

**1 September 2016**

**To: The Cathaoirleach and Each Member of Carlow County Council**

**Corporate Services & Human Resources  
Progress Report**

I set out, hereunder, for consideration by the members, progress report in respect of the Core Business Activities of the Corporate Services & Human Resources Directorate:

**Corporate Services**

- Management of Council, Municipal District of Carlow and Corporate Policy Group Meetings; Attendance of Councillors at Conferences; Members Training; Payment of Councillors Allowances and Expenses; Civic Receptions; Linkage with National Bodies such as AILG, LAMA; Joint Policing Committee
- Register of Electors
- Local Elections
- Run out of Higher Education Grants
- Customer Service
- Control of Dogs and Dog Breeding Establishments
- Coroners Service
- Management of Council Property
- Preparation of Corporate Plan
- Preparation of Annual Report
- Ethics Register and declarations of interests.
- Regulation of Lobbying Act
- Protected Disclosures Act
- Freedom of Information
- Ombudsman
- Data Protection
- Public Relations
- Irish Language Scheme
- Disability Plan – Towards Universal Access for All 2008 – 2015
- Schools to Business Partnership Programme
- Service Indicators co-ordination

## **Human Resources**

**Employees:** 266 (WTE) as at 30/06/2016 (excluding 47 Retained Fire Fighter posts)

- Manpower Planning, Recruitment & Selection
- The deployment of staff to all service areas
- Training, Learning & Development
- Performance Management (PMDS)
- Industrial Relations
- Staff Wellbeing and Employee Assistance Programme
- Equality & Diversity
- Work Life Balance
- Health & Safety - Creating a Positive & Safe Working Environment
- Superannuation
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Implementation of Core HR/Payroll/Superannuation System
- Attendance Management
- HR policy development

A delegated sanction was received in early 2016 from the Department of the Environment to allow the Council to recruit staff up to Administrative Officer level, without specific individual departmental approvals subject to strict criteria on numbers and costs.

The HR Department also provides co-ordination and leads on the implementation of the Public Service Agreement under the Lansdowne Road Agreement. This includes actions required under the following categories:

- Restructuring
- Shared Services
- Procurement
- E – Government
- Redeployment

Carlow County Council has achieved several of the efficiency targets and aims of the plan including:

- The transfer of payroll to MyPay (operated by Laois County Council)
- The Superannuation function is currently being transferred to MyPay
- Regional procurement of public lighting contract etc.
- Sharing of resources between Carlow Library, new County Museum and Tourist offices
- Rationalisation of the revenue collection service
- Preparation of an overarching workforce plan

- The transition to a single local authority including Rationalisation of engineering area supervisory structures

### **Register of Electors**

The Register of Electors is produced annually and the Register of Electors for the period 2016/2017 will issue on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016. The total number of electors registered to vote on the Register is 40,958.

### **Ombudsman**

The Office of the Ombudsman was established to examine complaints from members of the public who feel they have been unfairly treated in their dealings with bodies such as Government Departments, Local Authorities, Health Service Executive etc.

The following complaints were received in 2016:

	2016	2015	2014
Complaints received to 31.08.16	1	1	1
Complaints responded to	1	1	1

### **Freedom of Information**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts ,1997-2014 gives three legal rights to those seeking access to information held by public bodies covered by the Act:

- The right of access to official records created after 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1998 which are held by Government Departments or other public bodies subject to the Act.
- The right to have personal details on official records corrected or updated when such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading and
- The right to be given reasons for decisions taken by public bodies that affect the requester.

A request for information under the Freedom of Information Act must be made, in writing, and should indicate that the information is being sought under the Freedom of Information Act. The number of requests received under the Freedom of Information Act to date in 2016 together with 2015 and 2014 are as below:

	2016	2014	2013
Number of applications received (to 30.06.2016)	62	43	32
Number of requests granted	30	27	30
Number of Requests refused	14	19	1
Live cases at 30 June 2016	14	1	1
Number of Internal Reviews	2	4	2
Number of Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	3	1

## **Control of Dogs**

Under the Control of Dogs Acts 1986 & 1992, all dogs except those used wholly for official duties by the Gardai, Defence Forces or the Custom & Excise Services. Section 2 of the Act makes it an offence for a person to keep a dog unless he/she holds a licence for the dog or a general licence covering any number of dogs at specified premises. Carlow County Council and Kilkenny County Council operate a joint Dog Warden Service with two Dog Wardens based at Paulstown. This joint service is currently is being provided by the ISPCA until December 2016 with a possibility of a further extension.

Licences issued 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016 = 1,038 Number: Income €17127.

Dog Breeding Establishment Registrations 30 June = 2 Number : Income €2,000

## **Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010**

The Council has also developed protocols for risk assessments and inspection guidelines to act as a template for site assessments. It is now the Councils intention to conduct at least two unannounced inspections on each registered Dog Breeding Establishment (DBE) each year.

The Council is currently reviewing the procurement of veterinary services for the Food Safety Authority and dog control services.

## **ACTION PROGRAMME FOR EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Following enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and forward planning for implementation of the Government's Action Programme for Effective Local Government, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2014, Management and staff in Carlow County Council have implemented the Transition/Unification/Reorganisation Plan which includes:

1. Establishment of Municipal Districts.
2. Unification of Services between former Town Councils & County Council.
3. Reconfiguration of Engineering Areas with Municipal Districts.
4. Workforce Planning – process included:
  - (a) Review of Directorates/Organisational and Staffing Restructuring
  - (b) Centralisation of Water Services
  - (c) Migration to the new operating model for the delivery of water services - Irish Water / Water Services Transition Process
  - (d) Establishment of LEO (Local Enterprise Office).

5. Financial Unification and new budgetary process – Local Property Tax; General Municipal Allocation; Harmonisation of Rates; Annual Budget 2015 and Schedule of Municipal District Works.
6. ICT - Unification of Services plus Portal
  - a) i Plan Team
  - b) i House
  - c) Financial Systems & Accounts for County & Town
  - d) Register of Electors
  - e) Portal review
  - f) Core Update.
7. Risk Register.
8. Implementation of an ambitious Shared Services programme on a 26 county basis eg 26 County – My Pay; Regional - Veterinary, Dog Control, SERBDM, Major Emergency Planning, Waste Management Planning; etc. and on an Inter-County shared service basis – proposals currently in hand relating to the Fire & Emergency Service.
9. Implementation of Lansdowne Road agreement.
10. Re-establishment of Strategic Policy Committees.
11. Establishment of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Public Participation Network (PPN) and the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan which has now been adopted.
12. Preparation and adoption of new Corporate Plan.
13. The formation of a single Countywide Joint Policing Committee (JPC) with elected members, Garda, Council executive and community representation and the drafting of a strategic plan for the lifetime of the JPC.

*Bernie O'Brien*

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**Bernie O'Brien**  
**Director of Services**