which DCC BETA is progressing projects from conception appears to be too slow and is limiting its impact.** There appear to be several factors holding back BETA Projects from progressing more quickly.

The **challenges** for DCC BETA appear to be both **BETA-specific** and **wider council constraints**.

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01

DCC BETA specific

Factors holding back BETA Projects and the scale of DCC BETA's impact

- **The DCC BETA Approach is rigorous and DCC staff have cited that BETA Projects often involve more work than anticipated.** BETA Project involves a different way of working, which DCC staff are often unfamiliar with and therefore underestimate the time required. The lack of additional DCC BETA staff to support projects has meant DCC staff often take on more work than they otherwise would. Limited staff time was considered to be a key reason projects progressed slower than expected.

- **Some staff consider the DCC BETA Approach to be too rigid.** Some staff cited that the process appears too "academic" and that there is little flexibility in the methodology. Because of this, staff didn't see the value in using BETA if they could undertake a trial quicker, with fewer restrictions, using their own departments resources. Moreover, there was some criticism that BETA Projects were too focused on the "process" rather than delivering a new service.

- **DCC BETA draws on part-time staff involvement to support BETA Projects, often on a voluntary basis.** This operational structure has benefits by ensuring DCC BETA remains lean, and is only as big as it needs to be at any point in time. However, because DCC staff time can be voluntary, or is committed only if it doesn't get in the way of 'core' work, staff are not always immediately available or their time allocated to DCC BETA is prioritised elsewhere by their line manager when workloads increase.

01

DCC BETA specific

Cont.

- **The BETA Approach can require staff to trade-off speed for quality.** Some staff are coming to BETA with a solution to a specific issue already developed. However, the BETA Approach requires them to complete an additional piece of work to confirm that they are trying to solve the right problem, before trailing any potential solution. This can add time to the project but ensures there is a clear evidence-base and rationale before anything is implemented.

- **It's not clear to DCC staff where DCC BETA sits in the organisation**. Because DCC BETA has operated at arms-length for 8.5 years, with only one staff member, there is perception from some staff that BETA is just the "pet project" of one DCC staff member.

- **The support framework for DCC BETA staff has been limited in some instances.** There appears to be a lack of clarity around the permissions needed to undertake new trials and the extent to which DCC BETA has to operate within DCC processes. This uncertainty means BETA Projects are often progressing more slowly than they should, or not at all.

02
Outside DCC BETA

Wider organisational constraints impacting the success of BETA Projects

- **There has been a lack of senior-level engagement and understanding of BETA Projects.** DCC staff involved in BETA Projects are often very passionate about the particular issue but will lack the permissions to make certain decisions when developing the project. This is exacerbated when there are multiple "touch points". The low-cost of BETA Projects means these projects don't appear high up on the "risk register" of senior people in the organisation.

- **The BETA Approach is a new way of working compared to more traditional approaches.** BETA Projects are often only in DCC BETA because there aren't already established processes and/or permissions for implementing the new idea, and so there isn't a natural home for the project elsewhere in the council. DCC staff are used to bringing a specific problem, to a specific department, and want a solution to be implemented immediately.

- **There is a perception that DCC BETA is an additional 'action resource' in the council**. Staff are approaching BETA for support to get something small done quickly (i.e. small-and-specific), rather than to help them think differently about an issue an experiment with new ideas (i.e. big-and-general).

The **location** of DCC BETA within the council also has had an affect on how it works overall.

The key differences between DCC BETA's experiences in City Architects and the Transformation Unit are summarised below. Some of these differences reflect a natural progression as DCC BETA has matured and taken on more complex task and projects. However, there do seem to be some **differences in the ways of working**, from which the learnings could be used to inform scaling options.

