



Local Government Management Services Board

An Bord Seirbhísí Bainistíochta Rialtais Áitiúil

Corporate Plan

2008 – 2010

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1. Introduction & Background

The local government system in Ireland plays a crucial role in the economic and social life of the State. It provides an essential range of infrastructure, social and community services and is a key part of the local democratic system. Local Government operates within the National and European legal framework as defined in the main by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG).

The local authority sector comprises thirty four (34) major county and city councils and eighty (80) town councils. The sector has some thirty four thousand (34,000) employees and will be responsible in 2008 for an operating budget, both current and capital, of approximately " 9.5 billion.

The Local Government Management Services Board provides the necessary support to the local authority sector in the areas of human resource management, industrial relations and management services. The management services remit is carried out by the Office for Local Authority Management through the provision of a range of executive, research, secretarial, and support services to the County and City Managers Association (CCMA)*.

This Corporate Plan, which has been developed following an extensive consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders, sets out how the Board proposes to support local authorities in addressing the ongoing modernisation agenda which the sector faces in meeting the needs and expectations of its sectoral customers . the public, business and Government.

*CCMA - The County and City Managers Association operates in a non statutory capacity as a representative forum for local authority managers where issues of an executive nature, requiring a coordinated response are considered. The Association seeks to influence government policy on key areas of relevance to local authorities.

2. Development of the Corporate Plan

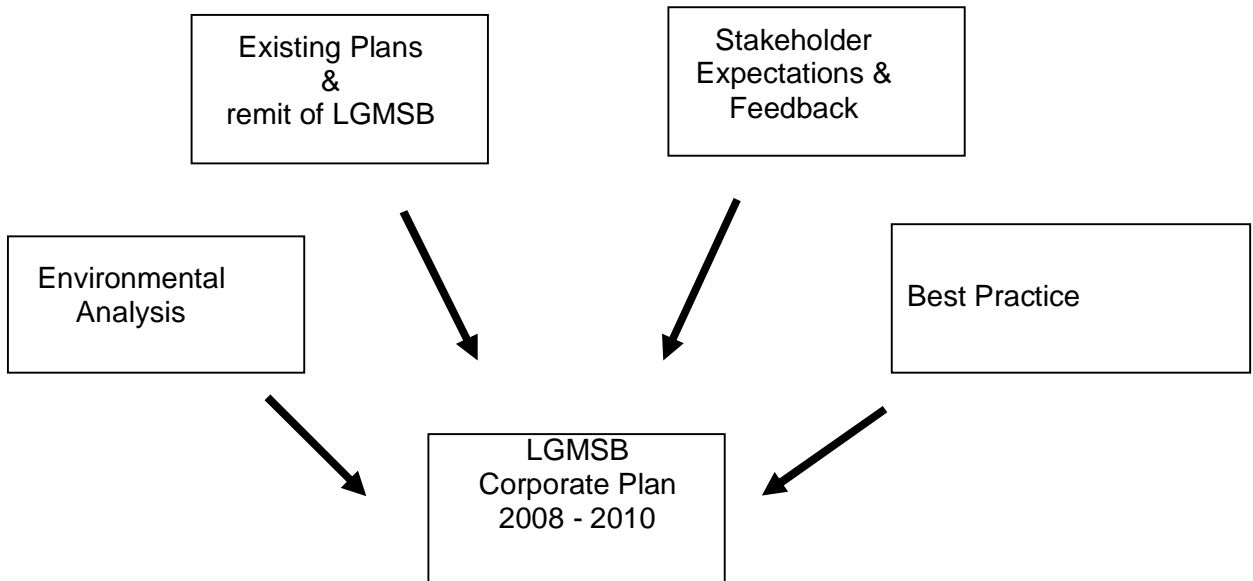
The Corporate Plan has been prepared in consultation with Board members and staff and representatives of relevant stakeholders . see Figure 1 below. Account was taken of the environmental factors which influence and impact on the Board's area of operation and responsibilities. In addition there was also a requirement to ensure that best practice in human resource and management service organisations was taken into account along with the Boards existing plans and remit.

