

LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL

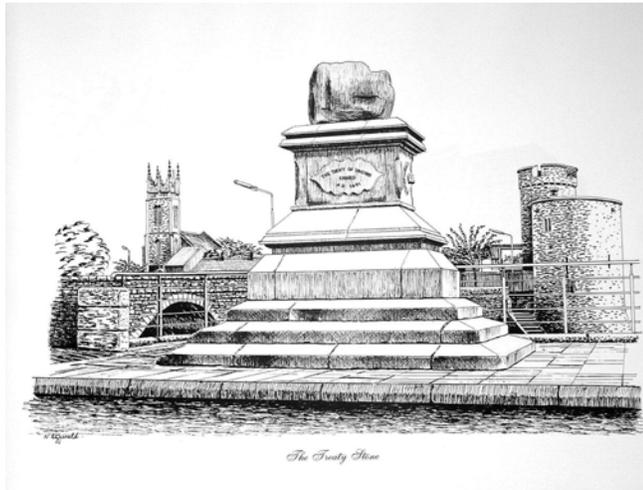


Corporate Plan 2004 - 2009

Your Council.....

Your City.....

Our Future.....



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i. Introduction

Background to Corporate Plan

Limerick City Council had its first Corporate Plan for the period 2001 to 2004. This was a very extensive plan that contained challenging targets for improvements to city services and for the enhancement of democracy. While many of the objectives of the first Plan have been realised, there is always scope for further improvements and the opportunity now presents itself for greater change and modernisation in the second Corporate Plan.

The Local Government Act 2001 requires each local authority to prepare a plan for the lifespan of the new council i.e. for the period 2005 to 2009. This document details our agreed mission, objectives and strategies, which are framed by our business environment and boosted by separate annual operating plans. The Council has a key leadership role in the city and the mid-west region, with wide ranging responsibilities. We want to encourage our public, private and voluntary sector partners to work better together for the improvement of the city. Our goals take account of the resource constraints which affect our capacity to deliver change.

Consultation process

The preparation of the plan involved widespread consultation with councillors, staff, corporate policy group, the Partnership Steering Committee, the City Development Board and the public through the Council's website.

ii. Organisational Structure

The delivery of council services is managed through five directorates, viz: Social Policy and Housing/Community & Enterprise, Finance & Property, Environment & Emergency Services, Transportation & Infrastructure and Planning/Corporate Services. The work of these directorates is allied with the democratic structure through the five Strategic Policy Committees, which are as follows;

- Social Policy & Housing Committee
- Economic Policy Development & Future Planning Committee
- Cultural & Sporting Policy Committee
- Environmental Policy Committee
- Transportation & Infrastructural Policy Committee

