

Statement of Strategy 2003 - 2005



Mission

To promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life through protection of the environment and heritage, infrastructure provision, balanced regional development and good local government.



Statement of Strategy 2003 - 2005



© Government of Ireland 2003
PN 12237
ISSN 1649-3605

Design: *Corporate Graphics Ltd*

The document (English and Irish language version)
is available on the Department's website: <http://www.environ.ie>

Copies of this document may be obtained from the:
Quality Customer Service Officer,
Department of the Environment and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

LoCall: 1890 20 20 21
Tel: 01 - 888 2091
Fax: 01 - 888 2888
Email: qcsofficer@environ.irlgov.ie

This document is also available in Braille (on request).



Sustainable development is a key challenge of the 21st century; and it involves economic, social and environmental dimensions. My Department's most fundamental responsibility is to provide leadership within Government for the sustainable development agenda. Many of our own departmental programmes valuably support sustainable development, and we will be pursuing these actively under the guidance of this Strategy. But sustainable development also needs wider support from government, the economic sectors, and from the national and international communities. My Department is called upon in many ways to facilitate and influence the achievement of sustainable development within this wider setting.

The enhanced environmental mandate of my Department, which now includes responsibility for heritage policy, Met Éireann and nuclear safety, is intended to provide a more integrated and effective approach to this task. I welcome the assignment of new functions to the Department and look forward to the challenge of discharging them capably and energetically.

This Statement of Strategy is a framework for action by the Department across the range of its functions over the coming 3 years. I look forward to working with the Department and with our partner bodies, both local authorities and agencies, on implementing these actions for the period ahead. The new Strategy reflects Government priorities, as set out in the *Agreed Programme for Government*, including the implementation of an ambitious environmental programme and ensuring balanced regional development through the implementation of the *National Spatial Strategy*. We are also committed to the agenda set for us in *Sustaining Progress* which provides for special initiatives on affordable housing and waste management.

The Department has a traditional and longstanding involvement with mechanisms of democracy and consultation, through its responsibilities for local government, and electoral arrangements, as well as for planning and environmental legislation. We must ensure that these processes operate fairly and efficiently, and where appropriate with benefit of eGovernment enhancements.

In all of its business, my Department will seek to deliver a quality service to its customers, and to adopt progressive public service management practices in line with Government objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Cullen'.

Martin Cullen, T.D.,

Minister for the Environment and Local Government

March 2003

PART I	INTRODUCTION	5
	SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOREWORD	6
	ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	8
	MANDATE	12
PART II	OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES	15
	ENVIRONMENT	16
	HERITAGE	22
	PLANNING	26
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	30
	HOUSING	36
	SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOCAL SERVICES	40
PART III	IMPLEMENTATION	45
	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	46
	RESOURCING AND MANAGING THE DEPARTMENT	48
	SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS	54
	MONITORING AND REVIEW	60
PART IV	APPENDICES	61
	APPENDIX 1 PROCESS FOLLOWED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY	62
	APPENDIX 2 STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT	63
	APPENDIX 3 LOCATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S MAIN OFFICES	64
	APPENDIX 4 AGENCIES	66





Part I

INTRODUCTION

- Secretary General's Foreword
- Environmental Analysis
- Mandate



The Statement of Strategy sets out a vision for the Department of the Environment and Local Government for the period to 2005. It focuses too on the means for implementing that vision, in terms of:

- the best organisation and use of the Department's resources;
- providing support to our partner local authorities and other agencies;
- working with other Government Departments on common goals; and
- cooperating with business, the voluntary sector and NGOs to achieve our objectives.

The Department's primary task is to ensure that Ireland's natural and built environment, as well as key infrastructures, and the quality of life associated with these things, are appropriate to our status as an advanced economy and society.

By 2005, we intend that significant progress will have been made towards this goal. Targets set in the Strategy envisage that by that time

- all major urban discharges will have environmentally advanced waste water treatment,
- there will be major increases in recycling and in the participation of relevant industries and businesses in support of this,
- the potential of Ireland's regions will be progressively activated under the coordination of the *National Spatial Strategy*, and
- the performance and influence of local government will be stronger.

There have been significant changes to the shape and mandate of the Department since the last Statement of Strategy. We are determined to make a success of our enhanced mandate for environment and heritage; and to deploy and integrate our new resources so as to create a better organisation.

The Department will need this enhanced organisational capacity as it addresses key requirements over the next 3 years:

- the continued leadership and promotion of the sustainable development agenda, in line with our recently published policy document *Making Ireland's Development Sustainable*;

- working with local and regional authorities, and with a range of other agencies, to make a reality of the *National Spatial Strategy*;
- organising an effective EU Presidency in relation to the important and wide ranging environmental agenda; and
- promoting regulatory reform, particularly in relation to the process for approving major developments.

I wish to acknowledge the participation of staff, of representatives of our key partner bodies and of other Government Departments in the development of this Statement of Strategy. Their participation in the process has been of great and important assistance to us in formulating this Statement. Their support will be equally vital to the good implementation of this Strategy.



Niall Callan
Secretary General

March 2003

Important challenges face the Department of the Environment and Local Government over the period 2003 to 2005. The *Agreed Programme for Government (APG) and Sustaining Progress, Social Partnership Agreement 2003 - 2005* have re-focused our agenda in relation to the environment and heritage, housing, balanced regional development and local government. The Department has been overseeing major elements of the *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP), as well as developing new approaches to project procurement and delivery and streamlining the project approval process. The role must continue through the mid term review of the NDP which will take place in 2003.

The **changes in Government Department functions** announced in June 2002 involve a transformation in mandate and shape of the Department of the Environment and Local Government. We are now charged with a more comprehensive responsibility for environmental protection; and heritage policy and conservation, as well as nuclear safety and Met Éireann, have been added to our brief. Notwithstanding the transfer of most of the Department's former Roads Division to the new Department of Transport, these organisational changes have increased staff numbers in the Department from 950 to nearly 2,500.

A key requirement for the Department over this Strategy period is to make a success of these changes. This success will be measurable in terms of more effective and coordinated policies and measures in support of the environment and heritage; in turn, this will need to be based on coherent and integrated arrangements within the Department for the deployment of its new resources.

The **economic environment** relevant to this Strategy has become relatively uncertain in the short-term, after 10 years of unprecedented growth levels. This is reflected in a tightening of the fiscal situation which must be taken into account in the development and implementation of policy and which also requires us to place even more emphasis on achieving value for money. However, the economy retains the potential for ongoing growth in the medium term which will be strong by international standards, although not at the exceptionally high rates of the last decade. The 2003 Budget Statement of the Minister for Finance forecasts GDP growth of 3.5% in the coming year, with prospects improving as we move into 2004 and 2005. To achieve our full economic potential it is recognised that we need to continue a programme of targeted infrastructural development.

To minimise environmental pressure, we need critically to improve the environmental efficiency of our economic growth. The preparation of this Statement coincided with our participation in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August-September 2002. Preparations for the Summit provided an opportunity for us to review progress with **sustainable development** in Ireland since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and to set out policies and actions to meet current challenges. Economic growth and changing lifestyles have led to increasing amounts of waste being generated, growing energy consumption, rising greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change, growing housing demand and associated settlement patterns, and threats to water quality, biodiversity and natural resources and to our built and natural heritage. The report of our review points out that *"we can have both a dynamic economy and a high quality environment..... In the long-run, economic activity is undermined by inadequate environmental protection; in turn, a healthy economy provides the resources with which to build and maintain high environmental quality. But to achieve both these objectives we have to do better in the coming decade."*¹

¹ *Making Ireland's Development Sustainable.*

Significant **demographic change** evidenced in our growing population, in changing household formation and commuting patterns and in increasing regional imbalance continue to present challenges to the Department in the development of our planning policies, in the protection of our built and natural heritage and in the implementation of our infrastructure programmes, in particular housing. The convergence of the average Irish household size towards European norms, the rapid growth in incomes and employment, the significant increase in the number of people in the key household formation age groups, and high immigration have impacted very significantly on demand for housing. Fuelled mainly by demographic forces, the strong demand for housing is forecast to continue. The population of the country as outlined in the 2002 census preliminary report was 3,917,336, up 8% from 1996, the highest rate of population growth since the 1970s. The increase was most marked in Leinster where the population exceeded two million for the first time.

More **balanced regional development** within and between regions and between urban and rural areas to address these demographic changes will be one of the key elements in continued economic growth and competitiveness and is one of the main objectives of the NDP and is endorsed in the APG. The *National Spatial Strategy* is a 20 year strategy designed to enable every place in the country to reach its potential. It recognises that various regions of the country have different roles and seeks to organise and coordinate these roles in a complementary way. It aims to make all regions more competitive according to their strengths. It also seeks to promote a high quality urban environment, as well as vibrant rural areas.

