



Tel: + 353 (0) 42 933 5457

Fax: + 353 (0) 42 933 4549

Louth County Council
Comhairle Chondae Lughai
"Opening doors to a brighter future"

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER

County Hall
Halla an Chontae

Millennium Centre
Ionad na Milaoise

Dundalk
Dún Dealgan

17th December 2007

Joint Chairs
LANPAG
35-39 Ushers Quay
Dublin 8



Re: Performance Verification under Towards 2016
(June 2007 – February 2008)

Dear Joint Chairs

I refer to the above matter and attach the Louth Local Authority progress report in checklist format. This narrative report will address the matters raised in your most recent letter of 31st October last and will in particular mention progress achieved in the current reporting period.

Enhanced Customer Service through better use of ICT

In recent times I am glad to report that there are significant improvements with regard to customer service in the planning area. This is based exclusively on progress achieved with regard to website access to records and applications.

Since the last reporting period, the gPlan system has become operational in all 3 of the Louth Local Authorities. This represents an extension to the two Town Council's and provides the public with access the GIS planning map system online. At the same time, the original ePlan system which is the database that provides full access to planning applications, now allows access over the website to drawings submitted with the applications in the case of Louth County Council.



These enhancements while improvements to the service to the public, represent changes that were required in the business processes of the planning staffs to change previous work practices.

I can also advise that parking fines are now payable online in all three of the Louth Local Authorities which represents an improvement from a system that only allowed payments in the Drogheda Borough Council area.

Co-operation with other Agencies

In this reporting period, I can report that there has been continuing co-operation with other agencies with regard to service delivery in County Louth. This is represented by the continuing support for joint policing committees and a number of Economic Development Programmes. This has seen staff co-operate with other agencies such as IDA, SEI, HSE and private sector representative groups such as Chamber of Commerce. Such co-operation has been demonstrated by out of hours attendance at meetings and extra curricula work undertaken with these agencies with a view to achieving the overall goals of the Louth Local Authorities Corporate Plan.

To this end I am happy to report that the following has been delivered:-

- Re-branding of Dundalk
- Gateway bid proposal
- Investment promotion CD's

Development of Shared Services

It has always been the viewpoint in Louth that the shared service approach would first be concentrated in sharing services across the Louth Local Authorities. During the course of previous action plans, the consolidation of the Agresso Financial Management System was a particular building block that was required to facilitate future shared service options. I can confirm that this project is complete and is now facilitating other potential shared service options.

In the current reporting period I can advise that Human Resources and Superannuation are now treated as a shared service model in the Louth Local Authorities. It is likely that during the coming months further options will be considered for utilisation under this heading. In this period also a decision has been made to progress shared service delivery in the following areas:-

- Fire service
- Housing Capital provision
- Delivery of water services

Staff Training – Performance Management Development System (PMDS)

I can advise that the Performance Management Development System is now embedded in the practice of Louth Local Authorities and the current business plans for 2008 are being prepared in that vein.

With regard to staff training, PMDS has become the sole source of training requests in the Louth Local Authorities and it is likely that the Service Indicator figure for Training will be at least 5.5% for 2007. In this current reporting period, a significant element of training has been delivered in the area of outdoor staff with regard to matters such as Driver Training, Health and Safety Familiarisation and Line Manager Training.

Organisational Change and Innovation under Towards 2016

In the action plan submitted under this agreement, a significant number of change issues were identified for matters in relation to the operation of the fire services in the Louth Local Authorities. It is recognised by all parties that there are significant outdated work practices currently in place and indeed inefficiencies are apparent.

In an effort to address these matters while at the same time to achieve progress in this subject, the Area Partnership Committee of Fire Services have agreed to assist in the undertaking of an overall review of fire service provision in County Louth. This review will address over half the points or actions sought in the original action plan. This review will be undertaken through the Handling Significant Change protocol with the assistance of the Partnership process.

I am however disappointed to advise that progress is not being achieved on other aspects of the action plan which were sought for the fire service. These include matters such as co-operation with introduction of CAMP, co-operation with Major Emergency Planning, co-operation with the Fire Change Programme and also a physical move to the new Fire Station in Drogheda. An issue has also arisen with regard to the Attendance Management Policy and PMDS as retained staff are now refusing to comply with both.

Value for Money/Efficiency/Effectiveness

During the reporting period, I am glad to advise that an objective that was set in the current action plan and in previous formats, sought to address matters in relation to compliance with the Organisation Working Time Act with regard to working in excess of 48 hours. I am happy to report that this matter has been resolved and that the staff concerned are now complying with the legislative requirements. This is being achieved through a variety of measures with the co-operation of all staff concerned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I am satisfied that sufficient progress has been achieved with regard to the actions sought in the Towards 2016 action plan with the exception of the Louth Fire Service.

A number of efforts have been made to address the matters within the Louth Fire Services however there are no compliant groups and I regret therefore to recommend that no payment is made to this grouping.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conn Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Conn Murray
County Manager