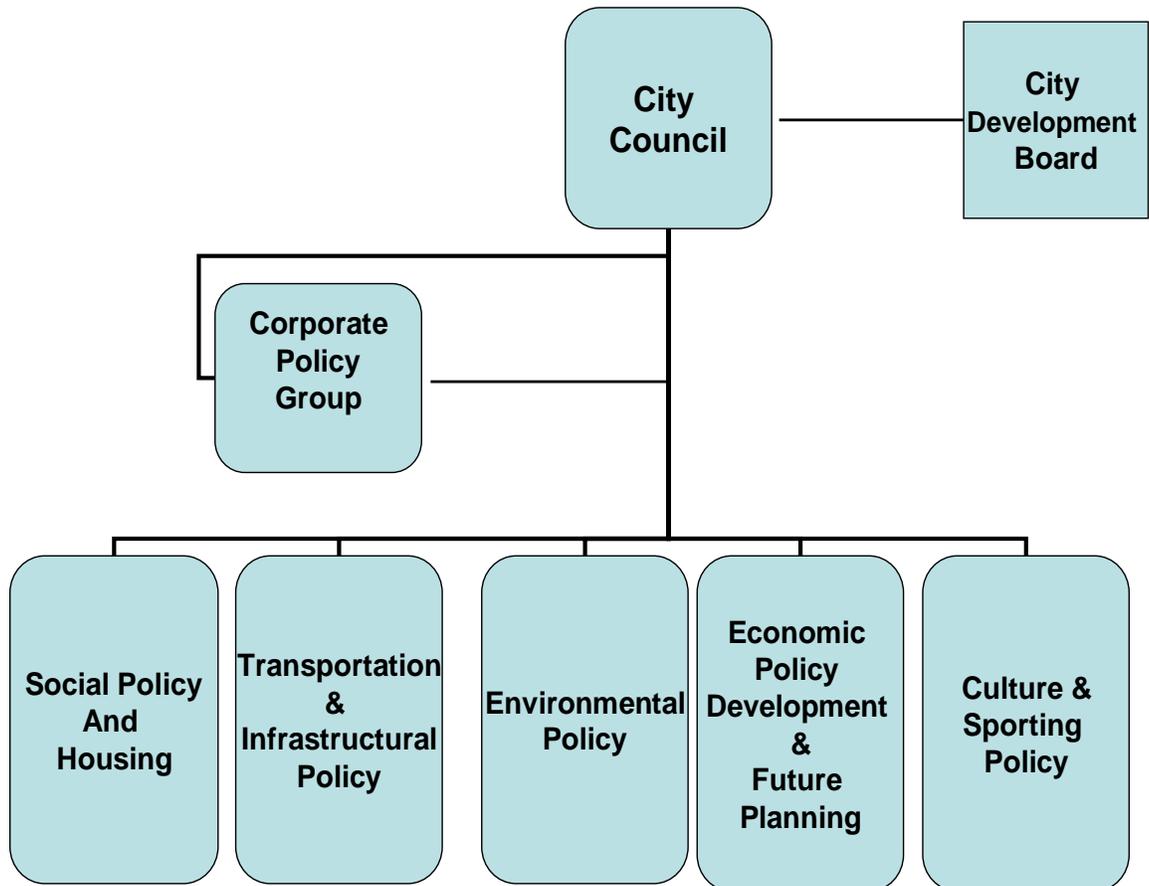
The work of these committees is co-ordinated through the Corporate Policy Group which consists of the chairs of the Committees, the Mayor and the City Manager.

In addition to the above, there is a Partnership Steering Committee where management, staff and trade unions collaborate in the decision making process of the organisation.



The Civic Centre

Representative Structure



iii. Our Mission Statement

"We will work in partnership to enhance Democratic Leadership and continue to support our community by the development of sustainable policies and the delivery of better quality services"

iv. Core Values

Limerick City Council upholds the following core values....

- **Transparency & Accountability**

We will focus our decisions, which are based on clear understandable principles and policies, to better serve our citizens and their needs, subject to the common good

- **Democracy**

We will promote and grow the role of our councillors and optimise the contribution from the external nominated representatives

- **Value our Staff**

The Council's stature as an essential public service provider depends critically on the loyalty, commitment and performance of its staff. We will support our workforce during this time of change through ongoing partnership initiatives, training and assistance programmes

- **Quality Service**

Each client service will be assessed on how it is delivered and its outcomes, in pursuit of continuous improvement in standards

- **Value for Money**

Each resource allocation and spending decision will seek to deliver the best value in services to our customers and ratepayers

- **Equality and Social Inclusion**

Prioritise the delivery of resources to enable all our citizens to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of our city

- **Community Partnership**

Our communities are our city and we will work in partnership with them to build greater trust and respond to their diverse needs

v. **Operating Environment**

Profile of Limerick City

Limerick has a long, proud history with a strong sense of identity, tradition and character. It is well located on the national transportation network and has an extensive educational, industrial, social and cultural infrastructure. Limerick has benefited from the growth of the Irish economy and been transformed beyond recognition in the last decade. This is manifest in the wide choice of shopping and other amenities. The city is pleasantly situated with easy access to numerous local tourist attractions and is endowed with a great natural asset in the river Shannon. The population of the city and its suburbs is approaching 90,000 people, making it the third largest city in the country.

Because of the growth in the economy, there has been significant development and redevelopment of the city in recent years, which is leading to a shortage of land for new housing within the city proper. At the same time there has been a vigorous growth of population in the city centre, many of whom are non national, which is giving the city a more cosmopolitan profile.

