

Our Ref: ER/JF

11<sup>th</sup> July 2008



**Private & Confidential**

Ms. C. Gavigan and Mr. M. Merrigan  
Joint Chairs  
LANPAG  
35-39 Ushers Quay  
Dublin8

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

Dear Ms. Gavigan and Mr. Merrigan,

The attached checklist was agreed for signature at a meeting of the City Council's Partnership Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008. The Joint Chairperson, Tom Power, Union side and Lar Power, Management side have signed the checklist.

In accordance with your request of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008, I set out my narrative in relation to the headings raised.

**Enhanced Customer Service**

The City Council continues to improve its housing maintenance service to its tenants through an enhanced programme of planned maintenance to achieve a better response to existing tenants and a faster turnaround on vacancies.

Recent competition from the private sector in the domestic waste collection area necessitated a response from the City Council through a publicity campaign that highlighted the advantages of the Council's system in the area of cost, segregation, recycling, reliability and regularity. The workforce responded to the challenge by fully co-operating with the programme.

The library service continues to provide an excellent and varied service to the public. The close relationship of the Arts Section and the Archives Section with the Library Service has meant a more co-ordinated and holistic approach to many projects and ventures in this area such as exhibitions, art, craft etc, lectures, readings, recitals and information



seminars. This library service has now taken a more prominent role in the whole “% for Art” area for capital works across the full spectrum of operations of the Council. Major enterprises like the Outer Ring Road and the Waste Water Treatment Plant, new build housing schemes and remedial works schemes together with an input into the % for Art Project for the Waterford City Bypass which is the biggest ever single infrastructural project in the southeast are recent projects.

The City Council, on a regular basis, has customer satisfaction surveys carried out in an effort to establish where the gaps and blackspots are in service delivery. A response to one such survey was a seminar organised by the Planning Department in response to a request by agents for a direction on how to deal with planning applications.

### **Co-operation with other agencies**

The GIF has offered the City Council and the stakeholders involved a tangible example of cooperation in compiling Project 2014. Adjoining Local Authorities together with private sector interests have demonstrated a capacity to co-operate to achieve a vision to bring the Gateway Area forward as a vibrant, growing and inviting location going into the future.

The CBD actively pursuing its brief to deliver the Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development of Waterford City 2001-2012 is in constant contact with all state and local agencies in the area.

A Joint Policing Committee was set up in accordance with Garda Síochána Act 2005. This committee consists of senior Gardai, local Oireachtas members, community forum representatives and elected and executive members of Waterford City Council. This committee has helped to the constituent agencies to focus on the most pressing local policing issues.

### **Shared Services**

#### **Composting Plant expansion**

Situated at the western edges of the City with direct access from the Outer Ring Road, it will provide a regional facility for the processing of organic waste.

Waterford Energy Bureau continues to operate well and has a number of flagship projects to its credit where the latest energy-saving methods have been employed e.g. new City Council Depot and new Sports and Leisure complex

#### **Waterford Sports Partnership**

The position of this venture is now firmly embedded in the day to day sporting activities in the City and County in both the governing bodies and the schools. The partnership was actively involved in progressing the events for the recent very successful official opening of the new Regional Sports Centre East Stand.

The sports and leisure facility provided under the PPP process is open and operating and feedback is very positive.

On the same sports campus, in a somewhat different arrangement, the City Council is in partnership with the FAI secured Sports Capital Funding which went towards providing the new stand with a capacity of 1680 to the playing field/running track at Waterford Regional Sports Centre. The same project provided a new entrance and additional parking to improve access.

### **Staff Training/PMDS**

The City Council's strategy to compile its training plan from PDPs gives focus and relevance to the plan. At 6.1% of payroll, the training budget is reflective of the commitment to the City Council to the ongoing training and development of all employees. The PMDS process is now in its third year and while there are still some small operational glitches the process is embedded overall and is now seen as part of the standard operating procedure of the City Council.

### **Organisational Change**

The City Council can report progress under the above in the following areas:

Attendance Management: Electronic format introduced across the entire Council. Being constantly developed to provide more data

Significant Change: Regular meetings taking place with full participation of all partnership stakeholders.

Work Practice: The growing acceptance of the necessity for flexibility around work practice is a corollary benefit of significant change engagement.

Redeployment: The principle is now accepted as a necessary part of moving forward to the organisation.

Workplace Partnership: Now firmly established within the organisation strong departmental working groups emerging.

Health & Safety: Active health and safety committees and Health & Safety representatives keeping all issues to the fore.

### **Value For Money/Efficiency/Effectiveness**

We have a Corporate Procurement Plan which aims to achieve value for money in purchasing, in particular the need to maximise choices when obtaining goods and services by focusing on organisation structure, training, and procurement aggregation. Waterford City Council was the first Local Authority to complete their plan and it was placed on the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government's web site as an assistance to other Local Authorities.

Our core approach in striving to achieve efficiencies is centred on continuous cost comparisons in our areas of operations. We are about to complete a comprehensive cost

comparison exercise with the private sector in the housing maintenance area. We have completed a similar study of the City Council's garage operation. The City Council has just recently concluded a restructuring of its entire Revenue Collection area which will result in significant efficiency and savings.

The use of customer surveys is seen as a critical element in delivering services and in responding to ever growing demands.

The objectives are to deliver quality services and the sustain/retain payroll costs at below 40%.

On going co-operation with the modernisation agenda as referred to above is satisfactory. Industrial peace has been maintained and regular dialogue in the form of face to face meetings with the unions takes place on a regular basis.

Yours Sincerely,



**Michael Walsh**  
**City Manager**