

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CONTAE ÁTHA CLIATH THEAS



02/01/08

Halla an Chontae, Lár an Bhaile
Tamhlacht, Baile Átha Cliath 24
Telefon: 01-4149112
Facs: 01-4149110

Human Resources Department
County Hall, Town Centre
Tallaght, Dublin 24
Telephone: 01-4149112
Fax: 01-4149110
website: www.sdcc.ie

14th December 2007

Ms. Chris Gavigan,
Asst. Chief Executive,
Local Government Management Services Board,
Olaf House,
Ushers Quay,
Dublin 1.

Re: Towards 2016 Agreement (June 2007 – February 2008)

Dear Chris,

Further to your letter dated 31st October 2007 in respect of the national pay increase due from 1st March 2008, as requested I set out for your consideration a comprehensive narrative report setting out the progress achieved in completing and further progressing our commitments under the Towards 2016 Agreement using the key headings which form part of the Action Plan Progress Report.

In accordance with your letter the Partnership at Work Committee have been consulted in relation to progress and modernisation commitments contained in the Towards 2016 Agreement. The Partnership at Work Committee at its meeting on 12th December 2007 considered the Action Plan Progress Report and I am enclosing the completed Checklist signed, by the Partnership Joint Chairs, with appropriate progress comments.

The last progress report issued to you in March 2007 and I am pleased to advise you that the current update identifies continued progress, innovation and enhancements to many aspects of our service provision to our customers as well as to our internal efficiencies and processes. I can confirm that industrial peace has been maintained and that there has been full engagement in the development of the Partnership at work process.

South Dublin is an organisation comprising approximately 1500 staff with an annual revenue – capital budget of over €900m in 2008. This budget provides a wide range of services to over 249,000 citizens as well as maintaining and improving our extensive catalogue of fixed assets, currently valued at €3.1 billion including infrastructure, parks and properties vested in the Council.

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Email at cccoun@sdublincoco.ie
SMS-text "cccoun" and your query to 086 1731707

To enable me to provide a strong teamwork approach to service delivery and policy development I have organised the Senior Management of the organisation into three distinct Cluster Groups. Their task is to convert into action the objectives of the Corporate Plan and decisions taken by the elected representatives through the Council, the CPG and the various Strategic Policy Committees. The **Organisational Change Cluster Group** is charged with driving the modernisation and change agenda, providing the elected members with support and customer service improvements, the **Infrastructure Cluster Group** is responsible for spatial planning, the built environment and economic development and the **Quality of Life Cluster Group** with delivering community development, environmental control, interagency co-operation and quality of life issues.

This Council continues to embrace modernisation and change programmes in practice and has led the way as pilot authority for many initiatives and changes. Examples of our initiatives and progress can be chartered under the following areas:

- Enhanced Customer Service
- Organisational Change and Modernisation
- PMDS and Staff Development
- Co-operation with other agencies
- Partnership in the workplace
- Value for money/Efficiencies/Effectiveness
- Shared Services

Enhanced Customer Service

We have continued to develop the **Customer Contact Centre**, with up to 90% of personal callers now being dealt with at first point of contact. During the past 6 months this service was extended to the Clondalkin Civic Centre and has facilitated four extra hours opening per day coupled with an expanded range of service provision which has been well received by the public. During 2008 the priority will be to deal more efficiently and comprehensively with telephone callers on a first point of contact basis without referral to back office staff. Those improvements are being carried out on a cost-neutral staffing basis through the redeployment of staff from departmental back – offices to be retrained and redeployed as multi-skilled customer service agents. During 2007 the Customer Contact IT System was upgraded to better evaluate performance, utilize the system for complaints handling and compliance with all Customer Charter Standards. Further enhancements to the telephone system are being implemented across the organisation to more effectively deal and manage calls to and from our Customer Care Centres and facilitate eworking in the organisation. The introduction of Call Centre Technology into all general offices throughout the organization will enable us to track and provide feedback on levels of business to each department for better organization-wide management of staff resources.

Our library website www.southdublinlibraries.ie is now offering 24/7 access to the library service with increased functionality including downloadable ebooks online library catalogue, reservations, renewals and access to a range of online reference services. Wifi wireless access is also available in all libraries and being expanded to all community and swimming pool facilities. During 2007 nearly 1 million items were borrowed and 1 million visitors came to our libraries. RFID technology has been implemented to introduce 'smart' library processes, introducing self service options for customers thus re-deploying staff from traditional repetitive tasks to focus more on customer service. Work on a major expansion and enhancement of the County Library are nearing completion and plans are being advanced for the extension of another library.

