



# COMHAIRLE CONTAE MHAIGH EO

Aras an Chontae, Caislean a 'Bharraigh, Contae Mhaigh Eo.  
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Your Ref.

Our Ref.

24<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Ms. Chris Gavigan,  
Joint Chair,  
LANPAG,  
35-39 Ushers Quay,  
DUBLIN 8.



**Re: Performance Verification Under Towards 2016  
(March 2008-August 2008)**

Dear Ms. Gavigan,

I refer to your letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008, regarding the performance verification under Towards 2016 (March 2008-August 2008).

Our original Action Plan/Progress Report under this social partnership agreement was submitted to you in March 2007.

There has been full compliance with the terms of the agreement by all stakeholders in Mayo Local Authorities, through their full involvement in the Partnership process.

I can also confirm that since our last report industrial peace has been maintained and agreed industrial relations machinery, as detailed in T2016, has been used by Mayo Local Authorities, where necessary.

Our Authorities have made substantial progress in 2008 across all activities. Further to our previously outlined objectives for 2007, we continue to make progress in a number of key areas including:-

- Ensuring continuing communications with and involvement of all our employees through the Partnership Process. We have implemented the



“Handling Significant Change “protocol and the HSC High Level meetings have been taking place. A number of these meetings have been convened in 2008, with a view to agreeing the terms of reference of a Strategy Group to look at the future of our Machinery Yard.

- We have introduced PMDS into the four Mayo Local Authorities under the auspices of the Partnership Committee and a review of the process is at an advanced stage. The Partnership Support structure has been particularly effective in this regard. The process is being monitored by our Corporate Affairs Directorate.
- We give huge importance to the training and development of our staff, which is borne out by the fact that our training costs as a percentage of payroll for 2007 was 6.75%. On target for a comparable figure for 2008.
- Our Return to Learning programme is also proving very beneficial and we are continuing to expand and develop this initiative, in conjunction with the local VEC.
- The Council continue to maximise benefits of Castlebar Regional Training Centre. This Centre successfully delivers much needed professional and relevant training and development on a regional basis. The Centre is incorporated in the complex of Mayo County Council, The Mall, Castlebar. The Centre delivers an effective and efficient training service to its constituent partner Local Authorities of Galway, Leitrim, Longford, Mayo and Roscommon and the National Federation of Group Water Schemes, and is a good example of a shared service.
- We continue to enhance our links with the local community, with some examples below:

**(a) Mayo Community Futures Programme**

Community Futures is an innovative whole-community approach to local community planning which results in the production of a Community Action Plan. This Plan is prepared with the full involvement of the local community and provides a clear statement of the community's needs and aspirations, as well as identifying the projects which the community as a whole think are most important for the development of their community. The project has moved from an initial pilot with 4 communities in 2006 to a second phase of 4 new communities. Key strengths of the programme are that it strengthens local ability to represent the local community; acts as a guide for public agencies plans and service delivery strategies; gets more people involved in the local community; and strengthens community organisations.

### **(b) Local Electoral Area Management System**

- Mayo County Council is the third largest County in the Country with a combination of clusters of population, Island communities and varying sized towns together with rural communities including Gaeltacht areas spread throughout the County. In order to provide access to our services for all of these communities, we have introduced the devolved management structure where most of our services are delivered to local communities from within their own local electoral areas. This means that local Councillors through local area committees together with local communities through extended area committees have significant local autonomy in service delivery matters pertaining to their local areas. A Director of Services and management, professional, technical and clerical and administrative staff delivers this innovative system in our seven local electoral areas.
- Suitable infrastructure has been provided to provide a much needed local physical presence in each of our seven areas;
- Highly competent and trained staff deliver this service;
- Supportive and Accessible Self Service options for our services have been provided on our award winning web site: [www.mayococo.ie](http://www.mayococo.ie);
- The primary focus is on people and their needs at all stages of their lives-the life cycle approach;
- Local Councillors and local communities are having a major role on local matters that affect local people;
- Mayo County Council was an 02 ability award winner in 2005 and 2006 and was overall national winner in non private sector in 2007 indicating the Council's commitment to actions for disability;
- The motor tax service has been extended from Castlebar to Ballina and Belmullet which has contributed to increasing commercial business in those two towns in particular.

