

Corporate Plan for Meath Local Authorities *2004-2009*



Meath Local Authorities

Corporate Plan 2004-2009



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1.0 FORWARD

It is with great pleasure that we present our Corporate Plan for the years 2004 to 2009.

This very important document will guide the actions of the Meath Local Authorities over the next five years. We have a vision of Meath as a county which is recognized locally, nationally and internationally as an excellent place to invest in, to visit and to live in, renowned for the quality of its environment, heritage, culture and the strength and viability of its communities. We also have a vision of Meath Local Authorities being recognized as leading the way in ensuring that our vision for the county is implemented.

Meath Local Authorities believe in County Meath and believe that the members, management and staff are focused and committed to making a real and positive difference to County Meath during the period of the plan. We also believe we have the mechanisms in place to support our state and semi-state partners and to encourage continuing partnership with our communities.

We are facing many challenges, particularly the need to grow our economic development capacity and to ensure that we have the infrastructural services in place to facilitate the balanced growth of the county. We must also be conscious of our existing communities and continue to support their needs.

This plan should be read by all those interested in the development of County Meath, including members and staff of Meath Local Authorities. It will serve to remind us of where we are going and what we want to achieve. We have put a comprehensive monitoring regime in place and reports will go regularly to the Corporate Policy Group and the members of Meath County Council.

Tommy Reilly
Cathaoirleach



Tom Dowling
Co. Manager



2.0 INTRODUCTION



The Corporate Plan, for the period 2004 – 2009, sets out the strategic framework in which Meath Local Authorities will operate for that period. Meath Local Authorities are operating in an ever-changing environment, characterised by the unprecedented population growth occurring in the County and the resulting increase in demand for services. The Councillors and staff of Meath Local Authorities are committed to meeting the challenges, which will arise over the period of the plan.

The Corporate Plan adopts an organisation-wide approach, encompassing the services being delivered by Meath County Council, Navan Town Council, Kells Town Council and Trim Town Council. This approach highlights the relationship and inter-dependencies between Town Councils and the County Council.

The primary objective of the Corporate Plan is to outline the strategic direction for Meath Local Authorities in serving the citizens of County Meath. This will be achieved by identifying the long-term vision and the mission statement for Meath Local Authorities and the key values that guide their actions. It will outline the environment in which the Authorities operate, the broad corporate and strategic functional objectives with supporting strategies. It will also address the internal capacity and resources available to achieve these objectives.

The Corporate Plan will be supported by a series of Annual Operational Plans, which will develop the implementation process by outlining in detail how the objectives will be achieved. Performance measurement will form a key part of the implementation process, as required in the document 'Delivering Value for the People – Service Indicators for Local Authorities', and as published in the Annual Report.

An inter-departmental Corporate Plan Review Steering Group Committee, reporting to the management team, was formed to oversee the preparation of the Corporate Plan. Consultation was considered critical in producing a meaningful document that will respond to the real needs of the citizens of our county. Councillors, Management, Staff and Service Users actively participated in the consultation process and we appreciate their cooperation and assistance.

Meath Local Authorities are committed to implementing this Corporate Plan 2004 – 2009 and look forward to the challenges that will inevitably be presented as Meath enters a further period of development and growth.

3.0 VISION

The Meath Local Authorities have a vision of a County that is recognized locally, nationally and internationally as an excellent place to invest in, to visit and to live in, renowned for the quality of its environment, heritage, culture and the strength and viability of its communities. We also have a vision of our Local Authorities being recognized as leading the way in ensuring our vision for the County is implemented.

4.0 MISSION

To drive the economic, social, cultural and environmental growth of our county in a balanced manner that is inclusive of all our citizens.



5.0 CORE VALUES

In the implementation of this plan Meath Local Authorities will be guided by the following core values, which underpin our operations.

Citizen Focus

We are committed to the development and implementation of policies for the overall benefit of the county, whilst serving the customer in a caring, consistent and courteous manner.

Building Communities

We are committed to developing and strengthening communities by providing built and social infrastructure, by strengthening our economic base to ensure our communities can work within our county, and by building working relationships through consultation, planning and cooperation.

Enhancing Local Democracy

We are committed to enhancing the local democratic process by encouraging our citizens to participate in the planning and delivery of services.

Accessibility, Accountability, Openness

We are committed to making our services accessible to all our citizens and that service delivery and decision-making is conducted in an open and transparent manner.

