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CITY HALL
CORK
IRELAND



Ms Chris Gavigan/Mr Matt Merrigan.
Joint Chairs,
LANPAG
C/O LGMSB
35-39 Usher's Quay,
Dublin 8.

17 December 2007.

PVG –Progress Report December 2007.

Dear Chris/Matt,

I refer to your letter of 31 October relative to the above wherein you request an interim report on the continuing progress being achieved under the Towards 2016 Agreement. I attach a copy of the checklist, duly completed which shows that progress is reported on all issues.

While progress is reported under all headings, many of the items are long-term in nature and incremental progress over very short timeframes is not always significant and in many cases relatively minor. However forward momentum is maintained by ensuring that the improvements previously made are embedded and consolidated into our operations and this continues to be the case in this council.

I can confirm:

- a. There has been on-going co-operation with the implementation of the modernisation agenda.
- b. We continue to operate in a stable industrial relations climate and all issues which have arisen have been dealt with and continue to be dealt with in accordance with the agreed procedures.

In this report I would like to highlight a number of issues which I think indicate the continuing progress being achieved by the Council towards the achievement of its objectives, which of course incorporate the targets and aspirations for the local government sector and the wider public service set out in Towards 2016. The items listed are noteworthy only because they are new or mark important milestones in our progress to date.

Lee Road Waterworks PPP.

The re-development of the City's waterworks (in effect its virtual replacement with a completely new plant) is a key element of the council's current capital programme. In line with national policy, all potential options for the delivery of this critical piece of infrastructure are under consideration. The issue is being addressed very constructively under our partnership arrangements and all sides are actively engaged and fully committed to seeing it through to completion utilising the "Handling Significant Change through Partnership" framework. I am particularly impressed with the commitment and engagement of the staff side and it certainly provides a very positive manifestation of the benefits of dealing with these issues through partnership.

Finance.

The period under review saw the introduction of integrated cash receipting in the council which contributes to improved customer care throughout the organisation permitting as it does immediate cash receipting for any of the council's services from any cash receipting location

The period also saw the elimination of the Council's revenue deficit for the first time in over 30 years. This has been a long-term objective of Council which was finally achieved in 2007.

New Offices.

The council occupied its new offices at City Hall during the year and the transfer ran very smoothly with no disruption to service and the new offices offer considerably improved levels of customer service which are operating satisfactorily.

Recreation.

The council has recently awarded a contract for the construction of a specially designed skate-board park which is one of the first such facilities to be provided by a local authority in this country. In addition the period under review saw the opening of two new parks in the city. 2007 also saw the launch of a new library service catering for housebound citizens providing for fortnightly collection and delivery service directly to the homes of housebound members.

Cleansing.

Negotiations have commenced on rationalisation proposals for the council's refuse collection services which are losing customers to rival private contractors. In this area, as well, I feel it important to note a significant improvement in the number of successful prosecutions and court convictions in respect of litter offences. This results from a council initiative by its Litter Warden Service and is encouraging. The staffs involved are to be congratulated on their success.

Social Inclusion.

We have recently completed a second edition of our very successful "Social Inclusion Booklet for Employees" through the partnership committee and with the financial support from LANPAG which is gratefully acknowledged. In this area as well we have recently launched a Travellers Employment Initiative modelled on a similar scheme undertaken in South Dublin Co Co last year. Twelve participants have enrolled and the early reports are encouraging.

Personnel.

The Council new CORE HR personnel software programme went live in June this year and this is the first stage of a programme which will see the introduction of an automated time and attendance system and a new payroll system in the Council over the next two years in line with our objectives under Towards 2016. This systems are the same as those recently selected for the national HR system for the local authority service.

Housing and Community.

The Councils Housing programme which is particularly ambitious is progressing well and 2007 saw

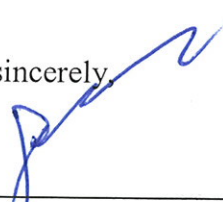
- a. 728 new units completed and 871 under construction under various schemes.
- b. Major area regeneration programmes at Knocknaheeney and the Glen and the refurbishment of older flat complexes at Cushing Road and Sunvalley Drive continued during the period under review.
- c. At the end of 2007 over 1400 rented dwellings had central heating installed under the DOEHLG scheme.
- d. The Councils Foyer at Blackpool received accreditation from the UK Foyer Federation (the first such institution to receive this outside the UK).
- f. The Wet Shelter at Leitrim St is close to completion and will be opened shortly and will be operated by the Cork Simon Community.

The foregoing are a few of the more notable improvements achieved by the Council in the relatively short period under review. It should not however detract from or overshadow the continuing high quality service being provided by the council and its staff on a daily basis throughout all our Directorates and Departments. The continuing improvements introduced and agreed over the last several years have been consolidated and standards maintained in the intervening period. Indeed I consider the maintenance of these improved standards to be just as important as new initiatives in ensuring internal efficiency and effectiveness and optimal service to the public.

I am happy to report therefore that in the period under review the Council has made steady progress towards the achievement of its current objectives and in doing so has had the fullest support and co-operation from its staff.

I am happy to recommend the payment of the relevant pay increase to all grades within the council from the due date and to certify that the provisions of the agreement have been met in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



J Gavin
City Manager