This Statement sets out important objectives and strategies for the next three years including in the areas of **waste, water quality and climate change**. Particular landmarks for evaluation of progress over the period of the Statement include the target of recovery of 50% of packaging waste by 2005, the need to achieve by 2005 demonstrable progress towards Ireland's emissions commitment under the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, and the enactment of modernising and reforming legislation in the water services and broader environmental areas. This is not just about sustainable development in Ireland, our responsibilities extend beyond national boundaries. We have a part to play in achieving sustainable development at **global** level and we will do this in a number of ways including committing Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004 to advancing environmental protection and sustainable development in the EU and internationally.

Ireland's **EU Presidency in 2004** will present particular challenges and opportunities for the Department. The environment is an area of significant EU competence and activity and Presidency work will include chairing two formal meetings of the EU Council of Environment Ministers, hosting an informal meeting of the Ministers in Ireland and leading EU participation at international environmental negotiations.

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 new relationships based on mutually beneficial partnerships and equality have been established between administrations **North and South** and on a broader **East/West** basis. Enhanced cooperation and joint action in relation to environmental research and protection (including waste management, water quality management and environmental impacts of agricultural activities), fire services and emergency planning matters are part of the programme of work of the North South Ministerial Council. A programme of work involving enhanced cooperation on areas of common interest, including impacts of climate change and adaptation, waste management, radioactive waste from Sellafield and follow up action to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, is also being taken forward through the British Irish Council.



Local authorities are key to the delivery of the Department's policies and strategies in most areas. The Department must therefore continue to support and develop a capable, effective and responsive local government system. In order to fulfil these requirements, local government needs to be adequately resourced and to have an appropriate level of responsibility for the raising of these necessary resources. Significant progress has been made in relation to the level of finance available for local government over recent years. With a view to further progress in this area, the Minister has announced that a major independent review of local government funding will be carried out in the early years of this Statement.

The next local elections are due in 2004 with further changes to the local electoral code in prospect. In addition, the working environment for the holding of elections will alter fundamentally with the further roll-out of the electronic voting and counting system at both the European and local elections in 2004. The development and implementation of this system will present a major challenge to the Department, returning officers and local authorities but will ultimately provide a key impetus to the modernisation of the democratic system.

As already stated, responsibility for the entire range of **built and natural heritage functions** previously within the remit of the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, is currently assigned to the Department of the Environment and Local Government. This arrangement stands pending the completion of a review, led by the Department, to determine the most appropriate organisational arrangements for discharging all of these functions into the future.

A number of key issues have arisen during the review which is now at an advanced stage. From the policy point of view, the broadening of the Department's remit to encompass the built and natural heritage functions gives us a wider, more holistic environmental mandate. The review has been looking at the opportunities to formalise existing linkages between some of the heritage functions and activities in the Department's Planning and Environment Divisions, as well as identifying new linkages and avenues through which these can be best exploited, including possibilities for regulatory reform and rationalisation. The long-standing bar on the Department from becoming involved in individual planning applications has been partially waived insofar as Dúchas, now part of the Department, has retained its role in commenting on the built and natural heritage implications of individual cases. The review has had to consider whether this is an appropriate role for a central Government Department to continue to fulfil indefinitely. In a possible alternative scenario, the heritage capacity of local authorities would be significantly strengthened so that they could deal with the heritage implications of individual cases themselves, freeing up central Government time to focus on more comprehensive policy guidance activities.

At an operational level, we have been considering important issues of how very extensive front-line activities in the heritage area are to be effectively managed given that, traditionally, the Department has been focused, largely, on policy formulation, relying heavily on partner agencies such as local authorities and semi-state bodies for implementation. We have also been giving careful consideration to how effect might best be given to that aspect of the Taoiseach's statement on 6 June 2002 which signalled an operational role for the Office of Public Works in relation to built heritage matters.

The management of the newly structured organisation also presents new challenges and opportunities. Numbers of staff have increased as also has the number of locations in which staff of the Department work in Dublin and around the country. The Department's *Human Resources Strategy* published in 2002 provides a platform from which to move forward and further develop policies and practices to the mutual advantage of staff and the organisation. Internal communications takes on a new importance in the context of the changed structure of the Department and this is an area that will require particular attention in the years ahead.

A new vision for the Government's **Public Service Modernisation Programme** is being developed following on the evaluation of the Strategic Management Initiative. In line with this, the Department will assign particular priority to the development of a Management Information Framework, Information and Communications Technologies and Human Resource Management. At the same time we must maintain our efforts in the areas of Quality Customer Service and Better Regulation by building on the good progress already made, taking advantage of the opportunities presented by our enhanced environmental mandate to serve the public to the highest possible standards and taking into account the new customer and legislative bases of the Department following on the reorganisation.

This environmental analysis has informed the development of objectives and strategies in the following parts of this Statement.



The Department has a key role in improving the quality of life of the people in Ireland. Through our responsibility for the quality of the environment in which we live, for housing and other infrastructure, for physical and spatial planning, and for local government, we impact significantly on the daily lives of all people in this country.

In the *Agreed Programme for Government*, commitment is given to implementing an ambitious environmental programme covering a wide range of environmental media and issues. Reflecting this the Department has been given a renewed and enhanced environmental mandate – retaining responsibility for water, waste and air/climate and been given additional responsibilities for the built and natural heritage, Met Éireann and nuclear safety. Our mission – **to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life through protection of the environment and heritage, infrastructure provision, balanced regional development and good local government** – embraces our enhanced environmental mandate and also places that mandate in a broad sustainable development context.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept captures the important ideas that development has economic, social and environmental dimensions which together contribute to quality of life; that development will only be sustainable if a balance is achieved between these three dimensions; and that development must not result in later generations having insufficient stocks of economic, social or environmental resources to enjoy a quality of life at least as high as our own. In recent work, Comhar identifies sustainable development as being concerned with satisfaction of human needs by efficient use of resources; social equity, and equity between generations and between countries and regions; respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity, and for cultural heritage and diversity; and good decision making.²

Sustainable development is about a better quality of life now and for future generations. In practical terms, this means following a comprehensive approach to development by, for example, providing optimum mobility and accessibility, meeting people's housing needs, ensuring clean air and good quality water supplies, adopting modern waste management practices, helping regions reach their full development potential, and, for individuals, instilling a real sense of participation in decisions on these issues affecting their own lives. Importantly, sustainable development is also about individuals and communities sharing and accepting responsibility for the economic, social and environmental needs of the wider community of which they are part and for the needs of future generations.

Sustainable development is more than an environmental concept although that is an important and fundamental element. Rather, sustainable development requires us to combine a dynamic economy with social inclusion, giving opportunities for all in a high quality environment. Sustainable development is, therefore, at the heart of the Department's mandate and mission. We have responsibility for the development and implementation of strong policies in support of the **environment**, for promoting integration of environmental considerations into economic/fiscal and sectoral policies and for promoting the achievement of **balanced regional development**. We have responsibility for many elements of our built and natural **heritage** which forms part of the national sense of identity and provides resources of social, educational, recreational and aesthetic value. We have responsibility to provide, through local authorities and in partnership with the private sector, much of the **infrastructure** which

² *Principles for Sustainable Development – Comhar the National Sustainable Development Partnership - 2002.*

Ireland needs to realise full development potential, but this infrastructure must be provided in ways which minimise impacts on the environment and maximise environmental gain. We must seek to secure the objectives for the main functional areas for which the Department has responsibility, as set out in Part II, without significantly affecting economic activity or the growth prospects of individual sectors or regions of the economy, and with due regard to the social issues of equity and fairness. Equally we must support good local government and further reflect the citizen participation dimension of sustainable development through promoting **democratic governance and public participation**, particularly at local level, in the sometimes difficult choices necessary to achieve sustainable development.

Local government continues as a central element of the Department's mandate and is critical to much of our work. We work in partnership with local authorities to deliver on the various policy and service objectives. We have a responsibility to ensure as far as possible that local government has the framework capability to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.





Part II

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES



15

In Part I, we outlined our **mission** towards which the work of the Department³ is directed. In this Part, we identify the **objectives** which flow from the mission and which set the agenda for the main functional areas for which the Department has responsibility:

- Environment
- Heritage
- Planning
- Local Government
- Housing
- Supporting the Provision of Infrastructure and Local Services

For each objective, we outline the **key strategies** which we will pursue over the next three years to support its achievement. We set each objective and the key strategies within a **policy context** linking them also to the concept of sustainable development as set out in the Department's Mandate. The **key performance indicators** by which we will assess the extent to which these objectives are achieved are listed. These strategically-focussed indicators will be elaborated upon in the Department's business planning process and in particular this process will address the time frames and measures being undertaken to assess performance. The **business units** within the Department which are involved in the achievement of each objective and the **key inter-relationships** with other Departments and agencies are also outlined. High level cross-Departmental issues have been identified for each objective and are included under the heading Key Inter-Relationships.