Equality and Social Inclusion

We are committed to the development of policy and delivery of services that will contribute to an impartial and inclusive society, which meets the diverse needs of all our citizens.

Embracing Change

We are committed to responding to and leading change through innovation, flexibility and measurement of our performance.

Partnership

We are committed to working in Partnership with our citizens and our staff to further the processes of consultation and consensus decision-making in our activities.

Sustainability

We are committed to the provision of services, which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Management of Resources

We are committed to the most efficient and effective use of available resources to provide a quality service and value for money.

6.0 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

There are many factors impacting on our county, which directly or indirectly affect the Meath Local Authorities. In many instances these are outside of our control, yet we must be cognisant of these factors and take them into consideration when preparing and planning for the future.

External

The external environment represents those factors external to our organisation that affect and influence operations.

The current complex legislative environment influences how we operate, and set our objectives for the coming years.

Meath has a recorded population of 134,000 (2002 Census), representing the largest percentage increase in population experienced by any Irish county over the 1996-2002 period. The population is currently in excess of 140,000, with demographic projections suggesting a population of 151,000 by the year 2010.

The development pressures associated with this growth are partly influenced by our proximity to Dublin. These pressures present major challenges in the provision of political, economic, social, technological and legislative infrastructure.



Political

Meath Local Authorities provide a forum for the democratic representation of the local community through local elections conducted every 5 years. Meath Local Authorities are also charged with the implementation of National Government policies.

The elected Councils formulate policies based on the needs of the county and these drive the activities of the organisation.

Economic

Reliance on central government funding and the lack of autonomy and discretion to generate local income continue to pose problems, in economic terms, for the Meath Local Authorities.

It has been difficult to develop an enterprise base capable of generating sufficient local revenue to fully respond to the development needs of our county. We are competing with the Border Midland West region and are affected by our proximity to the metropolitan Dublin Area.

Similarly, while the county has a highly skilled workforce, substantial numbers commute outside of the county on a daily basis, thereby restricting the generation of local income.

The Council will continue to proactively promote County Meath as an attractive location for inward investment opportunities to address the challenges outlined above.

Social

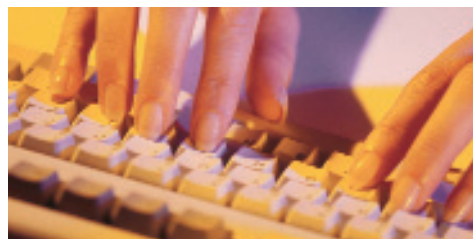
The changing demographic profile of the county has led to a diverse and multicultural community. This presents challenges and opportunities to shape the future of service delivery and to achieve a high quality of life for our citizens.

An overall population growth of 87% has been recorded since 1970 (an increase of 22.1% between 1996 and 2002) whilst levels of population decline have been experienced in the north and west of the county. One of the major challenges facing Meath Local Authorities during the lifetime of this plan will be balancing the needs and expectations of the population growth in certain areas, with the required regeneration of other areas.

Information Communication Technologies

Information Communications Technology has been, and will continue to be, a key catalyst for change.

The advancement of the national ICT strategy, including the eGovernment agenda and the provision of Broadband Infrastructure, requires a coordinated, strategic and socially inclusive response from the Local Authority sector.



Legislative

Meath Local Authorities operate within a wide-ranging legislative framework to implement Government policy and act as a local regulator and an agent of Government,.

National, Regional and Local plans and strategies along with EU Directives and Regulations impose stringent controls and demands, particularly in the planning and environmental areas.

All of these have a significant influence on the operation and resourcing of our business.

Internal

All factors that are internal to our organisation are called the "internal environment".

We must be conscious of this environment in setting realistic objectives and in managing change over the coming years.

Human Resources

Meath Local Authorities employ over 800 staff and, collectively, are one of the largest employers in the county. The workforce is our greatest resource and is fundamental to the successful delivery of this Corporate Plan.

Our commitment to change and continuous improvement will challenge the skills and capacity of our workforce. This, together with the need to provide quality customer service, requires a strategic approach to the training, development and effective management within an approved staffing structure.

Training and development of staff has progressed through Workplace Partnership and will continue to be a priority. The implementation of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), together with our accredited Continuous Professional Development programme for engineering and technical staff, will assist career development, promote staff retention and reinforce a commitment to life-long learning.