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City Architects ("Concept Stage")

Resources & budget	**0.1 FTE** initially, increasing to **~0.5 FTE** after the first year. **Specific** DCC BETA cost centre. - BETA's **budget came from other sections**, rather than City Architects. Budget was ring-fenced, **increasing from €0, to €5,000, to €20,000** in the final year. - Project-related expenditures were **~€17,500** in total - DCC BETA had a **go-to consultant** that was always available for work and understood BETA and the DCC. **Hiring them felt easy**.
Types of projects & outputs	- Purposely kept **manageable in scale**. - Primarily focussed on **concept-stage trials** and **clearly-bounded projects**. - Emphasis on **positive projects** for the city **12 concept-stage** projects
Administration	**0 to 5,500** social media followers - Amateur website (but flexible) - No physical space for design-thinking
Ways of working	- DCC BETA **felt like a "project" in the architecture team**. - Worked much more as an **intrapreneur**, at arms-length from other DCC staff.

Transformation Unit ("Scaling Stage")

Resources & budget
- **1.0 FTE**
- **Shared** Transformation Unit cost centre.
- The budget is part of the **overall Transformation Unit budget** and is **not ring-fenced** specifically for DCC BETA
- Project related expenditures have been **~€30,500** and **upfront sign-off on expenditure** is required
- Contractors are always changing as they become unavailable.

Types of projects & outputs
- Began **scaling the size of projects** and ambition for BETA
- Took on **scaling stage** projects and added a **City Challenge.** Some concept stage projects were also **more complex with less clear boundaries**.
- Several projects are **politically complex**.
- **13 concept-stage** projects, **3 scaling** at various levels, **1 City Challenge**.

Administration
- **6,500 to 12,000** social media followers.
- Professional website (looks better but more difficult to update).
- Physical space for design-thinking and collaborative workspace.

Ways of working
- DCC BETA feels **separate and quite different** to the rest of the Transformation Unit.
- More deliberate attempt to **include staff from relevant departments much earlier** in projects (which adds complexity, but achieves better outcomes in the long run)

DCC BETA is **working to identify projects with benefits** but it has not been able to **deliver on this potential** at scale.

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Some changes are needed

It's clear that **DCC BETA has developed a well-recognised and trusted brand with Dublin residents**, who are actively engaged in identifying new issues and providing feedback on BETA Projects.

BETA Projects have demonstrated that they are an **inexpensive way for DCC to experiment and develop evidence-based learnings** that have the potential to benefit not only the council but also residents, businesses, other organisations in Dublin, and local authorities across the Dublin region and nationally.

However, a **significant number of projects have gone through BETA's "Concept Stage" but have so far failed to scale**, even when clear benefits from doing so had been identified. Despite being a cost-effective way for the DCC to test new ideas, **DCC BETA hasn't been used to drive transformational change**–which remains its potential to do so.

There are several reasons for this, and some are out of DCC BETA's direct control. Still, some changes could help to ensure DCC BETA is really working and achieves the impact it could have.

There is value being missed

And this risks damaging the "BETA-brand"

DCC BETA could be a more valuable asset to the council and residents. Additional benefits could be realised by:

- **Increasing the number of BETA Projects undertaken and the speed at which they are scaled and implemented**. There are likely to be projects in the backlog that could be successfully implemented by DCC, but both internal and external constraints mean that these haven't been looked at, started or have stalled at a particular stage.

- **More deliberately using the BETA Model on other projects undertaken in the DCC**. There are likely to be projects that didn't go through DCC BETA but could have benefited from this if the BETA Model was better understood across the council and had senior-level buy-in as a methodology for trialing new ideas.

The size of this missed opportunity is only growing. Moreover, is a **risk of damaging the "BETA-brand" and increasing citizen frustrations** because projects either never happen or take too long to trial and implement.

Options for DCC BETA to address this missed opportunity and scale its impact are described in the remainder of this report below.

Question 2 — How might we scale to increase impact?

What needs to change

To increase the impact of DCC BETA

Regardless of the delivery model option, **DCC BETA needs to establish clearer governance arrangements, strategic priorities that are aligned with the wider organisation and a resourcing model**.

