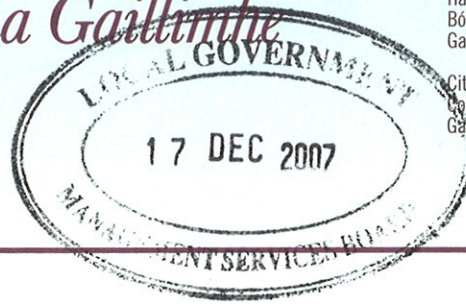




Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe Galway City Council

Halla na Cathrach
Bóthar an Choláiste
Gaillimh

City Hall
College Road
Galway



Ár dTag / Our Ref:

Do Thag / Your Ref:

JMcG/MC

13th December 2007.

Ms. Chris Gavigan/Mr. Matt Merrigan
Joint Chairs,
LANPAG
C/O Local Government Management Services Board
35 – 39 Ushers Quay,
Dublin 8.

Re: Performance Verification Under T2016 (June 2007 – February 2008)

Dear Ms. Gavigan/Mr. Merrigan,

I attach herewith the completed Indicator Checklist for Galway City Council covering the period 1st June 2007 to 29th February 2008. I wish to confirm that this document has been fully endorsed by the Workplace Partnership Committee.

With regard to finalising negotiations on the local Action Plan with the relevant Trade Unions, I wish to confirm that agreement has now been reached, with the exception of one issue in relation to Holy Days with the craft unions. In this respect, I wish to confirm that negotiations are currently underway with a view to finalising matters and it is anticipated that agreement will be reached in the coming weeks.

Since submitting the last progress report in April of this year, Galway City Council has continued to achieve significant progress in the various measures outlined in our Local Action Plan and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of these achievements and to comment on same.

Enhanced Customer Service:

In February 2007, Galway City Council set up a dedicated project team to carry out a review of customer driven processes in City Hall with a view to

- *Maximising efficiencies in work processes*
- *Relieving pressure on staff and*
- *In the process, identifying, agreeing and implementing improvements in Customer Service.*
- *Development of Procedural Documents*

It was agreed that the initial focus would be on the following three areas Planning, Housing and examination of the amalgamation of four existing public counters (reception, cashiers, traffic and refuse)

Fáiltítear comhfhreagras i nGaeilge / Correspondence in Irish welcomed

A full review has been carried out on the Planning processes, which identified that there are a number of significant improvements that can be made, which will benefit the customer, staff and the organisation. One of the major changes that we are currently working on is the Planning Validation process. From mid December 2007, we will be offering pre-validation of Planning Applications at the public counter with full validation, including site inspection notice, within 24 hours. Prior to this the validation process took on average five no weeks.

Organisational change and innovation:

The Customer Service review has also identified the need for the establishment of a Customer Services Centre. The Customer Services Centre will be built around a centralised approach to the delivery of services via counter, telephone and web. We are currently working with the various staff involved to agree the appropriate processes and services to include in this area. This will include the amalgamation of the four public counters that I referred to earlier in my report.

We have also commenced examining the top customer driven processes in Housing , which we hope to finalise over the coming months.

Co-operation with other agencies:

Galway City Council has strong linkages with many other agencies and departments. This has been clearly demonstrated in the submission for the Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF). Under the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013, the GIF has been established and is aimed at accelerating the rate of development and growth of gateways. A key objective of the GIF is to encourage and foster true collaboration between Local Authorities and to encourage strong private sector participation. An interagency steering group has been developed to oversee this submission comprising of fourteen members including NUIG, Iarnrod Eireann, Enterprise Ireland, West Regional Authority, Galway County Council and Galway City Council. This submission is based on the strategic investment priorities of the Galway Gateway and it is the economic driver for the West Region. In developing the submission, the Galway Gateway carefully considered documents such as the City and County Development Board Strategies (2002 – 2012), the City and County Development Plans, Galway Transportation and Planning Study (2002), Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A Framework for Action (2003 – 2012) and the West Regional Planning Guidelines (2004). The three projects selected for inclusion are as follows:-

- The provision of Ardaun town centre, urban avenue and bus corridor*
- The construction of a concert, conference and educational venue situated in the prized city centre site location known as the Fisheries Field opposite the Cathedral in Galway City*
- Double rail tracking project from Galway to Athenry*

The Galway Gateway has attached significant importance to ensuring that it has adopted an inclusive and highly consultative approach, both in identifying, short-listing and appraising the three GIF projects. If the projects are approved they will result in the accelerated development of a new town to the highest standards of urban design. Upwards of 8,000 households will benefit from the Ardaun project. Culture, arts, the Irish language, business and education will be re-vitalised with the construction of the Fisheries Field venue. In addition to this, Galway's chronic

traffic congestion will be relieved once a high frequency urban commuter service is introduced.