Organisational Change and Modernisation

I have established a Change Management Unit which provides support, direction and co-ordination for the successful introduction of PMDS, BPI and other necessary business and organisational changes required to realise our vision. A Change Agents Group comprising of representatives from all Departments work with Change Management Unit to deliver and communicate modernisation projects throughout the organisation at a local level.

Our Change and Modernisation Strategy which involves achieving standards of excellence in project selection, planning, management and communication details how we support the business and organisational changes necessary to maintain delivery of high quality modern services. A significant programme of works has been delivered ensuring that we remain alert to our customer's needs and changing expectations, while also enabling us measure our responses. Included are:

- Lunchtime openings
- WIFI access to the public
- Elected members meetings applications system and development of a members net and a press net
- Document management systems
- Billpay on-line
- Electronic time and attendance
- Development of E-Connect
- Excellence Through People accreditation
- Development of e-learning circle
- ANPR and Roadmap
- Infrastructure Tracking System

PMDS & Staff Development

The PMDS review was concluded during 2007 and is developing into a management tool for delivering change. The monitoring of the Team Development Plans through an in-house developed on-line system will in time facilitate training and reporting on the delivery of corporate objectives. The Personal Development Plans have provided improved job clarity and the identification of training and development needs which will form the basis of a comprehensive staff training programme during 2008. Investment in staff training has been maintained at a high level with 4.75% of the payroll budget expanded on training in line with national requirements.

As a organisation we are working towards achieving accreditation for continuing Professional Development for our Engineering/Technical staff. During 2007 a total of approximately 1500 staff training days were carried out which is broken down 25% professional/technical staff, 34% general services staff and 41% clerical/administrative.

Partnership in the Workplace

During 2007 a number of High Level Management/Trade Union meetings were held in accordance with the framework set out in the policy document Handling Significant Change. The Partnership at Work Committee is supported by two full-time staff and 8 working groups comprising of management, staff and union representatives were established to progress issues of significant change such as:

- GPS System in council fleet
- Organisational HR Strategy
- Policy on purchase of Plant and Machinery
- Career Paths of General Operatives
- Policy on sustainable environment
- Completion of physical accommodation examination
- Delivery of communications policy
- Use of Contractors in SDCC

Value for Money/Efficiency/Effectiveness

The achievement of ongoing modernisation and change in ensuring the delivery of a value for money service continues to be driven through our Partnership Committee and our organisational change programme led by the Change Management Unit. The successful conclusion of negotiations during 2007, on a Cleansing Review means that an enhanced cleansing service will now be delivered to the public in 2008. The core objectives of this review were to achieve flexibility, greater responsiveness and work practice improvements. Business Process Improvements incorporating best use of ICT have resulted in cost savings, improved efficiencies and enhanced service provision. Staff have been central to this change to date and their continued flexibility and cooperation is acknowledged.

Co-operation with Other Agencies

The Council is actively involved with a number of key initiatives which require co-operation with other agencies. These include:

- Childhood Development Initiative in conjunction with the HSE
- Delivering affordable housing in co-operation with the Affordable Housing Partnership
- Establishment of a Joint Policing Committee
- Pilot authority for the Children's Service which is comprised of representatives from a number of key statutory, community and voluntary organisations
- Inter-agency co-operation in relation to the delivery of services and supports to the Traveller Community including extension of Traveller Employment initiative
- Development of the Grange Castle Business Park in conjunction with the I.D.A.
- Initiatives in a number of pro-social behaviour projects including the engagement of three 'Football in the Community' Development Officers in conjunction with the FAI
- Further development of the Connect Project in conjunction with local schools and community associations.

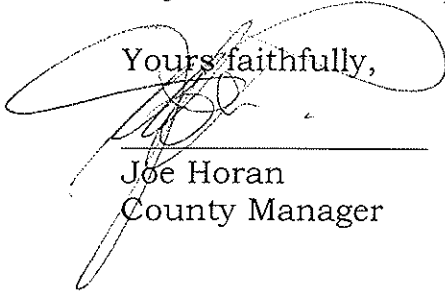
Shared Services

The Council is presently engaged in a number of shared services arrangements i.e. waste enforcement, fire service and water service delivery. In addition the Council has indicated its willingness to partake in a feasibility examination of a shared services in respect of Superannuation.

In conclusion I am confident that during 2008 the development and implementation of the change and modernisation agenda will continue at a satisfactory pace and accordingly I am satisfied that on the basis of progress being made throughout the organisation to date that the pay increase of 2.5% from the 1st of March 2008 is warranted.

During the course of our last verification I reported to you that I was not applying the June 1st 2007 pay increase to any staff member who had not signed up for Paypath. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that 98% of all staff have now signed up for the scheme. Staff who still refuse to join the scheme will not receive any increases retrospectively.

Yours faithfully,



Joe Horan
County Manager