- DCC BETA is going through a transition and trying to develop an in-house design methodology. The way its been set up–both in City Architects and the Transformation Unit–has prohibited growth and dissemination of this methodology. **It's hard to effect change and scale impact across the council with the level of ownership sitting with one person, at arms-length from the rest of the organisation**.

- The model of "open calls" from the public for new BETA Project ideas means that a lot of the backlog is disparate from the Council's corporate objectives. While a useful tool for surveying residents' concerns, **the selection of new projects could benefit from closer alignment with council strategies so that it is clearer, to all staff, how DCC BETA work is contributing to achieving the organisation's corporate objectives**.

- There isn't currently a clear mechanism for allocating time to BETA Projects. **Closer alignment of BETA Projects with strategic priorities should make it easier to secure council staff time to support DCC BETA**. The resourcing model should be agreed to and endorsed by DCC senior management.

What must change

Cont.

Critical to scaling BETA's impact is **broadening the base of council staff involvement and understanding of what DCC BETA is trying to achieve**. This needs to be the responsibility of, and driven by, senior management.

DCC BETA could be positioned as a new corporate function, responsible for how the council applies design methods to its work with city residents. The "City Challenge" programme of work appears to be a good example of how the design methodology developed by DCC BETA can be applied to addressing a strategic priority for the council.

Increasing senior management understanding of DCC BETA, and making its activities a corporate function, should help to:

- ensure Beta Projects are **adequately resourced**;
- **reduce delays in decision-making** / time spent seeking permissions to undertake or scale an project;
- **disseminate the DCC BETA methodology** with other council staff; and
- **increase the scaling and implementation** of projects that benefit the residents of Dublin.

Key questions for scaling BETA

There are some key questions the council needs to answer in order to determine what happens with DCC BETA moving forward:

Funding
- How long will funding and staffing for DCC BETA be guaranteed for?
- To what extent is funding linked to the delivery of the ambition for BETA?

Resourcing
- How many staff FTE are needed to deliver the ambition for BETA? What skills are required?
- How are staff resources procured?

Governance
- Where should DCC BETA sit within the organisation? What level should it report to?

Commissioning
- How are decisions made about BETA Projects? What permissions will DCC BETA have to access funding for project-related expenses?

Different delivery models for DCC BETA

How the council scales DCC BETA should be anchored to a particular delivery model. We have set out three different options for DCC to consider:

1. **Invest in the "arms-length" operating model.**

2. **More firmly embed DCC BETA into its existing delivery unit in the DCC.**

3. **Procure an external partner to support the delivery of BETA Projects.**

For each option, we have set out the key considerations and potential trade-offs relevant to the categories on the previous page.

Options for **scaling** BETA.

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Invest in the "arms-length" operating model.

Building on the existing delivery model for DCC BETA, this option would increase core staff resources and establish aa agreed process to access funding for BETA Projects.

Pros
Addresses key resourcing issues. Allows DCC BETA to prioritise projects and to be innovative. Continues to develop the BETA Model.

Cons
Doesn't address challenges around senior-level engagement nor DCC BETA's support framework. Still unclear where BETA sits in the organisation.

02

More firmly embed DCC BETA into its existing delivery unit in the DCC.

Under this option, DCC BETA would be managed as part of the "core" workload in the council. Existing DCC staff would be made available as needed to support the delivery of BETA Projects.

Pros
Increases the support framework around BETA. Clearer process for seeking permissions. Can better leverage existing DCC staff to help address resourcing issues.

Cons
Less freedom to be intrapreneurial and projects follow a potentially more corporate process.

03

Procure an external partner to support the delivery of BETA Projects.

This option would draw on external expertise and capabilities, rather than investing in additional internal resources, to help deliver BETA Projects. Strategic objective is to increase DCC BETA's portfolio of scaled projects.