To further enhance Galway City as a Gateway, the development and implementation of transport and traffic management initiatives is a priority for the City Council. In this regard and in order to ensure the implementation of the various plans and initiatives, the City Council has established a Transport Unit. The purpose of this Unit will be to:-

- Improve the availability and potential usage of public transport
- Relieve existing traffic congestion in the city
- Improve journey times to and from the city for all modes of transport
- Effectively integrate different transport modes, especially public transport

In addition to local benefits in terms of economy, transport, road safety, environment and quality of life, the Unit will also have regional and national benefits. In particular, it will pilot an integrated transport structure in a gateway location. It will also support sustainable transportation and spatial development resulting in energy conservation and compliance with the Kyoto Protocol. The initiative will also boost the national economy and support key national policies such as the National Spatial Strategy, Transport 21 and the national strategy for health services.

The Doughiska inter-agency group whose membership comprises Galway City Partnership, City Council, Galway Childcare Committee, Galway Refugee Support Group was initially formed in response to anecdotal evidence of the lack of community development structures in the Doughiska area. This group is currently developing its Action Plan based on recommendations stemming from a community profile and needs analysis study undertaken.

Since August 2007, Galway City Community Forum (GCCF) and Galway City Partnership has facilitated the establishment of the Galway City Intercultural Forum made up of representatives from the range of ethnic minority groups in the city. Arising from the Galway City Anti-Racism Strategy, the goals of the new Forum are to promote interculturalism, create a formal platform for intercultural dialogue between local communities and to increase participation of ethnic minorities and immigrants in the local development process. The first meeting of this Forum took place on 11th September 2007. The Forum has agreed to form an Interim Steering Group which has three main objectives:-

- To define the role and objectives of the Intercultural Forum
- To develop proposals for participation and decision making structures
- To define links with GCCF and the Galway City Partnership

Social Inclusion:

Galway City Council is currently working towards the development of a Social Inclusion Unit. This will further strengthen the City Council's role in embedding the National Anti-Poverty Strategy in our actions and policies. The focus of the Social Inclusion Unit will be corporate wide extending significantly beyond traditional areas such as housing in working to promote social inclusion in the day-to-day activities of

the Council and promote interagency work on social inclusion and community development issues to facilitate an integrated approach at local level.

The Social Inclusion sub group of the Galway City Development Board (GCDB) recently held its annual networking event. This year the theme was accessibility and its aim was to highlight and share information on initiatives that are currently working to make Galway a more accessible city.

Continuing on the theme of accessibility, I am pleased to inform the Performance Verification Group that the Leisureland Complex has been awarded the prestigious 'National Disability Provision Award' for 2007/2008. This award followed a rigorous disability access audit.

Earlier this year, the GCDB was invited to make a nomination for an Integrated Service Delivery Award by Chambers Ireland for their fourth annual Excellence in Local Government Awards. The Galway City Anti Racism Strategy 2005 – 2008 'Towards a City of Equals' was nominated and, I am pleased to confirm, short-listed for an award.

With regard to preserving and enhancing the natural environment, Fáilte Ireland has approved in principle funding in the region of €178,000 for upgrading works along the Eglinton Canal on foot of an application made by Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees. In addition, the Trustees in conjunction with the City Council are working towards the development of a footbridge and walkway linking the Eglinton Canal with Fisheries Field.

Efficiency measures – use of new technology:

Galway City Council continues to utilise technology as a significant resource both internally across the organisation and externally for the benefit of our customers.

There is continued development of the CARD (Customer Address Reference Database) system. This system aims to consolidate the different data sets in the organisation and thus provide speedy access to integrated information on customers / clients who avail of City Council services.

The Council has also increased efficiency with the development of a billing system in conjunction with Pay by Weight. There is also on-going development with regard to the expansion of options for customers in making payments – on line facility for parking fines and refuse. In addition the Council has introduced a Staff Initiative Scheme to encourage ideas for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Team Working and PMDS:

The City Council faced difficulties this year in the provision of a public water supply following the Cryptosporidium outbreak.

The management of this issue presented significant challenges for the staff of Galway City Council and I am pleased to report that all staff responded with an effective, team based approach. Staff across all disciplines worked in a very positive co-ordinated manner both internally, and externally with the relevant agencies until the issue was resolved.

As part of the response the Council has put in place a Water Services Team and has also initiated a Water Conservation Awareness Programme for the city. This

innovative approach is aimed at creating efficiencies in the service. An integral part of the water conservation programme involved the work of the leak detection team in the city and their work has resulted in over 300 leaks being fixed in a six month period to 31st October, 2007 and a saving of over 2,500 cu. m. per day. The enhanced leak eradication programme is set to continue in 2008.

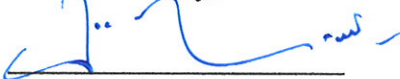
With regard to our commitment under Section 32.13, 'Performance Management and Development System', I wish to confirm that PMDS has now been introduced in all departments and for all staff of the City Council. I would also like to confirm that a role has been developed for the Council's Partnership Facilitator to monitor progress regarding the implementation of PMDS.

Galway City Council remains fully committed to working in partnership with staff and unions and in this regard a work programme has been agreed in relation to "Handling Significant Change Through Partnership".

There continues to be full co-operation with the industrial peace provisions as outlined in Section 32.4 of Towards 2016. I wish to confirm there has been no disruption in service delivery to our customers over the period in question.

I trust this clarifies matters and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or Ms. Eileen Ruane, Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources Department.

Yours sincerely,



Joe MacGrath
Galway City Manager.
Encl.