³ Met Éireann is a constituent part of the Department. However, given its *de facto* autonomy as an organisation unit, it prepares and publishes its own Statement of Strategy.

Environment

Objective

To promote and protect a high quality natural environment, protect human health and secure the integration of environmental considerations into economic and sectoral policies.

Key Strategies

- Providing and maintaining policies, programmes and a legislative framework for the protection and, where necessary, improvement of environmental media and the satisfactory management and reduction of waste.
- Providing the policy leadership and legislative framework for the development and management of investment programmes in water, waste water and waste management infrastructure, and pursuing complementary policy initiatives, including producer responsibility initiatives and application of the polluter pays principle, to meet environmental and development needs.
- Providing and maintaining efficient and effective environmental implementation, monitoring and enforcement systems through action by the Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities.
- Disseminating high quality information on the environment and on sustainable lifestyle choices through ENFO and pursuing other awareness initiatives, and participating actively in EU/wider international work to address global/regional environmental problems, cooperating on environmental issues in the framework of the North-South Ministerial and British-Irish Councils, and preparing for Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004.
- Developing and implementing, in cooperation with other Departments and agencies and with good participation in related international developments, policies and programmes aimed at integrating environmental considerations into economic/fiscal and other policy areas, particularly industry, transport, energy, tourism and agriculture.
- Promoting a partnership approach among the economic sectors, social partners, and non-governmental organisations to key environmental policy and sustainability issues through *Comhar* and other inclusive initiatives such as Local Agenda 21.
- Influencing EU and other international policy so as to take full account of the health, safety and environmental impacts of nuclear energy.
- Monitoring the implementation of safety commitments at Sellafield, continuing to oppose the MOX plant at the site and working towards the eventual safe closure of the installation.

Policy Context

A high quality environment is essential for a good quality of life and is a key component of **sustainable development** as detailed in the Mandate section of this Statement. The policy commitment to the environment is well reflected in a range of documents, including *Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland*, *Making Ireland's Development Sustainable*, *Waste Management: Changing Our Ways*, *Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change*, *National Climate Change Strategy*, and *Litter Action Plan*.

Ireland has a modern body of environmental legislation but this needs regular updating, particularly in line with EU Directives.

Action taken in recent years for the benefit of the environment includes record levels of investment in water services, development of water catchment management strategies with associated action in relation to nutrients and phase-out of phosphate-based domestic laundry detergents, adoption of regional waste management plans, introduction of environmental levies on plastic shopping bags and landfilling operations, elimination of leaded petrol, extended bans/voluntary agreement on smoky coal, and the *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP) commitment to substantial investment in public transport and the provision of quality bus corridors and cycle lanes. Ireland is committed to full implementation of the Nitrates Directive to protect water quality against pollution from agricultural sources. Ireland maintains a high international reputation for the extent and quality of information disseminated in relation to environmental issues.

Today, the quality of Ireland's environment remains relatively good overall but there are increasing pressures associated with economic growth, related consumption patterns and underdeveloped environmental infrastructure. The main challenges now facing environment and sustainable development policy in Ireland are reducing eutrophication of inland waters, improving waste management, protecting the urban environment, controlling greenhouse gas and other transboundary emissions in accordance with Ireland's international commitments, and protecting natural resources.

Addressing these challenges successfully requires ongoing policy development, more effective implementation of environmental controls, greater integration of environmental considerations into economic/fiscal and sectoral policies, providing information and raising awareness towards behaviour change and continuing to encourage a partnership approach and the concept of shared responsibility in relation to environmental issues. Acceptance of this responsibility by the Department is explicit in the development of an environmental management system (ISO 14001) for the Department's main office at the Custom House which will provide examples of best practice for the guidance and information of other public sector organisations.

A particular focus over the period of this Statement will be on more effective implementation of environmental policies and controls, including in the waste area. Regional waste management plans are now in place and the challenge is to drive forward implementation as quickly as possible, in a consistent and systematic way. To this end, a national overview of the plans is being prepared which will form the platform for intensified action to address landfill capacity constraints and provide modern waste management facilities. A major priority will be developing and overseeing implementation of initiatives to prevent or minimise waste in the context of *Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change*, including a new grant scheme to support greater reuse and recycling, further producer responsibility initiatives (building on the success of REPAK) and additional environmental levies following those implemented successfully in respect of plastic bags and landfilling operations.



The *Agreed Programme for Government* provides for the establishment of an Office of Environmental Enforcement to secure further improvements in the implementation of environmental controls. Work is underway on the most appropriate approach in this regard, taking account of progress by the Environmental Protection Agency on development of an environmental management system to help oversee local authority environmental performance and of the need to achieve early progress on this important initiative.

We must participate actively in policy development at EU and international level, including in the context of follow-up to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004. The EU *Sustainable Development Strategy* adopted in 2001 and the 6th EU *Environment Action Programme* agreed in 2002 will provide the key frameworks for policy development and action at EU level over the period of this Statement.

There has also been a need for the Department to provide increased capital funding to local authorities for the development of water services infrastructure across the country; while significant progress has been made in this regard there is a continuing need to maintain and, where necessary, increase investment so as to support necessary social and economic development while providing increased protection for the environment. In terms of our social policy objectives, the availability of sufficient serviced land is a critical factor in tackling our housing supply problems. In addition, existing infrastructure needs to be upgraded to ensure compliance with EU Directives on drinking water and urban waste water collection and treatment and to tackle the problem of water wastage resulting from deficiencies in the network; there also is an urgent need to improve the quality of drinking water supplied in rural areas by privately sourced group water schemes in particular.

To meet all of these needs, almost €4.4 billion (2002 prices) has been provided for investment in water services in the NDP. Delivery of this unprecedented level of investment presents a major challenge to the Department, local authorities, and the private sector. To help meet this challenge, the Department has moved to a three-year rolling investment programme involving the use of public private partnerships and the application of the polluter pays principle. There is also a need to underpin this investment by putting in place a modern legislative and regulatory framework to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. New water services legislation will be progressed to consolidate and modernise the existing statutory framework.

Ireland is opposed to the use of nuclear energy as it believes the environmental, health and safety risks and impacts outweigh the benefits arising from this industry. Ireland recognises that this view is not shared by some other countries. However, in so far as nuclear plants are being operated and commissioned in other jurisdictions Ireland takes the view that such plants must comply fully with all relevant conventions and legal provisions in regard to health, safety, environmental impact and economic justification. Where the risk posed by the operation of nuclear installations such as Sellafield in neighbouring countries is considered untenable, Ireland will use every diplomatic, legal and other route available to it to have the installation closed and decommissioned safely.

Key Performance Indicators

- Implementation of key strategic policies and measures included in *Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, Making Ireland's Development Sustainable* and the *National Climate Change Strategy*.
- Adequacy of legislative framework and the implementation systems for environmental legislation, and timeliness of transposition of EU Directives.
- Level of emissions to air and water and the associated air/water quality.
- Progress in implementation of *Litter Action Plan*.
- Implementation of policies and measures included in *Waste Management: Changing Our Ways* and in *Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change* to prevent/minimise waste and secure increased diversion of waste from landfill.
- Early implementation of action programmes under the Nitrates Directive in all areas, in consultation with interested parties.
- Achievement of the targets for ENFO as set out in the *Customer Service Action Plan 2001 - 2004*.
- Achievement of the infrastructural objectives set out in the Water Services Investment Programme in an environmentally sustainable manner and having regard to the polluter pays principle.
- Implementation of key water services policies, including the Government's water pricing policy framework in respect of non-domestic users of water services, and, in particular, the metering of all such users by 2006.
- Enactment and implementation of the Protection of the Environment Bill, Water Services Bill, Containment of Nuclear Weapons Bill and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Bill.
- Progress in relation to enhanced North/South cooperation on the Environment.
- Influencing EU and wider international policy developments so as to take full account of the health, safety and environmental impacts of nuclear energy, and seeking through legal, diplomatic and other means the safe closure of the Sellafield Nuclear Installation.



Business Units

Responsibility for this area lies mainly with the Air/Climate, Water Quality, Environment Policy, Environment Awareness, Environment International, Waste Infrastructure and Regulation, Waste Prevention and Recovery and Nuclear Safety Sections; the North/South, Water Services Investment Programme and Water Services Policy Units; and ENFO and the Water Services and Environment Inspectorates.