We recognize that the effective Industrial Relations and Workplace Partnership mechanisms are critical to the successful delivery of national partnership agreements and change management.

Meath Local Authorities acknowledge that the successful implementation of Family Friendly/Work Life Balance Initiatives and other human resource policies are key elements in enhancing the Council's ability to retain experienced and valued staff, and attract high quality new entrants.



Financial Resources

The legislative restrictions imposed on Local Authorities preventing us from raising local income, coupled with the rising expectations of our growing population, present a serious challenge to delivering and maintaining high levels of service, while trying to redress an ongoing revenue deficit.

The most significant trend in recent years is the loss of income streams coupled with significantly increased costs, especially in the provision of water and wastewater services. The promotion of value for money and management of resources are critical to the full implementation of the corporate vision.



Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The move to a system of area-based service delivery through a network of one-stop-shops has been facilitated by investment in technology. It has provided us with a communication tool and a mechanism for innovative delivery of quality customer service.

We will continue to invest in ICT to ensure a flexible and responsive approach to service delivery and participation in the Government's REACH initiative.

7.0 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Set out below is a number of broad organisation-wide objectives to guide and shape the direction of the functions of the organisation.

Financial

To optimize the use of limited resources and generate additional sources of revenue.

Physical and Social Infrastructure

To facilitate the integrated provision of the physical, economic, social, cultural and quality of life infrastructure.

Change Management

To embrace and promote the necessary organisational changes, by systematically reviewing the performance of the Local Authorities and to ensure our ongoing effectiveness to deliver a quality service.

Sustainability

To achieve balanced integrated sustainable development in accordance with the principle of Agenda 21.

Social Inclusion

To promote universal equality of access to public spaces and buildings, participation and empowerment for all through an inclusive approach to service provision in line with Equality Legislation and The Barcelona Declaration of 1995.

Customer Service

To provide a quality, accessible, courteous and responsive service.

County Development Board

To lead and drive the improved coordination and integration of service provision at local level.

Area-Based Management

To manage and monitor the effectiveness of service delivery in the context of the current decentralised structure.

8.0 STRATEGIC FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

These objectives are set out on a functional basis and have been developed with regard to the corporate objectives. They set out the aims of the Local Authorities over the lifetime of this plan and prioritise the supporting strategies to achieve these aims.

Supporting Services

Corporate Services

The functions of the Corporate Services Department include supporting the role of the Councillors and the democratic process, providing information on organisational activities and ensuring the delivery of a quality customer-focused service.

Strategic Objective

To work within a framework of democratic principles, which facilitates optimum public participation, and the delivery of quality services for the benefit of our community.

Supporting Strategies

Members' Support

To support and enhance the role of the elected Councillor through the provision of information, training, advice and facilities, as required to carry out their role.

Management Team Support

To provide administrative support to the executive management team in the execution of their functions.

Higher Education Grants

To administer the Department of Education and Science Higher Education Grant Scheme at local level.

Communications / Corporate Identity

To communicate effectively with our customers and community in order to increase awareness of the organisation's services and operations.

Corporate Plan

To oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Corporate Plan.

Ethics Register

To administer and enforce the provisions of the Ethical Framework for the Local Government Service.

Elections

To oversee the democratic election process in an efficient manner.

Health and Safety

To ensure that health and safety is a priority in all aspects of our work

Meetings Administration

To support the Councillors in fulfilling and enhancing their democratic and policy role.

Register of Electors

To capture information and manage the quality control, publication and distribution of the Register of Electors, in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Acts.

Customer Care

To promote a culture of excellence in service provision, which is responsive to the needs and expectations of our customers and community.

Corporate Buildings and Surrounds

To provide, manage and maintain a safe, secure, functional environment accessible to all.

Change Management

Implement a process of review and strengthening of our business processes.



Human Resources

Meath Local Authorities employ circa 800 people. These employees are the Authorities' most vital asset and are key to the effective delivery of our services.

For the past number of years Local Authorities have had to face the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. Significant modernisation changes such as those brought about under BLG, and the National Social Partnership Agreement, "Sustaining Progress" have presented new challenges for the Human Resource function. The organisation recognises and takes into account skills and competencies that are necessary for the delivery of quality customer services and value for money. Performance Management Development System (PMDS) is a new requirement for the delivery of improved productivity, coupled with adequate professional development of individuals and teams, and will drive the human resource management function of Meath Local Authorities.