Internal Environment

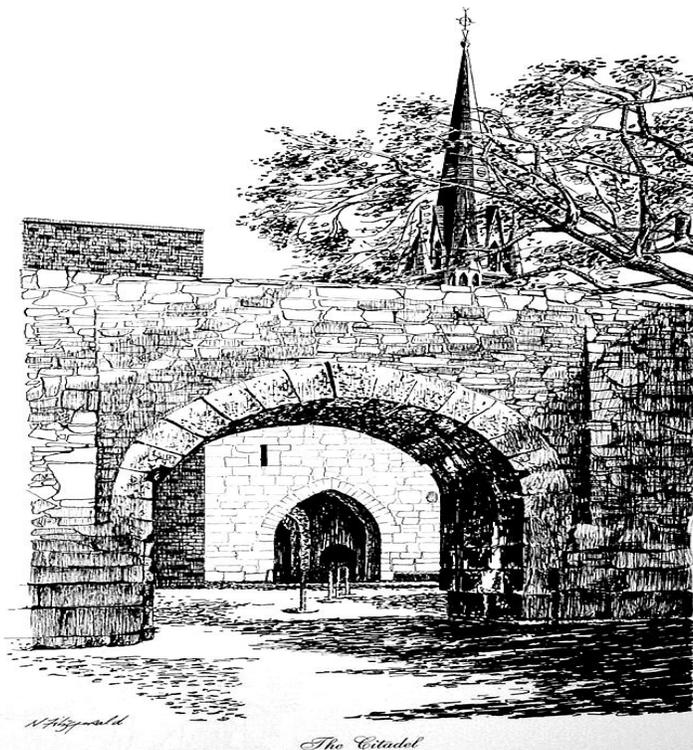
The Council is an intensive user, generator and manager of information across all its policy areas. Information and Communication Technologies are key agents of change to achieve our policies and objectives. Despite the geographical and resource constraints with which we must contend, we are committed in our pursuit of continuous improvement to services and outcomes. We will provide more efficiencies in our work through targeted training which will upskill staff. An essential component in strategic change is effective communication. Our approach to performance management at individual level is to ensure that each employee knows what is expected of them and how they contribute through their performance to delivering on the Council's objectives. In addition we will improve on our communication through meaningful consultation on organisational change through the partnership process.

External Environment

The National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 is the impetus for further improving the city as a place where people choose to live, learn, work and play. By helping the city to flourish and grow, the Council can make Limerick the preferred location for visitors, families, students and investors. A key proposal in the plan is the establishment of the ‘western’ strategic development zone from Galway to Cork. Limerick would be geographically central to such a zone, providing increased opportunities for development in the city. The Council will actively seek to input into the formulation of a new National Development Plan.

The City Development Board seeks to achieve better co-operation and partnership between the local development sector, state agencies and social partners. Local authorities are now tasked to drive social inclusion through NAPS (National Anti Poverty Strategy) and the NAPS Action Plan 2003 – 2005. This corporate plan and our annual operational plans embeds social inclusion in the work of Limerick City Council across our range of activities.

The ability of the Council to deliver on this plan is influenced from a national level by resources provided by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the translation of E.U. initiatives and directives into local actions.



vi. Objectives and Supporting Strategies

The previous chapters set out the mission statement, operating environment and the core values of Limerick City Council. The next step is to set out the goals of the organisation over the next five years and beyond. Limerick City Council would like to achieve the following objectives during that time...

- 01 Improving the image of Limerick
- 02 Developing the city in a sustainable way
- 03 Strengthening the City as the regional capital of the Mid-West
- 04 Delivering better value for money through prudent management of our resources
- 05 Enhancing our Human Resources
- 06 Setting and delivering quality service standards
- 07 Working in greater partnership with our communities
- 08 Combating Social exclusion and reducing marginalisation

In order to carry out the above goals, we need to identify the measures or steps we will take to achieve them. The following strategies have been identified as necessary to do this...

Objective 1; Improving the image of Limerick

Supporting strategies;

- ✓ Work with political, civic and business interests to accentuate the positive events happening in the city
- Limerick Co-Ordination office to market Limerick and its attractions at home and abroad
- Develop a clear communication strategy for the city with the media
- Work closely with retail and hospitality sectors to make Limerick the destination of choice for visitors and citizens
- ✓ Accelerate the physical re-development of the city centre to improve its streetscapes, appearance, facilities and accessibility
- Continue to achieve a major reduction in street litter

Objective 2; Developing the city in a sustainable way

Supporting strategies;