There is significant cross-Divisional involvement, particularly with Planning, Urban and Village Development, Housing Policy and Supply and Local Government Sections and Dúchas Division.

Key Inter-Relationships

It has long been recognised that a high quality environment will not be achieved without integration of environmental considerations into economic/fiscal and sectoral policies. The environment is influenced by a wide range of public policies and activities so a comprehensive approach to environment policy and implementation is required across the governmental system.

This Department has leadership and facilitative roles in relation to environmental protection and sustainable development. To this end, there is regular contact with other Departments and agencies and a range of mechanisms are in place, which are regularly reviewed and updated, to help ensure that this comprehensive approach and the necessary policy coherence and internalisation of environmental considerations are achieved. Key areas of interaction (and some of the Departments concerned) are as follows:

- Climate Change (Department of Finance, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Department of Transport, Department of Agriculture and Food);
- Waste Management/Producer Responsibility Initiatives (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Agriculture and Food, Revenue Commissioners);
- Water Quality and Water Services (Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Department of Health and Children, Department of Finance);
- Sustainable Energy/Sustainable Transport (Department of Transport, Department of Finance, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Revenue Commissioners);
- Chemicals (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Agriculture and Food);
- Biotechnology (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Health and Children, Department of Agriculture and Food);
- Eco-Auditing (Department of Finance, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Transport, Department of Health and Children); and
- Nuclear Safety (Office of the Attorney General, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Transport, Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Defence, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform).

Met Éireann, for which responsibility was assigned to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government in 2002, provides services with important linkages to other aspects of Departmental activities, including in areas such as climate change, air quality and hydrology.

The Environmental Protection Agency is a key partner of the Department in working to protect and improve the quality of the environment.

The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland provides the Department with scientific advice on all matters relating to radiological safety and undertakes research in relation to such matters. It also operates an extensive monitoring function in relation to the presence and origin of environmental radioactivity and regulates the provision, use and disposal of radioactive substances employed in health and other industries.

We rely on local authorities for implementation of much of the body of environmental legislation. Local authorities as sanitary authorities are also responsible for implementation of the water services investment programme and for the operation and management of water services.

To achieve its objectives, the Department must have good working arrangements with the social partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and build wide public support through better communication and partnership towards progressive environmental policies. *Comhar* - the National Sustainable Development Partnership provides the key forum for development and implementation of integrated environmental policies in partnership with the relevant stakeholders. In addition, the Department maintains important relationships with a range of economic and social organisations and environmental NGOs.

In relation to rural water supplies, which rely heavily on voluntary group schemes, the Department has promoted a partnership approach involving the local authorities, the National Federation of Group Water Schemes and the National Rural Water Monitoring Committee.

There is a significant international dimension to our work in relation to the environment, resulting in participation in fora such as the EU, UN and OECD. There will be heightened engagement by the Department with the international environmental and sustainable development agenda in the period of this Statement associated in particular with follow-up to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and Ireland's holding of the EU Presidency in 2004.

In addition the Department supports the Cabinet Committee on European Affairs.





Heritage

Objective

To protect and promote appreciation of the built and natural heritage and to promote their enjoyment by all.

22

Key Strategies

- Provide an appropriate legislative and policy framework for the effective conservation and protection of the built and natural heritage.
- Identify, inventory and assess the built and natural heritage.
- Designate elements of the built and natural heritage requiring special protection measures.
- Provide leadership in the conservation of the built and natural heritage outside State care.
- Conserve, manage and present State properties to the highest standards as models of excellence in the conservation of the built and natural heritage.
- Provide leadership through the promotion of increased national awareness of the importance and value of the built and natural heritage and through increased public consultation as part of the decision-making process.



Policy Context

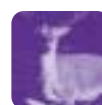
Respect for cultural heritage and diversity and for ecological integrity and biodiversity are key components of **sustainable development** as detailed in the Mandate section of this Statement. Heritage makes an essential contribution to quality of life, giving a context and coherence to the present that acknowledges the contribution of the past. A systematic approach to conserving the built and natural heritage is reflected in the *National Heritage Plan* and the *National Biodiversity Plan*.

Ireland is endowed with a rich heritage. That heritage is inextricably linked with our sense of identity and affirms our historic, cultural and natural inheritance. For present and future generations that inheritance has the ability to enhance and enrich the context of everyday existence. Heritage in all its manifestations is one of our key assets and is, therefore, deserving of the highest levels of protection and management thus securing its future for coming generations. Enjoyment of our heritage is the privilege of the current generation which has the responsibility to preserve it for future generations.

A prerequisite to protecting our heritage is a knowledge of its extent and its importance. It is vital, therefore, that the process of identification and inventory of the heritage is kept up-to-date and the information thus yielded is made widely available. The State can mitigate the threats to heritage through a variety of measures spanning legislation, best practice in the management of heritage properties including the adoption of site management plans in liaison with local interests and promoting better awareness and appreciation.

There exists a broad span of legislation covering the Department's regulatory roles in relation to the protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage as well as wildlife. On the archaeological heritage side, which includes our archaeological sites and monuments, the National Monument Acts 1930 - 1994 give responsibility to the Department to protect archaeological sites and monuments that have been identified under the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. A National Monuments Bill, to consolidate and modernise national monuments legislation in order that it can meet the increasing demands being placed on the heritage is currently at drafting stage. Under more recent legislation, the Department is charged with carrying out the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, which focuses on the more recent built heritage and invariably involves structures still in use. The Inventory involves the recording of structures, many of special architectural value which will feature in the Records of Protected Structures set up by the Local Authorities.

On the natural heritage side, the recently enacted Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 together with the support offered by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 has not only enhanced protection levels directly through additional site designations, but it has also alerted the public to the need to conserve threatened habitats and species. The Department designates Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in line with EU Directives. Natural Heritage Areas are designated under the Wildlife Act 2000. Under the EU Directives or Natura 2000 programme good progress has been made on designations and the list so far accounts for about 14% (close to the European average) of the national territory including maritime sites. Sites are monitored in order to ensure that they are not being damaged or otherwise interfered with in a manner which would threaten the integrity of such sites.



The Department owns and presents a significant number of heritage properties. These comprise some of the most important built and natural heritage in the State where best practice in conservation can be effected. The *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP) under the Border, Midland and Western and Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programmes has given recognition to the need to conserve these sites and develop and improve them for the benefit of visitors. Funding has been made available during the lifetime of the Plan to facilitate the carrying out of a programme of conservation and restoration works as well as the provision of new and improved visitor facilities, at a number of sites nationwide. The works programme will help ensure that visitors can continue to enjoy our heritage but it also ensures that staff in the Department are to the fore in conservation and thus well informed in devising both policy and strategies in support of the Department's regulatory role in protecting the heritage.

The key to any successful conservation and protection programme is through the promotion of better awareness and appreciation. The Department and its staff have wide expertise in and information on heritage and the provision of advice and information to the public and other agencies is, therefore, another important element in the effective protection of heritage. This supports the aim of achieving a good balance between conservation and development and in this regard, codes of practice, guidelines and other advice notes are being increasingly utilised to help achieve this aim.

Key Performance Indicators

- Publication (by end 2003) and implementation of the National Monuments Bill.
- Progress on implementation of both the National Heritage and National Biodiversity Plans.
- Progress on maintaining favourable conservation of habitats and species.
- Publication of archaeological, architectural and habitats surveys.
- Publication of guidelines and codes of best practice for architectural, archaeological and natural heritage conservation.
- Improved visitor numbers and visitor satisfaction at heritage sites.
- Progress on designations programmes.
- Progress on adopting management plans for selected sites.
- Conservation status of heritage sites monitored.
- Efficient and effective conservation of the Department's property portfolio.



Business Units

The National Monuments and Architectural Protection Service and the National Parks and Wildlife Service take the lead in the regulatory matters involving protection of the heritage and their activities cover site identifications and designations, protection of sites not in State care, licensing, and advice in relation to land use and development. Additionally, these two services and the Historic Properties Service are responsible for the management and maintenance of some 750 properties in State care and responsibility for delivery of the NDP programme of capital projects.

Education and Visitor Services is responsible for the presentation of heritage sites as well as promotional and marketing activities in relation to the work of the Dúchas Division.

The Heritage Policy Unit is responsible for all legislative matters including the advancement of primary legislation and the enactment of associated regulations. It also has a coordinating role for the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan.

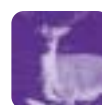
The Dúchas Division also liaises with Business Units in the Planning and Environment Divisions.

