



11/8 July, 2008

Ms. Chris Gavigan
Joint Chair
LANPAG,
35-39 Usher's Quay
Dublin 8.

Mr. Matt Merrigan
Joint Chair



**Re: Performance Verification under Towards 2016
March 2008-August 2008**

Dear Ms Gavigan /Mr Merrigan

I refer to your letter of 28th May 2008 in connection with the verification of performance in respect of the current period March 2008-August 2008. I enclose checklist outlining the verifiable progress achieved since March 2008 on the identified indicators.

The checklist/progress report was tabled before the Kilkenny Local Authorities Partnership Committee at its meeting in July 2008. The progress report highlights numerous examples of progress by both Authorities on the identified indicators.

I refer also to your request for the Managers report and wish to report as follows:

Enhanced Customer Service

The organisation continues to respond to ongoing customer service needs.

Initiatives undertaken include:-

- Redevelopment of the Kilkenny Parade Project
- Provision of Phase 2 of the School Safety Programme
- Further Development of Woodstock Gardens
- Communications as to revised revenue collection arrangements
- Communication to public on the water meter installation programme and the charging for waste water.
- Improved website and high volume of website hits.
- Development work with Travelling Community.
- Improved Kerbside collection and street sweeping arrangements in Kilkenny City
- Launch of Rural Design Planning Guidelines

Supporting the provision of these services is an effective team work ethic. There are a number of cross departments and multi disciplinary teams in place delivering important services include water metering,

water conservation, school safety measures, Disability Services, and various services under the Rapid Programme.

Co-operation with other agencies

The range of services being provided jointly with or in co-operation with other Agencies continues to expand-

- Senior management continue to participate in the work of various National & Regional committees in developing policy in conjunction with the Department of Environment Heritage & Local Government,
- On going work of Disability Group/Local Authorities in the implementation of its Actions Plan,
- Cooperation on the proposed relocation of central government offices on County Council HQ site .

Development of Shared Services

Both Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Borough Council have examined the potential for the sharing of services. There are numerous ongoing examples of services being shared – human Resources & IR , finance – bank reconciliation, accounts payable & accounting services, environmental enforcement, environment education officer, water safety, developmental planning, housing needs assessments, estate management, tenant investigation, rental accommodation scheme, &the dog warden service.

New proposals are now being developed for the centralisation of the entire Finance function with Kilkenny County Council, the entire Housing function in a new housing one-stop-shop initiative, the Environment & Parks functions for City & Environs with Kilkenny Borough Council -all to be provided on a cost neutral basis.

Both Authorities have formally agreed to advance the provision of new City & County Library Service and Central Government Offices at Co Hall John Street Kilkenny.

A major Transportation and Pedestrian initiative-the Central Access Scheme has been agreed by both Authorities and is subject to An Bord Pleanála approval.

Artslink- a professional development service for creative practices of all art disciplines led and funded by five local authorities continues.

The integrated HR, Payroll & Superannuation system is being rolled out nationally and Kilkenny is due to commence its preparatory work on the project later this year.

Staff Training/PMDS

PMDS was rolled out to most staff of both Authorities but was deferred for a number of Kilkenny Borough Council staff pending restructuring . Support training was provided for all supervisors engaged in the PMDS process. A guide to reviewing team development plans was produced and circulated to all staff together with details of the performance management cycle in Kilkenny Local Authorities(-linking the annual

budgetary process with team development plans and with the organisations corporate plan).

The team Planning process is functioning well. The process will be strengthened further when individual personal development plans are focussed on later this year.

The continued development of staff is a priority as it leads to benefits in improved performance, improved customer service & legislative compliance and facilitates the development of career paths for staff. Training to support such development is now identified from the individual personal development plans of staff, from obligations under legislation, particularly health & safety legislation, and other needs as they arise.

The preparation of a Human Resource (people) strategy which will provide for all aspects of HR has commenced.

Organisation Change and innovation under T.16

Measures progressed through workplace partnership or through the IR forum include

- Transfer of staff from Kilkenny Borough Council to Kilkenny County Council on foot of the transfer of the sanitary services function.
- The rationalisation of the Revenue Collector posts
- Restructuring of the Kilkenny Borough Council refuse collection service,
- Restructure the functions and workforce of Kilkenny Borough Council ,
- Working groups on staff security, procurement options & taking in charge of water services.

IR negotiations on the transfer of staff in connection with the transfer of the Sanitary Service function and the rationalisation of the Revenue Collection function concluded with the assistance of the LRC and the rationalisation of the Revenue Collection function concluded following local discussions.

Value for money/Efficiency/Effectiveness

In addition to the efficiencies being achieved through the various shared services, e payment options and IT enhancements outlined above the following matters will also address VFM matters and achieve efficiencies-

- The ongoing development and provision of Shared Services on a cost neutral basis between Kilkenny County Council & Kilkenny Borough Council.
- The finalisation of a Corporate Procurement Strategy with a focus on an enhanced Procurement Function within both Authorities. Following the development of an understanding of the Local Authority's goods & supplies expenditure critical to its performance, its organisational capacity & competence and whether its financial systems support its position, a strategy is being produced which will focus on cost savings and cost

effectiveness and which positions Procurement as a strategic function within both Authorities.

- Redeployment of staff following reductions of manpower on the kerbside collection service
- Redeployment of staff following a significant reduction in the door to door revenue collection workload
- Restructuring of the functions and workforce of Kilkenny Borough Council to enable Kilkenny City to respond to changing needs .

Cooperation with the Modernisation Agenda.

The attached checklist outlines the indicators of the modernisation agenda. As demonstrated, despite the absence of SIPTU from Partnership , there has been continued cooperation between management and staff in progressing the Authorities action plans for modernising local government services in Kilkenny City & County. The Kilkenny Local Authorities Partnership Committee is a consultation forum for all major change matters and SIPTU's absence from it has not to date impeded progress on the modernisation and change agenda. Should SIPTU's absence from Partnership impede progress I will reconsider my recommendation to LANPAG to pay the final phase due under Towards 2016.

Stable Industrial Relations Climate.

I can confirm that the workplace Partnership Committees & the established Industrial relations machinery have been used to progress issues including significant change issues.

SIPTU, towards the end of the previous reporting period held a ballot amongst its members employed by both Kilkenny County & Borough Councils for industrial action, including strike action and received a mandate to take industrial action. Industrial action has not been taken to date. I can confirm therefore that there has not been any work days lost in the period due to industrial actions.

I recommend that the progress achieved justifies payment of the next pay increase of 2.5% from 1st September 2008 under Towards 2016 to all staff .

Yours Sincerely,



J. Crockett,
County Manager