The consultation process within the Board consisted of meetings with individual Board members and staff representatives, including the Chief Executive. The broader stakeholder view was reflected in meetings with representatives of:

- The County and City Managers' Association (CCMA)
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG)
- The Department of Finance
- Trade Union Leaders
- The Local Government Performance Verification Group (PVG)

The issues raised and experience gained from the internal and external consultation process were considered by the Board in finalising the Corporate Plan.

Fig 1 - Inputs to LGMSB Corporate Plan



Environmental Analysis

Local Government has undergone and will continue to undergo rapid change. The principles underpinning the programme for Better Local Government . Enhancing Local Democracy; Serving the Customer Better; Developing Efficiency and Providing Proper Resources continue to be the drivers of local authorities in the provision of services to their communities.

The DEHLG's Statement of Strategy 2008-2010 outlines the environmental, economic and social framework within which local government will operate over the coming three years. The Strategy also sets out the key areas of focus and challenges arising for local government in that time. These include:

- continuing to develop local government to make it more participative, transparent, accountable and responsive to its customers by strengthening, in particular, its democratic function in line with the Programme for Government;
- ensuring the highest possible standards of performance in the provision of public services, thus advancing local and regional competitiveness and ensuring the development of sustainable communities;
- continuing to modernise the financial management of local authorities, promoting enhanced value for money and ensuring that an appropriately structured funding system is in place for local government;
- promoting efficient and effective elections and progressing voter information and accessibility initiatives to enhance citizen participation.

Towards 2016, Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Programme 2006 -2015 sets out in detail the key human resource, industrial relations and work organisation changes which will be necessary to support the development of the local government sector. These include the maintenance of a stable industrial relations environment, the full implementation of a Performance Management Development System (PMDS), further development of workplace partnership and the measurement of performance (Performance Verification Process). The agreement also recognises that the nature, design and arrangement of work is rapidly changing and extensive retraining will be an integral part of the change process. The Board along with the human resource

departments in local authorities will play a key role in ensuring the implementation of the change programme specified in the agreement. The Board will also support key objectives of the Programme in the areas of planning, housing, environmental sustainability, social inclusion etc.

The Agreed Programme for Government, June 2007, also sets out the Governments intention to publish Green and White Papers in relation to local government reform. Key areas which were signalled in the programme and which are likely to impact on the Board and local authorities include climate change, waste management policy, planning and co-ordinated service delivery. This reform will also have implications for the role of the Manager and elected representatives, initiatives in customer service and more challenging service indicators. When the initiatives and changes are finalised the Board and the human resource departments will have a significant contribution to make to ensure their delivery.

A major review of the public service is currently being undertaken by the OECD*. The findings and recommendations of the review, when published, in so far as they may relate to the local government sector, will be taken into account during the period of the Corporate Plan.

Taken together these factors represent a continuation and acceleration in the pace of change which local authorities will need to address over the coming years in order to meet the expectations of all stakeholders involved.

*OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development

Existing Plans & Remit

The remit of the Local Government Management Services Board is:-

“To provide for local authorities and other bodies.....such services as may be requiredfor the purposes of staff negotiations under any scheme of conciliation and arbitration and Labour Court proceedings and such other management services as may be required and to provide for managers such services for meetings of managers and such other support services as the Council (of the Board) shall from time to time determine”

The Board has detailed plans to deliver on the requirements of local authorities and is structured into four divisions to provide these services: Human Resources; Industrial Relations; Management Services and Corporate Services.

The range of support services provided by the Board has grown significantly over recent years. This arises mainly from the additional requirements of new national and European legislation and the need to implement best practice. Since the preparation of the last Corporate Plan the Board has undertaken additional activities in the areas of inter alia health and safety and the publication of national service indicators. The Office for Local Authority Management which was established in 2004 has also undertaken considerable work in researching and developing policy positions on matters affecting local authorities as well as engaging and influencing key stakeholders on these issues.

Best Practice

In order to effectively support organisations in achieving their objectives there is a need to ensure that strategies and policies support the creation and maintenance of a high performance work organisation. It is not sufficient for strategies, policies and initiatives to merely comply with minimum legal, regulatory or other requirements, but must go beyond this to ensure that sustained organisational change and performance is achieved.

There is an increasing emphasis being placed on service organisations to ensure that strategic as well as operational issues are addressed.