Key Inter-Relationships

The Department works closely with a number of other Government Departments and a range of public bodies in relation to heritage matters as follows:

- The Heritage Council stands appointed by the Minister and acts in a complementary role to the Department in relation to heritage protection;
- Protection of the Built Heritage (Local Authorities, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, National Roads Authority, Bord na Móna, Bord Gáis, Office of Public Works, National Museum of Ireland, Heritage Council);
- Policy on Architecture (Office of Public Works, Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland);
- Conservation of Natural Heritage (Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Local Authorities, Environmental Protection Agency, Bord na Móna, Coillte, Teagasc, Heritage Council, European Commission);
- Regulating Trade in Plant and Animals (Revenue Commissioners, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Department of Agriculture and Food, European Commission);
- Development Impacts on the Heritage (Department of Transport, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Local Authorities, National Roads Authority, Bord na Móna, Coillte, Bord Gáis, Office of Public Works, An Bord Pleanála);
- National Heritage Plan (Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism specifically and all other Government Departments, Local Authorities, Heritage Council);
- National Biodiversity Plan (all Government Departments and the Departments of Agriculture and Food and Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in particular; local authorities and the Heritage Council); and
- Presentation of Heritage Sites (Local Authorities, Office of Public Works, Bord Fáilte).

In addition, the Department also maintains important relationships with environmental non-governmental organisations as listed earlier under the Environment functional area.



Planning

Objective

To provide a policy and legislative framework which facilitates and encourages development patterns consistent with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, balanced regional development, conservation of the natural and built environment, quality in construction and urban and village regeneration.

26

Key Strategies

- Lead and manage implementation of the *National Spatial Strategy* by mobilising action across the widest possible spectrum of interests towards the achievement of balanced regional development.
- Maintain an up-to-date legislative and policy framework to facilitate an efficient, effective, balanced and quality planning system that is transparent and accessible in its operation and which promotes the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.
- Develop and maintain in cooperation with local authorities, relevant Departments, agencies and other relevant interests, targeted and integrated urban/town/village renewal programmes aimed at the economic, social and sustainable regeneration of such areas.
- Promote high quality, safe and sustainable design and construction.

Policy Context

The physical planning system seeks to facilitate and encourage **development within sustainable patterns of settlement** whilst fostering protection of the natural and built environment and promoting the efficient use of land and infrastructure. It plays a key role in facilitating delivery of the infrastructure programmes in the *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP) and in addressing housing supply requirements. The system is directly operated by the local authorities and An Bord Pleanála. The Department's primary role is to provide the essential legislative framework and policy guidance while seeking to minimise the regulatory burden and cost of the system. In addition, the Department provides an expert advisory service on heritage/conservation issues to planning authorities and to An Bord Pleanála. Over the period of the Statement, the Department will seek to enhance quality in the planning system, not just by promoting efficiency in its delivery, but also in terms of the quality of outputs such as development plans, integrated area-based urban renewal schemes and design quality of new development. Quality is also a key focus of the Department's building control system. It has the twin aims of promoting high quality, sustainable building and securing the health and safety of people in and around buildings.

Planning policy is set to develop substantially over the next few years in line with the Government's objective, set out in the NDP, of achieving more balanced regional development. For this purpose, the Government has published the *National Spatial Strategy* for Ireland 2002 to 2020. The Strategy promotes a better spread of job opportunities, a better quality of life and better places to live in. The best way to do this is to consolidate the development of the Greater Dublin Area, while promoting places in the regions with sufficient scale and critical mass to attract significant investment and job opportunities. The Strategy will inform and direct decisions in relation to investment, planning matters and spatial policy over the next twenty years. It sets out how people, services and infrastructure can be brought together so that new opportunities for investment and employment growth will be opened up across the country.

The Strategy identifies a national framework of gateways and hubs, which will provide the necessary scale of infrastructure and services to increase the economic attractiveness of every region of the country. The gateways will drive development across the urban and rural areas they influence and support more balanced patterns of national level development.

A network of hubs will have a critical strategic role in energising the immediate areas around them by providing strengthened structures for more focussed investment across the country.

Spatial policies in relation to the location of employment, the location of residential development, the spatial aspects of rural development, how people access services and how they can continue to enjoy a high quality environment have also been incorporated in the Strategy.

The Minister for the Environment and Local Government will lead the Strategy's implementation. The Strategy will also be rolled out through regional and local authorities, starting with the preparation and adoption of regional planning guidelines.

Urban renewal policies and programmes are an integral element of the broad planning framework in that they seek to reverse urban decay, promote social inclusion, maintain the vitality of, and improve the quality of life in, town centres and reduce pressures for suburban development.

The national Building Regulations and the related Technical Guidance Documents must be continuously reviewed and revised to promote design and construction to modern and environmentally sustainable standards. Emerging harmonised European standards for structural design (Eurocodes) and construction products (under Directive 89/106/EEC) must be implemented, on a phased basis, in the coming years. This will involve, *inter alia*, a substantial recasting of existing fire safety classifications, standards and testing requirements for buildings and building materials. Stricter enforcement by local building control authorities must be actively encouraged. The Building Control Bill, due to be published in 2003, will provide for stricter enforcement powers for these authorities and for registration of architects, building surveyors and quantity surveyors.

Key Performance Indicators

- Degree of awareness and support for the *National Spatial Strategy* among key national, regional and local bodies and extent to which policies, plans and programmes of such bodies are consistent with the objectives of the Strategy.
- Effective, efficient and high quality planning system.
- Timely adoption and consistent enforcement of building standards.
- Enactment and implementation of the Building Control Bill.
- Extent to which objectives of urban/town/village renewal programmes are achieved in a sustainable manner in targeted areas.

Business Units

The lead role in this area rests with the Spatial Planning Unit, the Planning, Construction and Urban and Village Development Sections and the Planning and Building Control Inspectorates. There is significant involvement with other Business Units in the Department covering Housing, Water Services, Dúchas, Environment and Local Government.

Key Inter-Relationships

In the context of the Department's overall responsibility for planning policy and legislation and the effective operation of the planning system, it maintains on-going contacts with local authorities and An Bord Pleanála. The Department works closely with other Government Departments on a wide range of planning-related issues e.g. Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on telecommunications infrastructure; Health and Children and Justice, Equality and Law Reform on childcare policy; Enterprise, Trade and Employment on major accidents legislation. Cross-Departmental consultation which is already a feature of implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive will play an important part in putting in place the framework for implementation of the 2001 Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment. Consultation on the above issues also involves relevant State agencies such as the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation, the Health and Safety Authority, the Heritage Council, Industrial Development Authority and Forfás.

With regard to urban renewal programmes, the Department liaises with the Department of Finance and DG 4 (Competition) of the European Commission in relation to the financial incentives and with the Dublin Docklands Development Authority, Temple Bar Renewal, the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly and the Border, Midlands and Western Regional Assembly and the Special EU Programmes Body in relation to implementation in their respective areas.

Issues addressed under the *National Spatial Strategy* cross into most Government Departments in the context of transport, education, rural development, enterprise, infrastructure, tourism and finance. In recognition of the need for effective coordination across Departments and State-sponsored agencies, both at strategic and operational levels, an Interdepartmental Steering Committee was established to oversee development of the Strategy. Arrangements were also put in place for wide-ranging consultation with regional bodies, local authorities, local development bodies and the social partners. The cross-departmental/agency and widely consultative approach to the Strategy's preparation will be carried through in its implementation.

The Department in partnership with the National Standards Authority of Ireland and the Irish Agrément Board monitors and inputs to the development of harmonised European construction standards by the European Commission, via the EU Standing Committee on Construction, the European Standards Organisation-CEN and the European Organisation for Technical Approval. The Department will have primary responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of the proposed EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings. The Department develops national building code proposals, in consultation with the statutory Building Regulations Advisory Body and the construction industry/consumers, via a formal public consultation process. The Department maintains regular liaison with national and local regulators in Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a view to maintaining a broadly common building code for these islands. This facilitates healthy cross-border competition in construction.

The Department liaises closely with the non-governmental sector involved in the planning, land use and built environment areas, including An Taisce, Dublin Civic Trust and the Irish Georgian Society. We also work closely with representative bodies such as the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation, the Building Materials Federation and the Construction Industry Federation. Regular contact is also maintained with the bodies representing the relevant professions, such as Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Irish Planning Institute, Royal Town Planning Institute, Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland, Institute of Engineers of Ireland and the Society of Chartered Surveyors.

Local Government

Objective

To support and strengthen local government capacity to fulfil its responsibilities with good democratic decision making, human resource, and financial planning and management systems; a modern electoral and statutory framework and a strengthened focus on community development and social inclusion.