The HR Strategy recognises Workplace Partnership as the preferred approach for the introduction of change. It builds trust and understanding among staff and encourages a shared vision and appreciation of organisational objectives.



Strategic Objective

To contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives by developing a competent, highly motivated staff; and fostering a flexible, responsive working environment that enhances opportunities and maximises the potential of every staff member.

Supporting Strategies

Staff Structure

To effectively manage and maintain an approved, flexible and responsive staff structure that meets the evolving needs of the organisation.

Leave

To manage and facilitate a balancing of staff leave entitlements with operational requirements, and to promote a culture of successful work-life balance within the organisation.

Remuneration

To determine and provide appropriate remuneration of staff in line with nationally agreed pay scales and awards.

Performance Management

To devise and implement a performance management system, appropriate to Meath Local Authorities, enabling staff at all levels to understand how their personal contribution is required, for the achievement of overall organisational objectives.

Training

To systematically assess needs in conjunction with the Performance Management Development System and Continuous Professional Development programmes, in order to provide the appropriate training, education and professional development, to empower a skilled, productive, flexible human resource, capable of meeting evolving organisational needs.

Time and Attendance

To manage and develop flexible working arrangements for the benefit of our customers, while balancing the needs of employees and the organisation.

Identification and Security

To provide and implement an identification and security system, that contributes to a safe environment for staff and customers.

Superannuation

To manage the accurate recording and maintenance of all employment details, and to provide an accurate, efficient service that complies with Superannuation Legislation

Industrial Relations

To build on current stable industrial relations, and to promote and develop Workplace Partnership as the way we work, to achieve organisational success.

Regulatory Compliance / Equality / Ethics / Conduct / Policies

To develop, through Workplace Partnership, staff policies and procedures to meet organisational needs and to enhance the development of staff at all stages of their working life, having regard to relevant guidelines and legislation.

Recruitment

To manage the sourcing, selection and appointment, in a fair and transparent manner, of the highest calibre people to meet the human resource needs of the organisation.



Information Technology

The Information Technology Department provides quality customer services, enabling universal participation, innovation and excellence in eGovernment and technology.

Strategic Objective

To use the talents of our staff and the technological resources and assets of the Council efficiently, effectively and productively to deliver a high quality service to our customers that meets their needs and expectations.

Supporting Strategies

To develop and enhance the capacity of the IT Department to deliver systems and services that meet the needs and expectations of its internal customers, of Councillors, of other public bodies and of the public.

To contribute to and foster the creation of an inclusive Information Society.

To exploit the potential of information technology to enhance democracy and broaden public participation in local government.

To lead the development and exploitation of Internet technologies to deliver Council services to the public and to Councillors in a variety of innovative ways.

To work with external organizations to contribute to national technology and eGovernment initiatives, and to deliver national and local systems and services.

To continue to lead innovation in the delivery of local government services and use appropriate technologies for this purpose.

To participate in National initiatives such as Community Broadband and the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN)



Finance

The Finance Department manages and monitors the income and expenditure of the organisation. Meath Local Authorities expect to spend in excess of 1.5 billion euro over the life of this Corporate Plan.. This level of expenditure, together with the management of net assets and reserves of 2.4 billion euro, impacts on every activity of the Council.

Strategic Objective

To ensure that the activities of Meath Local Authorities are based on sound financial management practices which comply with appropriate legislation, and that all resources are optimised to fully implement the strategies contained in this plan.

Supporting Strategies

Decision-Making

To provide timely and accurate information and advice to support and enable good decision-making.

Financial Management

To optimise the financial management system to support sound financial management practices throughout the organisation.

Value For Money

To promote the principle of value for money and ensure resources are properly and efficiently managed.

Internal Audit

To continue to develop best practice in internal audit and controls.

Coordinated Funding Bids

To maximise all available sources of funds and be innovative in our bid to secure future and additional funding.

Insurances

To develop improved and enhanced management of insurances across the organisation.

Procurement

To develop cross-departmental value for money procurement practices.

Legal Services

To coordinate and provide an efficient and cost effective legal advice support to the organisation.

Risk Management

To assess, analyse and advise on the activities and processes of the organisation, to minimise losses and maximise opportunities.