Stakeholder Expectations & Feedback

A wide range of stakeholders was consulted as part of the process of the development of the Corporate Plan. While the feedback from stakeholders was very positive both the Board and the stakeholders believe that, in addition to continuing to deliver the existing Human Resources, Industrial Relations and Management Services, there is a need in the new Corporate Plan to enhance the process of developing a more strategic and proactive role in supporting local authorities.

In the Human Resources and Industrial Relations area this will involve:

- Identifying the key emerging business, human resources, regulatory trends and issues and developing human resource strategies / policies to address these
- Supporting the development of the leadership and organisational capability within local authorities to ensure that these are implemented effectively
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of existing strategies and policies
- Ensuring the development of Human Resource Management capability in local authorities

In the Management Services area this will involve:

- A proactive approach in the formulation, alignment and promulgation of the local authority management position on key policy and organisational issues.

3. Vision, Mission & Values

Following stakeholder consultation and a review of best practice the Board has developed a new vision and mission and sets down the values within which it will deliver on these.

Vision

Our vision is to support and influence the development of local authorities as high performing work organisations meeting the needs of all their stakeholders.

Mission

The Board will deliver on its vision through:

- Being a centre of excellence in the provision of a range of Human Resources, Industrial Relations and Management Services to local authorities.
- Being a source of best practice, advocacy, research, expertise and advice on Human Resources, Industrial Relations and Management Service issues.
- Influencing and supporting the development of the human resource and people management capability within local authorities.
- Leading the development of the sector through undertaking and publishing national research and contributing to the formulation of policy on key issues affecting the sector.
- Strengthening the relationships with key stakeholders at national and local levels.

Values

In delivering on our Mission the Board is committed to upholding the highest standards in its dealings with all its stakeholders, including its own staff. Our key values include:

- Honesty and integrity in our dealings with all our staff and stakeholders.
- Promoting the principles of partnership as the preferred approach to the achievement of change.
- Valuing diverse opinions and developing the capability of all individuals to achieve their optimum contribution.
- Taking pride in our work.
- Being professional in everything that we do.
- Serving local authorities in a prompt and professional manner.

4. Strategic Priorities

Successful implementation of the Vision and Mission, with the increased emphasis on a strategic and proactive role for the Board, is contingent upon a number of factors including:

- Continued support and engagement of stakeholders, particularly local authority management and staff on the implementation of the Corporate Plan
- Successful deployment of effective e-solutions to provide local authority management with up to date management services, human resources and industrial relations information
- Continued development of management and staff

In the following sections existing activities and the strategic priorities for each Division are set out in more detail.

4.1 Human Resources

The Human Resource Division undertakes the following key roles:

Strategy and Policy

- Researchs and develops human resource strategies and polices to support local authorities in meeting service delivery requirements.

Training and Development

- Provides guidance, advice and support to local authorities on how to effectively address the training and development needs of their employees in order to meet future operational targets.

Change Management

- Provides ongoing support and guidance to local authorities on implementation of effective change management processes.

Equality

- Provides a wide range of advice and support on legislation and human resource issues in areas such as equality of opportunity, diversity and disability.

Health and Safety

- Provides advice, information and guidance based on international best practice and standards to assist local authorities to comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work legislation.

Partnership

- Supports, oversees and reviews the implementation of the modernisation agenda in a spirit of partnership through the joint management / union forum, the Local Authority National Partnership Advisory Group (LANPAG), and the implementation of the LANPAG strategic plan.

Strategic Actions

- Undertake research and develop recommendations in the areas of employment, recruitment and selection.
- Explore how other public sector organisations respond to commercial and regulatory demands and organizational change and source solutions to effect such change.
- Review the effectiveness of recruitment processes in the employment of senior management and other key resources essential to Local Authorities.
- Identify new / additional leadership skills and management competencies that will be required inter alia for Public Private Partnerships (PPP); Procurement and Community Involvement. Recommend, oversee and evaluate solutions to address these requirements.
- Enhance the development of the capability of local human resource departments to further support local authority line management and staff. Review options and

make recommendations for a Human Resource career structure in local government.

- Evaluate the impact and contribution of PMDS processes in improving local authority performance and publish recommendations on how PMDS can be used to create and sustain high performance work organisations.
- Evaluate the impact of employee relations strategies (communications; human resource policies; family friendly initiatives etc) on creating high performance work organisations. Develop, publish and secure support for the implementation of recommended changes.