30

Key Strategies

- Enhance the democratic mandate and policy role of elected members, with effective input from local interests, through the new participative and decision making structures.
- Strengthen the community base and relevance of local government with genuine input to other public services delivered locally.
- Maintain and develop a modern, effective legislative and ethical framework for local government to deliver on its areas of responsibility.
- Ensure local government has an adequate and appropriate funding system to meet existing and emerging challenges.
- Develop and support modern local authority financial planning and management systems and distribute central funding in a fair and equitable manner.
- Provide a quality, regulatory and value for money audit service for local authorities.
- Support and promote best practice in human resource management in local authorities.
- Strengthen quality customer service in local government.
- Develop a modern and efficient electoral administration.

Policy Context

Good decision making is a key theme of **sustainable development** - this was identified by *Comhar*⁴ who also stated that decision making should be devolved to the appropriate level. Progress towards sustainable development requires cooperation and consensus and the participation of all actors in society, including civil society. The local government system provides an opportunity for people, through their representatives, to influence the economic, social and cultural policies affecting their areas. Local government is directly responsible for an impressive array of essential public services, and is judged on its ability to deliver these services efficiently and effectively. The role of the Department is to ensure that there is a modern and effective financial, human resource and legislative framework in place within which local government can operate to its maximum potential.

There are however many other public services not in the remit of local authorities being provided locally by other public service agencies. All local public services should be delivered in a manner which maximises essential synergies between them and which allows local democratic input into how they are planned and shaped. Local government should lead the process of integrated provision of all public services locally. Local authorities need to expand their horizons in addressing in innovative ways the many economic, social, cultural and other needs which exist in their communities through, in particular, interaction and co-working with other agencies both statutory and non-statutory.

The exercise of democracy at national and local levels is undergoing profound changes. Public policy development now operates in a more open environment and through new structures which facilitate the wider participation of civil society both in the development and in the implementation of public policies. For local authorities, this means leading particularly through the new County/City Development Boards, on the development of their areas and on the role of public services in fostering and securing that development. The recently published city/county strategies for economic, social and cultural development provide the platform from which to move forward; the challenge is for all involved to work together in a more integrated way towards these strategic goals. It also means developing more open decision making processes for their own services through Strategic Policy Committees which include representatives of the various local government stakeholders and others. We will actively support these new structures and in particular we will take measures to enhance the capacity of councillors to effectively fulfil their mandate as community leaders. The new structures should also significantly enhance the capability of local authorities to deliver the major capital services being sponsored and funded by the Department. We will return to this topic in Part III.

Local authorities' capability to deliver on their extensive remit and to maintain a wide range of high quality public services requires substantial financial resources. Clearly, the level of funding available at national level for all sectors is not unlimited and taking account of national budgetary strategies, we will ensure, as far as possible, that local government is adequately funded. To that end, and also to ensure that there is an appropriate level of local accountability, an independent review of the local government funding system will be carried out. The Department will also seek to ensure that available funds will be distributed to local authorities in a fair and equitable manner. The capacity of the finance function in local authorities has been improved in recent years by restructuring and recruitment of professional staff. We will build on this by replacing the existing regulatory financial regime governing local authorities with more relevant and modern regulations and an accounting code of practice

⁴ *Principles for Sustainable Development – Comhar the National Sustainable Development Partnership - 2002.*

setting out in a user friendly fashion new accounting policies for local authorities. To further improve the legislative environment within which local authorities work, we will replace the existing law on rating some of which dates back to the 19th century with consolidated modern legislation.

The modernisation agenda will be further facilitated by the introduction of new financial management systems which facilitate better financial planning and enable local authorities to more effectively advance their efficiency and value for money agenda. This agenda will be strengthened by the work of the Local Government Audit Service through regulatory audits of local authorities in accordance with the Code of Local Audit Practice and specific value for money audits.

The general local government legislative framework has been updated by the Local Government Act 2001. In addition, a new legislative framework has now been put in place governing expenditure at local elections and local political donations under the Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act 1999. Under the Local Government Act 2001, a new statutory ethical framework for the local government service is also being introduced. The operation of these systems will be kept under review in light of practical experience and developments generally in the field of ethical governance.

The modernisation and renewal programme for local government, *Better Local Government* is now well under way. New policy formulation and management structures have been introduced. New financial management, human resource and information technology systems are being put in place. There is a more strategic approach to business with emphasis on improving customer service and, in this regard, it is our aim to further develop the Service Indicators initiative. The whole programme has been underpinned by a modern legislative code. The great challenge now is to ensure that all of these changes are focused and bedded down so that collectively they secure the delivery of better services to the public.

We will also be pressing forward with an agenda of modernising the electoral administration principally through the extended use of electronic voting and counting at the European and local elections in 2004

Key Performance Indicators

- Effective operation of the Strategic Policy Committee system and effective support for implementation of the County Development Board strategies.
- Complete implementation of the Local Government Act 2001 by mid 2004. Review and improve the general legislative framework for local government, as necessary.
- Further develop a satisfactory, statutorily based ethical framework. Draft codes of conduct for staff and councillors to be available by end 2003.
- Conclude a major independent review of local government funding by mid 2004.
- Develop the Needs and Resources Grant Distribution Model to achieve greater equity in the distribution of general purpose funding from the Local Government Fund, with initial developments by September 2003.
- Roll out of new financial management systems to local authorities by end 2003.
- Replacement of outdated financial procedures with a modern financial regulatory system and an Accounting Code of Practice by mid 2003.
- Secure enactment and implementation of Local Government (Rates) Bill. General scheme to Government by mid 2003.
- Progress in implementing initiatives and effective support for best practice in human resource management in local authorities.
- Improved customer service in local authorities through further development of Service Indicators by end 2003 and the dissemination of best practice on effective customer consultation, complaints and appeals procedures, use of local partnership structures and general customer action planning by mid 2004.
- Progress in implementation of the electronic voting and counting project for countrywide use in the June 2004 local and European elections.
- Efficient preparation for the conduct of elections and the adequacy of the electoral legislative framework.
- Completion of annual audits.

Business Units

Responsibility for these strategies lies mainly with Local Government Policy, Local Government Finance, Local Government Personnel and Franchise Sections as well as the Local Government Audit Service. They will continue to work closely with the local democratic and administrative systems in the development and implementation of the policies and with the Oireachtas as regard electoral changes. They will also liaise with other Divisions within the Department who contribute to their delivery. In this regard, all Divisions have a key role in ensuring that the Strategic Policy Committees are well informed and briefed on policy which affects their functional responsibilities.

Key Inter-Relationships

Good consultation and cooperation are key to progressing our policies. While the Department has the key role for the achievement of the strategies set out above, we work in close tandem with the local government system, particularly local authorities, regional authorities, regional assemblies, the Local Government Management Services Board, the Local Government Computer Services Board and representative bodies such as the General Council of County Councils, the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland, the Local Authority Members' Association, the County and City Managers' Association and specialist groups such as personnel officers and finance officers.

Much of our work, particularly in the areas of social inclusion and community development, means that we must have close contacts with a number of other Government Departments including the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, state agencies including the Equality Authority, the Combat Poverty Agency and Area Development Management and the social partners in both the development and implementation of policy. We will continue to play an active and positive role in the various cross-cutting fora which help to deliver a cohesive public service response to issues where responsibility is shared between Departments and public bodies, for example, implementation of the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* and the *National Children's Strategy* in relation to the Department's role in RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) and in the strategies of City and County Development Boards which arose through the Inter-Departmental Task Force on the Integration of the Local Government and Local Development Systems.

We will continue to work within the framework of the Council of Europe with regard to the European Charter of Local Self Government as ratified by Ireland in 2002 and on a range of other related activities.

There is an extensive legislative programme in the local government and electoral areas which requires close workings with the Oireachtas and the Office of the Attorney General. We will continue to liaise and consult on a regular basis in order to progress all legislation as speedily as possible. In relation to the electoral system we liaise closely with the Standards in Public Office Commission, the local authorities and returning officers and with other Government Departments involved in the sponsoring of referenda.





Housing

Objective

To enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice.