Community, Enterprise, Recreation, Culture, and Heritage

This function deals with the following core services:

- Community and Enterprise Development
- Meath County Development Board
- Pride of Place Initiatives
- Environmental Action Programme
- Heritage
- Arts
- Library Service
- Community, Recreation, Leisure and Amenity Facilities/Community Grants Scheme
- RAPID programme
- Meath Local Sports Partnership

Strategic Objective

To develop and promote a wide range of programmes and services that empower people to participate in community activity and development; and to work together within the Council, with communities and with stakeholders, to best effect to build confident sustainable communities.

Supporting Strategies

Community and Enterprise Development

- To highlight, promote and establish the benefits of community development principles and processes within the policies of Meath Local Authorities and their service delivery.
- To identify, develop and implement a range of community development initiatives, including Community Information Technology initiatives that will encourage community participation and facilitate community empowerment, thereby enhancing the role of Meath Local Authorities in community development.
- To increase awareness of and address social exclusion, both within and external to Meath Local Authorities through consultation and cooperation.



Meath County Development Board

- To continue to support and facilitate Meath County Development Board in implementing its ten-year integrated strategy for County Meath.
- To promote Meath County Development Board within Meath Local Authorities as a strategic multi-agency partnership for the advancement of cross-sectoral initiatives.

Pride of Place/Environmental Action Programme

- To continue the development of the Pride of Place Initiatives and the Environmental Action Programme for the next five years in an innovative and flexible manner.
- To advocate a policy of best environmental management practices for all Local Authority operations and for all activities carried out by Community and Voluntary Groups.

Heritage

- To establish a County Heritage Forum and to prepare and implement a 5-year County Heritage Plan in consultation with the community and all stakeholders.
- To provide advice and training on best practice in heritage conservation and management to the community, Local Authority and other agencies.
- To raise heritage awareness and facilitate the collection and dissemination of heritage information.
- To contribute to local authority policy formulation and decision-making.
- To promote universal access to heritage sites.

Arts

- To launch and implement the second County Arts Development Plan.
- To continue to promote, facilitate and expand participatory arts initiatives towards social, cultural, community and educational development.
- To provide a balanced series of cultural events, annually, across all arts disciplines.
- To continue the development and sustainability of professional arts practices and practitioners in the County, taking into account the number of professionals now located in Meath.

Meath Library Service

- To deliver a modern library and information service through the implementation of a five-year library development Programme.
- To encourage and increase membership, and the use of the wide range of Library services which are available across all sections of the community.

Community, Recreation, Leisure and Amenity Facilities

- To co-ordinate and manage the annual Community Grants Scheme including local authority projects and initiatives.

Navan RAPID Programme

- To secure funding and resources to revitalise areas through planning, investment, integration and empowerment.

Meath Local Sport Partnership

- To implement the Meath Local Sports Partnership Plan.
- To develop and deliver a range of quality programmes to increase the awareness of, and the benefits of physical activity and sport.



Planning and Economic Development

This function deals with the physical planning and sustainable development of the county and the promotion of economic and tourism activity.

Strategic Objective

To operate a system of physical planning within sustainable patterns of settlement which facilitates and provides the impetus for economic development in County Meath, whilst at all times fostering protection of the natural and built environment of the County.

Supporting Strategies

Planning

- To facilitate and encourage development within sustainable patterns of settlement while having regard to National and Regional policy documents towards fostering protection and management of the archaeological and built heritage, thereby promoting the efficient use of land and infrastructure.
- To deliver a high quality, effective and efficient service through skilled and motivated staff, using the most up to date integrated Information Technology packages.
- To review and prepare all Development Plans and Local Area Plans and other statutory documents including the Meath Housing Strategy, Retail Strategy and Development Contributions Scheme in line with the principles of sustainable development.
- To fulfill our statutory duty to decide on all planning applications and other matters within specified timescales, and as expeditiously as possible, while at all times having regard to the principles of sustainable development and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- To use our statutory powers in ensuring that all development is carried out in conformity with planning permission and the Building Control legislation and to take appropriate enforcement action against unauthorised development.
- To give advice on planning matters to the public and to other bodies including the continuation of pre-planning clinics at area level in respect of one-off housing or domestic extensions' proposals.