4.2 Industrial Relations

The Industrial Relations Division undertakes the following key roles:

National Negotiations

- Leads on behalf of the sector in negotiations on national social partnership agreements.
- Leads on behalf of the sector in negotiations and discussions with trade unions and staff associations on all matters affecting local authorities.
- Ensures the effective operation of the Local Authority National Council (LANC) forum for processing all industrial relations claims with national implications.

Professional Representation

- Provides professional representation for local authorities at all third party proceedings including Labour Relations Commission, Rights Commissioner, Labour Court, Employment Appeals Tribunal, Equality Tribunal, National Implementation Body and any other agreed mediation, arbitration or adjudication process.

Advisory Role

- Assists local authorities in the research preparation and conduct of negotiations and discussions with trade unions and staff associations at local level

- Provides analysis and guidance to local authorities on employment rights, and on the impact of new / amended legislation

Strategic Actions

- Ensure the delivery of the industrial relations provisions of Towards 2016 (maintenance of stable industrial relations and adherence to the pay elements of the agreement).
- Support the delivery of the relevant elements of public service modernisation contained in Towards 2016 focussing on the local authority change agenda.
- Review the progress of implementation of the modernisation / change agenda identifying key change issues which will enable local authorities to adopt a more strategic approach into the future.
- Develop and secure agreement on policy options for the next pay round of Towards 2016, including the identification of changes necessary to create high performing work organisations.
- Lead the development of web based solutions as first port of call for dealing with issues relating to employment legislation and addressing employee relations queries.
- Develop online data management of agreements including implementation of agreements under Towards 2016.

4.3 Management Services

The Office for Local Authority Management undertakes the following key roles:

- Identifies emerging issues which impact on the local government system and on which coherent, integrated responses are required in order to achieve successful outcomes.
- Researches and develops responses to issues which reflect best practice nationally and internationally

- Represents the local authority management perspective appropriately, nationally and internationally
- Works in partnership with the DEHLG, other government departments and the representative associations in the best interest of the local government system.

Strategic actions

- Undertake research and publish papers and policy documents on key selected issues impacting the local authority sector. Specific areas will be agreed as part of the annual work programme of the CCMA Executive and will reflect current national priorities.
- Lead the development of strategy on the appropriate structures and supports required by the local authority sector at national level.
- Review and enhance the dialogue and coordination processes with all stakeholders. Develop a proactive communication strategy on local authority matters.
- Ensure that evidence on the performance of local authorities is collated on an ongoing basis and promulgated so as to inform perception and debate on local authority performance issues.

4.4 Corporate Services

The overall performance of the Board depends to a large degree on the professionalism, dedication and commitment of management and staff to the achievement of the Board's goals and objectives.

The Corporate Services Division supports the Board in this process through:

- Recruitment, development and retention of highly skilled employees
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory legal, governance and ethical requirements

- Ensuring the continuation of the highest standards of financial management
- Deployment of new technologies and processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Provision of legal and administrative services to the Board, its committees, as well as to management and staff

Strategic Actions

- In conjunction with the other divisions Corporate Services will enhance the Board communications strategy at a number of levels:
 - Public Relations Strategy: Position in a positive and proactive manner developments and achievements of the sector with key external stakeholders.
 - Sectoral Communications Strategy: Enhance the level of information and resources available to Managers, human resource staff and employees of the various local authorities through a range of medium (e.g. Websites, newsletters, facts sheets etc) with particular emphasis on exploiting new technologies.
- Ensure the development and implementation of best practice in the involvement and development of employees to support the achievement of the Boards objectives. This will involve ongoing performance management, local partnership structures, as well as cross functional working teams.
- Develop and implement a technology strategy to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of the operation of the Board. Specific areas to be addressed will include: upgrade of the Board's websites, embedding the financial management system; reduction in paper records; evaluation of the potential for remote working as well as enhancing Board secretarial services.

- Ensure that the full benefits available from technology associated with the Boards new offices are achieved.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

To ensure the successful achievement of the Corporate Plan objectives, detailed implementation plans will be developed by management in consultation with the staff involved.

Progress will be monitored by the Board at regular intervals and progress on the implementation of the Corporate Plan will be reported in the Boards Annual Report.