Key Strategies

- Oversee and seek to maintain an efficient housing market by implementing a multi-stranded approach to address housing needs as these evolve.
- Facilitate home ownership by those who desire and can afford it through fiscal and other measures.
- Expand the availability of housing (in line with the principles of the *National Spatial Strategy*) to meet demand, through the development and implementation of measures in the following areas: the legislative, regulatory and fiscal framework; securing the provision and efficient use of residential land, including the extension of the Serviced Land Initiative; expansion of social and affordable housing provision including increasing the contribution of the voluntary and cooperative housing sector and the pursuit of initiatives such as affordable housing; enhancement of the role of the private rented sector, including legislative reform and promotion of accommodation supply; addressing the special housing needs of elderly, disabled and homeless persons and Travellers; and, initiatives under the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* (NAPS) and the Revitalising Areas by Planning and Investment Programme (RAPID). In this context, it is intended to support housing advice services, through the local authority system, to enable those coming in contact with the local authorities to obtain advice on all of the available housing options.
- Seek to ensure the existence of appropriate standards in housing provision through the following measures: promotion of housing that is sustainable, affordable, energy efficient, architecturally appropriate, uses best available construction techniques and is adaptable to changing needs over its lifetime; and, promoting the conservation and improvement of the public and private housing stock, with particular emphasis on the needs of low-income households and rundown local authority estates.



Policy Context

Economic development and social equity are key themes of **sustainable development**. Access to affordable accommodation is accepted as an essential element of economic and social policy. Failure to address the housing needs of a growing population would impose significant costs and constraints on economic growth, competitiveness and social development. The general principle underpinning the policy approach to the housing objective is that those who can afford to do so should provide for their housing needs either through home ownership or private rented accommodation and that those who will be unable to provide for their own housing needs should have access to social housing. This principle is pursued by means of the key strategies outlined including the fiscal and other incentives available. The primary strategy is to oversee and seek to maintain an efficient housing market by implementing a multi-stranded approach to address housing needs as these evolve. The associated detailed strategies relate to various interventions and supports in the private and public housing domains to facilitate appropriate standards of housing provision and to promote social inclusion. The Department will keep these strategies under review in order to ensure their effectiveness in achieving the housing objective.

Economic and societal changes are reshaping the context within which policy is developed. Rapid economic growth, a rising population (including a significant increase in the key household formation groups) and the convergence of the average Irish household size towards the European norm, are resulting in a significant demand for additional housing.

The *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP) has provided the framework for addressing the infrastructural deficit in the size of the national housing stock. The Government's approach to this element of the NDP, involving significant investment in social housing output, has been further reflected in the Government policy statement, *Action on Housing* (June 2000), the *Agreed Programme for Government and Sustaining Progress, Social Partnership Agreement 2003 - 2005* (SP). The Housing Forum will continue as a key mechanism to facilitate inputs into housing policy development by the social partners. The Department will also participate as required in the various groups established to steer actions and review progress under SP.

Considerable progress has been made in implementing the NDP and the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* commitments, but the challenge remains for policy development and implementation to keep pace with these particularly having regard to the needs of an expanding and changing population and a dynamic housing market. The evolution and development of policy must take place against the backdrop of a tightening fiscal situation in which there will continue to be a strong emphasis on achieving value for money.



Key Performance Indicators

- Trends in the affordability of housing having regard to such factors as movements in house prices and rents.
- Degree to which house completions nationally keep pace with requirements, especially in areas of high demand.
- The adequacy of the supply of serviced land.
- The qualitative development of the national housing stock with regard to environmental and sustainability factors.
- Local authority housing strategies reviewed and amended as necessary within the life of this Statement.
- The extent to which the requirements of those in need of housing are met, including persons with social or special housing needs.
- Completion of a review of the effectiveness of social and affordable housing provision.
- Effective implementation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
- Degree to which progress has been made in developing arrangements for the implementation of the new affordable housing initiative contained in SP.
- Completion of the review of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 by end 2003.
- Degree to which specific actions provided for in SP for addressing the needs of homeless persons and Travellers are implemented.
- Follow-up on the report of the Commission on the Private Rented Residential Sector, including enactment of the Housing (Private Rented Sector) Bill in Autumn 2003 and the establishment of the Private Residential Tenancies Board on a statutory basis and other measures to develop the sector.

Business Units

The Department's Housing Division is responsible for implementation of the housing objective. The Division contains the following Business Units: Housing Policy and Supply; Housing Construction; Housing Management and Affordable Housing; Housing Grants; Voluntary Housing; Traveller Accommodation, Private Rented Sector, Social Inclusion Unit and the Housing Inspectorate. There is a cross-cutting involvement with other Divisions in relation to the planning and water services aspects of increasing housing supply, with Business Units in the Local Government and Environment areas, and with Construction Section and the Public Private Partnership Unit.



Key Inter-Relationships

The Department works with a range of different stakeholders in implementing its strategies. This involves close relationships with other Government Departments and participation in a number of Cabinet Committees and Cross-Department Teams. In this context, the Department works closely with the Departments of the Taoiseach, Finance, Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Social and Family Affairs, Transport, Education and Science, Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Health and Children, and Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in delivering its key housing strategies.

The Department works actively with the Cross-Departmental Teams which under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach support Cabinet Committees on Housing, Infrastructure and Public Private Partnerships, Social Inclusion, Drugs and Rural Development, Immigration and Children. The Department leads the Cross-Departmental Team on Homelessness and participates in the Department of Health's Inter-Departmental Group on the Needs of Older People, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's Coordination Group on Prisoner Re-integration and the monitoring committee on the implementation of recommendations in the Task Force Report on the Travelling Community. The Department also supports the development and implementation of a number of key cross-Departmental Government strategies led by other Departments, including the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* which now includes a significant housing dimension; the *National Drugs Strategy* in relation to significantly reducing the harm caused by the misuse of drugs; the Health Strategy, *Quality and Fairness A Health System for You* in relation to Homelessness; the *National Children's Strategy* which will guide policy in relation to children's issues up to 2010; the *Youth Homelessness Strategy* and the *Traveller Health Strategy* in relation to implementing the relevant accommodation related actions proposed in that strategy. In developing proposals for the private rented sector, this Department has the lead role, but other Departments such as the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and Social and Family Affairs play an important role in achieving targets in this area.

The Department works closely with the local authorities. This relationship is critical to the successful achievement of the housing objective. Other key stakeholders include the Housing Finance Agency, the National Building Agency, the Local Government Computer Services Board, the Rent Tribunal, the ad-hoc Private Residential Tenancies Board and the Housing Unit established jointly with the County and City Managers' Association.

The Department also works with organisations in the voluntary and cooperative housing sector and those working with elderly, disabled and homeless persons and Travellers. The mortgage lending agencies, the house building industry, relevant professional bodies and bodies providing structural guarantees are also central to achieving our housing objective.



Supporting the Provision of Infrastructure and Local Services

Objective

To promote and support the provision of infrastructure by local authorities, including non-national roads, fire and emergency services, library and other amenity services which support local communities.

40

Key Strategies

- Promote and support the implementation through local authorities of programmes for the improvement and maintenance of non-national roads.
- Assist and support local authorities in their role of ensuring that people, property and local infrastructure are protected from fire and other emergency situations.
- Support local authorities in developing the public library system to enable that system to fulfil its key role in widening access to the Information Society.
- Encourage and support the use of public private partnerships within the local government sector as a way of delivering infrastructure and quality public services in a timely and cost effective manner.
- Ensure regular review of performance, developments and prospects in the construction industry.
- Facilitate partnership between public and private sector clients and the construction industry via the Forum for the Construction Industry, in improving building and procurement processes.

Policy Context

Local authorities provide a range of services which support local economic, social and cultural development thus contributing to the **sustainable development** of their areas. Infrastructural provision is a key element of this and the Department supports local authorities in a number of ways including by providing legislative, policy, financial and other supports for the water, waste water, waste, housing, non-national roads, fire services and libraries programmes. We also assist infrastructural development through our role in public private partnerships and our role in relation to the construction industry.

Public private partnerships (PPP) represent a new way of delivering public infrastructure and services. Local authorities are to the fore in using this approach to improve efficiencies in the implementation of projects and to encourage competition. The Department's role is to encourage and support the use of PPP within the local government sector. Issues directly relating to PPPs and housing, water and waste infrastructure and services are dealt with under the Housing and Environment headings in this Statement. Within a framework that protects the public interest and the consumer, we will promote measures that encourage a fair and balanced division of responsibilities between the public and private sectors and a competitive environment for the delivery of infrastructure and services across the range of areas for which local authorities are responsible.

The Department has primary responsibility for the **construction industry** whose performance is critical to the successful implementation of many of the Department's strategies. The industry accounts for 21% of GNP and employs, directly or indirectly, around 240,000 people or around one in seven of the 1.75 million people now at work. Building output grew by an average of more than 10% per annum between 1994 and 1999. This was the highest and most sustained growth in the history of the State and was exceptional relative to the EU average of 2% to 3% per annum. Construction activity is now levelling out, albeit at double the level of activity achieved in the mid-1990s. Building output grew by 6% in 2000 and by an estimated 2% in 2001. Building output is forecast to fall by 3.5% in 2002. The medium term expectation is for construction activity to level off at around the present level in 2003 and 2004. Construction price inflation has eased from a peak of 12% in 2000 to 10% in 2001 and an estimated 5% in 2002. This means that more projects can now be built per €1 million invested under the *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP).