Economic Development

- To work in partnership with other Government agencies and the private sector to promote the sustainable, economic and industrial development of the County and to promote employment opportunities for people resident in the County.
- To continue to proactively promote County Meath as an attractive location for inward investment opportunities; to take advantage of its strategic location within the fastest growing region in Ireland and its proximity to Dublin Metropolitan Area and the Dublin Belfast corridor.
- To work with the County Development Board, the Meath County Enterprise Board and other agencies in achieving an integrated approach to the delivery of economic, social and cultural infrastructure to enable the identified primary development corridors to become the primary growth area for the County.
- To ensure that there is sufficient serviced land available for industrial and commercial purposes in the designated centres to enhance economic activity and to meet the employment needs of the County.
- To enhance transport infrastructure in order to improve access for jobs, recreation, tourism, facilities and services in County Meath.
- To promote wider access to job opportunities for our most disadvantaged communities.

Tourism

- To promote County Meath as a tourist destination in both the domestic and overseas markets and to move its ranking into the top 10 tourism counties in Ireland.
- To work in association with other state agencies who are charged with improving Meath as a Tourism destination.
- To seek new and high quality investment in the tourism industry in County Meath, with specific reference to accommodation and leisure activities such as Golf, Equestrian, Walking, Cycling and Angling.
- To obtain maximum economic and social benefits from the County's designation as the Heritage Capital of Ireland and achieving an increase in visitor numbers.
- To achieve an appropriate balance between development of tourist facilities and the protection of the environment and sensitive landscapes.
- To provide for improved signage to the existing tourist attractions and enhanced parking facilities.



Infrastructure

One of the major challenges facing Meath Local Authorities is to ensure that the development of infrastructure keeps pace with and facilitates economic growth. Infrastructure provision must be consistent with our land-use policies, identified in the Development Plans, as well as meeting environmental considerations. In recent years, there has been significant development in both the roads and sanitary water and wastewater services infrastructure. While this has helped to support the economic growth of the county, it also has had a major impact on the Council's financial resources. With the greater emphasis on local contributions under the capital investment programmes, together with the ever increasing costs of running modern water and wastewater treatment plants, a major challenge faces the Council to continue to meet the costs of infrastructure in the future. In spite of these challenges, Meath Local Authorities is well placed to cater for current and future growth.

Strategic Objective

To maintain and further develop the Infrastructure of the County and to ensure that infrastructural investment facilitates the physical, economic, social and cultural development of the County.

Supporting Strategies

To plan and implement infrastructural improvements consistent with land-use planning.

To work closely with neighbouring Authorities and other agencies to ensure that infrastructural planning is both complementary and consistent.

To develop and implement in consultation with the National Roads Authority a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the National Road network within the County.

To develop and implement in consultation with Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the Non-National Road network within the County.

To implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2004-2006.

To advance the projects identified in the Assessment of Water Services Needs, as adopted by the Council, to ensure they are included in future investment programmes.

To implement the measures under the Rural Water Programme so as to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water supplies for rural dwellers.

To upgrade existing water and wastewater facilities, where deficient, in order to meet the Drinking Water regulations and the Urban Wastewater Directives/Regulations.

To advance the planning and the development of the continuation of the rail link to Navan.

To investigate with a view to reducing our dependency on the infrastructure of other Local Authorities.

To co-operate with public transport providers in the development and improvement of these services to and from the county.



Environment

Our objectives focus on strategic goals across 6 core areas of Environmental activity which comprise Waste, Water, Education, Fire & Emergency, Regulation, and Effective Service Delivery

Strategic Objective

To support and promote the clean, safe and healthy environment, for present and future generations.

Supporting Strategies

To manage waste in an integrated and sustainable manner in accordance with best practice.

To improve water quality in line with the requirements of the Water Frame-Work Directive.

To raise Environmental awareness and encourage sustainable actions.

To maintain excellence in the delivery of emergency services.

To ensure compliance with Environmental standards.

To adopt and implement the Waste Management Plan for the North-East Region.

To minimise the impact of development on receiving waters by implementing a comprehensive monitoring regime, and identifying and eliminating potential pollution threats.

To provide resources for on-going Environmental Awareness and Action Campaigns, targeting all sections of the Community.

To implement the Fire and Emergency Services Development Plan.

To implement the Council's Environmental Enforcement Plan.

To implement a wide range of activities to curb and abate litter pollution through the use of Litter Pollution Monitoring System.



Housing

Strategic Objective

To ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs and, as far as possible, in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance.