### **(c) Mayo Ideas Lab**

Mayo Ideas Lab is a collaborative project which arose from the Economic Forum of Mayo County Development Board (Mayo CDB). Mayo, as a county has, through the leadership of Mayo CDB, gone through the process of planning and implementing strategies to make the county a better place to live, work and invest. Recognising the importance of innovation to economic development, the Economic Forum of Mayo CDB

have adopted a new and pioneering approach to stimulating a culture of innovation throughout the county. The strategic aim of Mayo Ideas Lab is to stimulate innovation at many levels within society, including, but not solely, the Industrial, Community and Education Sectors. The objective is that Mayo becomes a centre of excellence for a different model of development that embraces innovation in all its forms, creativity in all its aspects and modifies state of the art solutions to enhance our unique enterprise environment.

In implementing initiatives the project works in partnership with existing agencies. It is initially focused on the Gaeltacht region of Iorras. However many of the initiatives will have a countywide and regional application.

**(d) Green Schools Programme in Mayo.**

The Green Schools Programme is an environmental education programme, an environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. The programme is managed by An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland and is run in co-operation with Mayo County Council

**(e) Walk-in Planning Clinics**

Mayo County Council hold Planning Walk-in Clinics in seven Local Area offices each Wednesday morning from 9.30a.m to 12.30p.m. These are drop in clinics and do not require an appointment. Therefore, this has resulted in the waiting time to consult with a Local Area planner being reduced to nil. In 2007 there were 364 planning clinics held throughout the county and 3660 consultations were held.

**(f) Mayo Social Inclusion Pilot Projects.**

This project has been running since 2004 and was developed by Mayo County Council to address the particularly difficult challenge of extreme instances of rural social exclusion. One rural area was initially chosen and two subsequent areas were able to learn from the lessons from the initial study area. Effectively the project involved the bringing together of key local community contacts along with key personnel from statutory bodies to identify particularly at-risk people who might benefit from a more innovative approach to service delivery. At all times strict confidentiality was required to ensure the protection of personal information.

- We continue to prioritise the Road Safety Service through imaginative targeted programmes, and are aware of the importance of the continuance of awareness programmes for all road users on an ongoing basis.

- We continuously strive to improve our customer service:-
  - We are acutely aware of our obligation to provide a quality service to the public, and a need to listen to what the public have to say and recommend in relation to the services we provide. In this regard we have initiated a Customer Service Panel as a method of consultation.
- Mayo Local Authorities are working towards Universal Accessibility:-
  - Mayo Local Authorities have complied with our obligations under the Disability Act and have gone much further than the law requires in a number of areas. We have received the O2 Ability Award in 2005 and 2006 and were overall winners in the non private sector in 2007. We have received three NDA awards at quality level for our buildings in Westport Castlebar and Ballina. We have completed our Disability Audits; have a strategy and Implementation Plans in place, and our works programme is in train.
- Mayo County Council is the holder of an Excellence through People award which it has held continuously since it first achieved the award in 1997. We have applied for the Platinum Standard of this award in 2008, and have also applied for Chambers Ireland excellence in Local Government Award.
- Mayo Local Authorities will continue to work closely with the Local Government Management Services Board and to use the agreed dispute resolution mechanisms where this becomes necessary as set out in *Towards 2016*. There is an ongoing commitment to using the Partnership model to maintain a stable industrial relations environment. Recognition that Partnership is the way we carry out our activities is the key to our ongoing successes.

We appreciate that the success of Mayo Local Authorities is dependent on compliance by all stakeholders with the terms of the *Towards 2016*. There exists a genuine willingness on all sides to co-operate at all levels with this agreement and in this regard I am confident that substantial progress will continue to be achieved over the life of this agreement in Mayo Local Authorities.

Yours sincerely,



D. Mahon,  
County Manager