Pros
Addresses resourcing issues, is time-bound and easier to scale back if unsuccessful. Clear focus on the development and implementation of BETA Projects.

Cons
Limited opportunities to involve DCC. Broader learnings may not disseminate across the council. Less proactive engagement with residents and external organisations.

Option 1 – Invest in the arms-length operating model and building internal DCC capabilities

	How might it work?	What does this mean for DCC Beta?
Funding	• Funding is made available for (at least) the next 2-3 years. • A ring-fenced budget for BETA Projects, with agreed spending conditions.	• DCC BETA has more autonomy over its spending. This should help increase the speed which decisions are made when developing BETA projects. • In the first year of scaling, pre-approved spending could be small. This would increase each year, so long as there is evidence of value for money for DCC.
Resourcing	• Combination of temporary and permanent staff. • 2 full-time service designers (Senior Executive or Executive professional level). Other potential roles that would support scaling include an intrapreneur, full-stack developer and senior manager • An established and formalised process for DCC BETA to bring in DCC staff part-time as needed for BETA Projects.	• Allows BETA to take on more complex and ambitious projects, and provide better support to other staff when scaling. • In the first year of scaling, 2 service designers would be hired (one could be temporary but the other should be permanent to develop internal capabilities). • Additional staff could be hired to match the ambition for DCC BETA.
Governance	• Arms-length from Parent Unit. • Pre-agreed reporting rules with senior management and operate within those rules. • Clear communication from the executive-level in the council about DCC BETA's remit to develop BETA Projects	• DCC BETA is enabled to seek permissions by "demonstration" rather than "explanation". Clearer remit to trial projects that are reversible. • The current intrapreneur & coordination functions could be disentangled into two distinct roles. • Less direct contact with mid and senior-staff in the council.
Commissioning	• New projects are selected using the DCC BETA prioritisation framework. • Decisions to take on new projects are made by DCC BETA.	• Workloads are less transparent. Limited ability to ask for additional resources.

Option 2 – More firmly embed Dublin Beta into its existing delivery unit in the DCC

	How might it work?	**What does this mean for DCC Beta?**
Funding	• Funding for DCC BETA is consolidated with an existing Unit's budget and becomes part of the "core" workload. • "BETA Projects" would be allocated a proportion of the Unit's budget each year.	• The amount of budget available for BETA Projects, and how to access this funding, will be well established. • Beta Projects will be competing for funding and priority with other work in the Parent Unit.
Resourcing	• BETA Projects would be like any other project within the Unit and internal resources are provided as needed. • Service design capabilities will need to be added in-house.	• More resources should be available to support BETA Projects. • Time commitments will be "fixed" and less likely to be prioritised elsewhere once allocated.
Governance	• Closer alignment with the delivery unit and direct reporting to a line manager on a frequent basis. • Project coordination and administration responsibilities could be relocated elsewhere within the Unit.	• Stronger communication lines with mid and senior-level staff outside of Unit. • Permission by "explanation". The development of BETA Projects would likely be more consistent with other corporate processes.
Commissioning	• BETA Projects are signed off by Unit manager.	• Potentially less autonomy over the projects undertaken. Workloads are more transparent and can ask for more resources if extremely busy.