Supporting Strategies

- To participate with the multi-agency Social Inclusion working group, set up under the auspices of the County Development Board, to enhance the role of Local Government in tackling the disadvantaged and promoting social inclusion.
- To pursue the measures outlined in "A Plan for Social Housing and Social Housing – The Way Ahead".
- To ensure, through the operation of development plans and public utility services programmes, that sufficient serviced housing land is made available in suitable locations throughout the county.
- To pursue an ongoing program of housing land acquisition to facilitate public housing construction programmes.
- To ensure that all persons are treated equally in the allocation and management of public housing, regardless of origin, race, or creed, and that all marginalised groups such as Travellers and the homeless are catered for adequately.
- To ensure that proper structures are in place for the efficient and effective management of public housing through appropriate estate management initiatives.
- To promote the highest possible standards in the planning and design of both public and private housing, while adhering to the principles of sustainable development.
- To convert and maintain existing housing stock.
- To develop and expand the estate Management Schemes in existing council housing estates and in new developments as they come on stream.



9.0 CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

Introduction

Meath Local Authorities have identified and are committed to providing the Financial, Human and ICT resources required to realise the objectives and strategies outlined in this plan.

Financial

Our capacity to raise finances and generate economic activity will be fundamental to the realisation of the corporate objectives.

Meath Local Authorities have put in place an Economic Development Officer dedicated to the role of identifying business and stimulating investment opportunities, which will facilitate targeted financial investment into the county with a view to strengthening the rate base .

The management of our assets is an on-going activity, which will enable the organisation to progress the objectives in the plan.

Future budgets will be prepared having regard to the objectives of this plan. The new financial management system allows Meath Local Authorities to identify the costs of the provision of individual services in a far more systematic way. It will also be possible to relate input costs to outputs. Value for money reviews and audits will also underpin this process. There will be regular assessments of expenditure programmes in Meath Local Authorities. These developments will provide a more rational and informed basis on which to make decisions for allocating available resources in the light of the priority objectives identified.

Human Resources

We need to build on the achievements of area-based management and decentralised delivery of services. We have a flexible approach to the deployment of staff so that adequate resources are available on a countywide basis

The recruitment and retention of skilled and highly motivated staff at a time of severe competition in the labour market is especially challenging, and it is critical that Meath Local Authorities' Human Resources Department meets these challenges in the development of its policies.

The aspirations, training and career development needs of the staff must be adequately addressed so that the attainment of skills and knowledge are in line with our business strategies and corporate objectives. Development of our human resources will focus on the enhancement of employee capacity to take on future tasks and responsibilities. There will be a provision in the annual budgets towards the ongoing development and training of staff.

ICT

The development of information and communications technologies in the County is vital for the successful implementation of many of the Council's goals and objectives. Investment in e-Commerce and communications infrastructure and services is fundamental to the success of any organisation. During the lifetime of this plan, Meath Local Authorities will address the Broadband deficit, thereby increasing our capacity to take advantage of the Information Society.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Meath Local Authorities are committed to an ongoing strategic management process. The Corporate Plan was formulated and will be implemented in the following manner;

- It will be promoted and circulated to all relevant stakeholders to achieve clarity, common purpose and widespread ownership.
- A series of annual operational plans, detailing the specific activities to give effect to the Plan, will be prepared.
- A systematic method of performance analysis and review will be put in place so that progress can be recorded and the necessary adjustments made as circumstances change.

This process is set out diagrammatically below in fig xxx and can be explained as follows;

The Executive and the Corporate Policy Group will identify priorities from the Plan for implementation. These will be screened and matched to resources by the Corporate Policy Group in the context of annual budget preparation. The Corporate Policy Group will highlight and promote the need for funding and seek it from the relevant Government Departments. The Strategic Policy Groups will formulate policy to facilitate implementation of the priorities identified. The appropriate Council will approve the necessary funding in the revenue and capital budgets. These in turn provide for the required staffing levels and the harnessing of external resources, as required, such as matching funding and Public Private Partnerships (PPP).

Following the allocation of resources by the full Council the annual organisational plan will be drafted. This in turn will be broken down between the relevant supporting departments resulting in a series of annual operation (business) plans. Where issues cross department boundaries, coordinating responsibility will rest with the Management Team.

Ongoing monitoring will facilitate the formulation of biannual progress reports, which will be prepared for the Management Team, the Corporate Policy Group and in turn reported to the full Council. Integral to this monitoring regime will be the development of suitable local performance indicators to complement the new national service indicators.

The biannual progress reports will inform the annual review process. The review will include a validation of the annual operational plans measured against the Corporate Plan. This may involve a review of priorities and the reallocation of resources. The findings of the annual review will be published in the Annual Report.