- ✓ Ensure sustainable development by the implementation of the objectives of the City Development Plan and accompanying Local Area Plans
- Drive the economic development of the city to maximise investment potential, using the City's strategic location and connections to the transport network
- Work with the National Roads Authority in the delivery of the roads and associated elements of the National Development Plan
- ✓ Promote balanced land use development
- ✓ Preserve the built and natural environment to improve the quality of life for citizens and visitors
- ✓ Enhance the character of the city and range of amenities and facilities
- ✓ Provide a quality planning service to the community through innovation, commitment and customer care
- ✓ Deliver the Regional Waste Management Plan, with an emphasis on waste minimisation, recovery, reuse and recycling

Objective 3; Strengthening the City as the regional capital of the Mid-West

Supporting strategies;

- Obtaining an extension of the Borough Boundary
- Mobilise civic, business and community support for the Borough Boundary extension
- Raise and sustain community awareness on the implications of the Boundary extension
- Drive the Gateway status given by the National Spatial Strategy

Objective 4; Delivering better value for money through prudent management of our resources

Supporting strategies;

- Reduce the accumulated revenue deficit to less than 2% of annual revenue expenditure by 2009
- ✓ Develop timely, relevant and accurate management reports so that councillors, staff and citizens are accurately informed
- Maintain accurate register of assets and develop reporting tools to track use and maintenance of assets and return from investment in assets
- Promote the greater use of on-line and postal motor tax applications
- Property management – develop a property register and maximise return from all assets under our control
- Review work practices throughout the organisation to guarantee better value for money for ratepayers and citizens

Objective 5; Enhancing our Human Resources

Supporting strategies;

- ✓ Provide enhanced competencies for staff to equip them fully for change and modernisation
- ✓ Build improved communication channels internally
- Have greater delegation to increase autonomy that will enhance customer service and empower staff
- ✓ Improve facilities, working conditions and resources consistent with best practice working environments for all personnel
- Achieve a strong health and safety performance through a positive health and safety climate
- Give regular feedback to staff on their performance through the use of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS)

Objective 6; Setting and delivering quality service standards

Supporting strategies;

- ✓ Universal access – to increase openness we will provide easily accessible, well signed public offices that allow privacy and promote access for people with disabilities
- ✓ We will work to provide information in formats that are clear, timely, relevant and accurate
- ✓ Simplify the language of our rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and better explain our procedures
- ✓ Introduce a complaints system that is accessible, easy to use and well publicised
- ✓ Services to be delivered with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay and with callers directed quickly to the correct point of contact
- ✓ Introduce Public Satisfaction Surveys at Departmental level and publish the results annually

Objective 7; Working in greater partnership with our communities

Supporting strategies;

- Carry out a review of the Strategic Policy Committees
- Reinforce the democratically elected members and sectoral interests to fully realise their role in leading the process of Strategic Policy formation
- To assist councillors with I.T. solutions and services that will allow them to fulfill their roles as public representatives and policy makers
- ✓ We will invoke greater community involvement in our decisions so that our responses are more meaningful and effective to meet the changing needs of the city

Objective 8; Combating Social Exclusion and reducing marginalisation

Supporting strategies;

- ✓ Achieve a Public Services Accessibility Award
- ✓ Policies and plans will be equality, poverty and literacy proofed
- ✓ Train staff in Disability Awareness, Interculturalism, Literacy Awareness and Plain English Proofing
- ✓ Reduce the current geographic polarisation of the city through the planning and provision of services
- ✓ Review our consultation process to ensure that the views of our citizens are taken into consideration
- ✓ Work with the Social Inclusion Measures Group (SIM Group) of the City Development Board to develop a city wide focus on Social Inclusion
- ✓ Implement the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPS/Inclusion)

vii. Internal Capacity and Resources

The delivery of our Corporate Plan is driven by the allocation of resources through our annual budget. Effective delivery requires decisions on resource allocation (both human and financial) and prioritisation. The cost of services can now be measured in a more systematic way matching inputs with outcomes. Regular value for money audits will drive this initiative. A greater culture of financial management will be fostered to achieve a better informed and more rational model for expenditure and investment evaluation and decisions.

viii. Implementation and Monitoring

The Annual Operational Plans will set out in greater detail the actions to be undertaken by different service departments to deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

An annual progress report will be completed and presented to the council and will also be contained in the Annual Report.

In addition, we will have a comprehensive mid term review of the Plan and its effectiveness.