Option 3 – Procure an external partner to support the delivery of BETA Projects.
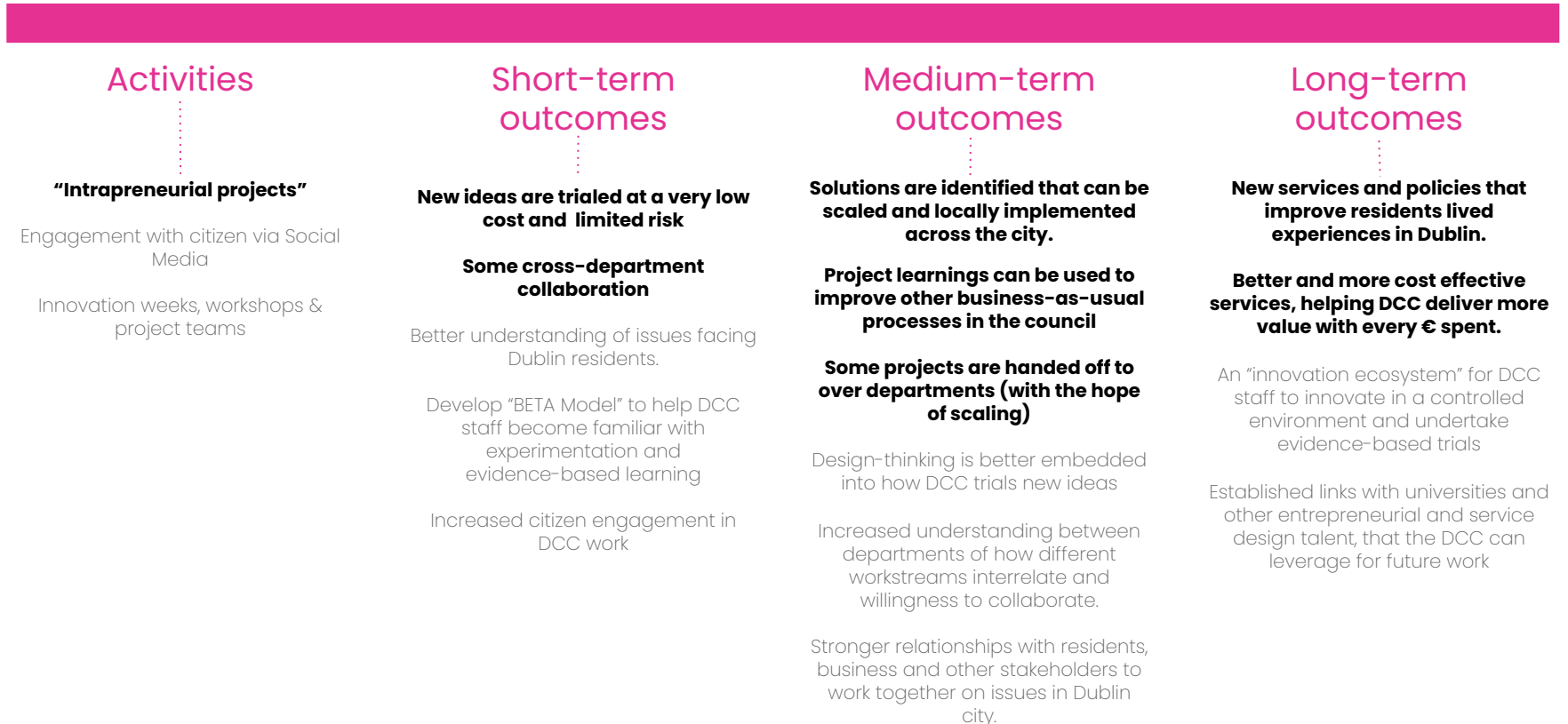
	How might it work?	**What does this mean for DCC Beta?**
Funding	• 1-3 year contract is agreed with an external provider, with clear milestones for funding.	• Potentially a long procurement process.
Resourcing	• Resources are procured through a strategic partnership contract. • External partner provides service design, research, technical/digital capabilities as needed. • DCC staff is only part-time to help support and input into BETA Projects.	• No other DCC resources are needed. • Limited development of internal capabilities in the council.
Governance	• Contract is owned by the Transformation Unit.	• Reporting arrangements will be agreed on in the contract. • DCC BETA will need to help coordinate permissions with relevant departments for the external provider.
Commissioning	• Work with external provider to identify projects that have the potential to scale. These would be signed-off by the Transformation Unit (at the end of a discovery phase). • A budget for project-related expenditures will be agreed on and included in the contract.	• Provide input into selecting the projects. • Limited other involvement in project-related decision making.

DCC BETA **scaling-back** is also an option to consider.

Under this option, DCC BETA would scale back to a size similar when it was located in City Architects. Resident engagement and developing relationships with external organisations would stop. Part-time staff resource would be allocated to work on a small number of BETA-like projects each year.

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Scaled-back BETA theory of change

Activities

"Intrapreneurial projects"

Engagement with citizen via Social Media

Innovation weeks, workshops & project teams

Short-term outcomes

New ideas are trialed at a very low cost and limited risk

Some cross-department collaboration

Better understanding of issues facing Dublin residents.

Develop "BETA Model" to help DCC staff become familiar with experimentation and evidence-based learning

Increased citizen engagement in DCC work

Medium-term outcomes

Solutions are identified that can be scaled and locally implemented across the city.

Project learnings can be used to improve other business-as-usual processes in the council

Some projects are handed off to over departments (with the hope of scaling)

Design-thinking is better embedded into how DCC trials new ideas

Increased understanding between departments of how different workstreams interrelate and willingness to collaborate.

Stronger relationships with residents, business and other stakeholders to work together on issues in Dublin city.

Long-term outcomes

New services and policies that improve residents lived experiences in Dublin.

Better and more cost effective services, helping DCC deliver more value with every € spent.

An "innovation ecosystem" for DCC staff to innovate in a controlled environment and undertake evidence-based trials

Established links with universities and other entrepreneurial and service design talent, that the DCC can leverage for future work

A **roadmap** for BETA moving forward.

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A decision needs to be made

Around three years ago, **DCC BETA moved into the Transformation Unit with the intention to scale**. This has had **only limited success**; while BETA Projects have become more ambitious and comprehensive at the Concept Stage, only a small number have actually progressed to scaling. **BETA Projects are progressing too slow**, and it its current state, **DCC BETA is not working as effectively** as it could be.

A decision needs to be made, with some urgency. **DCC BETA clearly cannot continue as it is.**

We have set out a **roadmap for DCC BETA** below, highlighting the **key decision points now, next and later** in the future. It is hoped that this will help guide important strategic decisions for DCC BETA over the next few years (and potentially beyond).

Roadmap for DCC BETA

Now	Next by early-mid 2021	Later 2022/23
Strategic decision on whether to scale up or scale-back DCC BETA	*Scaling option 1* Contract 2 service designers. Set ambition for BETA Projects over the next 12 months	*Scaling option 1* Review and decide whether to increase ambition. Seek to make some/all contractors permanent DCC staff.
If scaling: Determine delivery model. Begin process to secure resources and funding. Hire staff / contractors	*Scaling option 2* Hire at least 1 service designers. Set ambition for BETA Projects over the next 12 months.	*Scaling option 2* Review and decide whether to increase ambition. Bring in additional skills/capabilities as needed.
If scaling back: Identify live projects to continue and which to archive.	*Scaling option 3* Complete procurement project for external partner	*Scaling option 3* Evaluate contract performance. Decide whether to continue with outsourced model or investment in in-house capabilities.

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Thank you

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David Ayre, Project Director
+44 7709 132705
@ayredw
wearefuturegov.com

Appendix 1

List of interviewees

- Antonia Martin – **Communication & Promotion Officer, Sustainable Mobility & Projects Division**

- Barry McCann – **Intelligent Transportation Systems Engineer**

- Coilín O'Reilly – **Director of Services, Northside**

- Eileen Quinlivan – **Assistant Chief Executive for Corporate Services, Transformation & Human Resources**

- Finola O'Driscoll – **National Transport Agency**

- Helen Smirnova – **Senior Executive Engineer**

- Jamie Cudden – **Smart City Lead**

- Patricia Reidy – **Senior Engineer**

- Simon Brock – **Administrative Officer, Waste Management**

- Shane Waring – **Lead for Dublin City Council Beta**