In July 2002, the Forum for the Construction Industry, in its First Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Government's *Action Plan to Expand the Capacity of the Construction Industry* found that an excellent start had been made in implementing the Action Plan, construction capacity had increased and was more in line with demand and the momentum for further capacity increases should be maintained, so that future demands can be met.

Non-national roads account for 94% of this country's road network and carry 54% of all road traffic. These roads serve as an indispensable complement to national roads, affording access to the larger urban centres, ports and airports. They are vital to local enterprises, agriculture, forestry and tourism, as well as having a valuable social and community function. The main focus of the Non-National Roads Programme is to complete the Restoration Programme which aims, by the end of 2005, to restore all local and regional roads deemed to be deficient in 1996. The NDP provides for expenditure of €2.43 billion on non-national roads in the 2000 to 2006 period - €1.08 billion in the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Region



and €1.35 million in the Southern and Eastern (SE) Region. In the *Agreed Programme for Government* commitment is given to continuing with the programme of investment in non-national roads up to 2005 and to following this up with a further significant improvement programme. A further Pavement Condition Survey now proposed will identify the extent and funding needs of the improvement programme beyond 2005.

The Department's role in relation to **fire and emergency services** relates in particular to the legislative, financial and other support we give to local authorities as fire authorities. Over the duration of this Statement we will continue to support them in the development and maintenance of a quality fire-fighting and rescue service and in their fire safety and prevention programmes. The Department will continue funding and staffing support for a central training programme for the fire service, administered by the Fire Services Council, which supplements the fire authorities' own training programmes. The *Report on the Strategic Review of Fire Safety and Fire Services in Ireland* (March 2002), recommends an ambitious change agenda for the development of the fire and emergency services regime and will further inform developments in this area. The Licensing of Indoor Events Bill will provide enhanced public safety at such events and strengthen the enforcement provisions of the Fire Services Act 1981.

We will support local authorities, within the national framework for emergency response, in their planning for and response to major emergencies. We will work with the European Union to develop international support mechanisms in this area including the development of a European Community Civil Protection Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions. The development of the mechanism will be one of the key activities in the area of civil protection for the Department over the coming years, particularly during Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004.

The implementation of our major investment programme to develop the public **library** system will enable that system to fulfil the key role it has been given in the Government's strategy for widening access to the Information Society. The integration of the cultural role and the cultural resources of the library service with the Information Society will add value and content together with wider access.

Key Performance Indicators

- The number and range of PPP projects advanced, the efficiency with which the approach is carried out and the extent to which obstacles/barriers to PPP are removed.
- Timely identification of, and response to, critical factors affecting the construction industry.
- Progress (in terms of kms improved and schemes completed) in relation to the Restoration Programme and the programme of non-national roads in support of housing and other development. Meeting the performance indicator targets set out in the BMW and SE Regional Operational Programmes covering the period 2000 to 2006 inclusive.
- The delivery of effective quality fire and emergency services to the public and progress on the provision of facilities and equipment in accordance with the Fire Services Capital Programme over the period 2003 to 2005. Effective support to the enactment process of the Licensing of Indoor Events Bill, including the making of underpinning Regulations.
- Progress in improving local fire services having regard to the *Report on the Strategic Review of Fire Safety and Fire Services in Ireland*.
- The degree to which the *Branching Out - A New Public Library Service* recommendations are implemented by the end of 2005.

Business Units

Construction Section is the lead Business Unit in the Department for implementing strategies in relation to the construction industry.

The Department has a dedicated PPP Unit which has lead responsibility for implementing the strategies in relation to PPP. The Unit works closely with other Business Units within the Department in particular Water Services Investment Programme, Waste Infrastructure and Regulation and Housing Division.

Non-National Roads Section and the Roads Inspectorate are directly involved in the programme to improve and maintain the non-national road network which is implemented through local authorities. The Fire Services and Emergency Planning Section has the lead role in relation to protective services in particular fire services and emergency planning. Local Services Section has responsibility for the development of the public library system.

Key Inter-Relationships

Key partners of the Department in relation to the Construction Industry include the Departments of the Taoiseach, Finance, Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Forum for the Construction Industry.

In relation to PPPs, the Department will work closely with the Department of Finance and the new National Development Finance Agency to ensure the best mix of private and public funding to support the investment programmes and with local authorities, external agencies and other Departments to promote PPP and secure its successful implementation.

Local authorities are the key players in the implementation of the Non-National Roads Programme and in ensuring progress in meeting this objective and key performance indicators. Non-National Roads Section is also closely involved with the Border Midland and Western Regional Assembly and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly who are the Managing Authorities under the NDP for the Non-National Roads Measure. In relation to the EU Co-Financed Specific Improvement Grants Scheme there is also contact with the Department's EU/Internal Audit Unit, the Department of Finance, the EU Commission and the ERDF and Cohesion Fund Financial Control Unit of the Department of Finance.

The Department works in close partnership with local authorities and the Fire Services Council in relation to fire services and emergency planning matters. With the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety the Department shares the chair of the Fire Services Cross Border Working Group. The Section also works with the National Safety Council on matters in relation to fire safety education and awareness.

In the area of emergency planning, the Department participates in the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning, the Interdepartmental Working Group in Emergency Planning and the Interdepartmental Committee on Major Emergencies. The Department also has lead responsibility for representing Ireland on EU civil protection (emergency planning) matters and forms part of a network of all member states.

Local Services Section has the lead role in relation to libraries in partnership with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, and in relation to water safety in partnership with the Irish Water Safety Association.

Part III

IMPLEMENTATION

Part II of this Statement set out objectives, strategies and performance indicators for the main functional areas for which the Department has responsibility. In this Part we identify Critical Success Factors for the achievement of the objectives set out earlier. We identify objectives, strategies and performance indicators for Resourcing and Managing the Department and for Serving Our Customers including eGovernment, Better Regulation and Improving Coordination. We also set out how this Statement will be monitored and reviewed.

- **Critical Success Factors**
- **Resourcing and Managing the Department**
- **Serving Our Customers**
- **Monitoring and Review**

A number of factors will be significant in determining the successful implementation of strategies towards the achievement of our objectives as set out in this Statement

Effective management of the resources available to the Department will be key to our success. The major challenge here in the short to medium term will be to bring together all the parts that now make up the Department and to create a new and unitary corporate culture so as to enhance organisational performance. Our ability to finance our programmes in changing economic circumstances will be the main determinant of levels of activity in many areas. We will continue to seek efficiencies and arrangements for this include expenditure reviews and the implementation of the Management Information Framework all of which are embraced in our strategic approach to the management of the Department within the Government's ongoing modernisation programme.

In pursuing the objectives of this Statement, we are very conscious of our core objective of achieving an excellent service for the Government and for the public as customers and clients at all levels. The provision of **high quality services** to all those who are customers of the Department across the whole range of activities, includes the provision of policy advice, the simplification of regulation and improvements in the regulatory processes, improved coordination with key partners such as local authorities and agencies and the delivery of particular services directly to the public through a channel of choice. Ensuring such high quality services influences the conduct of our business and is critical to the successful implementation of our strategies.

Most of the Department's spending is channelled through local authorities. The capability of local authorities, therefore, is critical to the success of our infrastructure programmes and in particular the ambitious targets set down in the *National Development Plan 2000 - 2006* (NDP), the implementation of our policies and the delivery of other services.

An **effective and competitive construction industry** is critical to the achievement of key objectives of this and other Departments in terms of delivery of infrastructure by both the public and private sectors. The Department's interaction with the construction industry is outlined in Part II.

Sustainable development is understood to be about, *inter alia*, individuals and communities accepting greater responsibility for their economic, social and environmental needs. **Wider public acceptance** of a shared responsibility for addressing key problems associated with the achievement of the Department's objectives is critical to the successful implementation of our strategies towards improving quality of life in Ireland with reference to our mandate. While the Government framework of law and regulation and its implementation is essential for the achievement of a balance between individual and community or national interest the ultimate determinant of that balance is the behaviour of individual members of society. The challenge for the Department is to promote and encourage a sustained balance between individual interest and community responsibility so that the quality of life for all Irish citizens can be further enhanced.

As a society we aspire to goals such as protecting the environment, conserving our heritage and housing every household but attempts by the Department and our partners including local authorities and our agencies to achieve these are often hampered by conflicting aspirations at individual and community level. The achievement of these goals sometimes necessitates the making of difficult choices. It is important therefore that we continue to work closely with all our customers and in particular with elected representatives, with non-governmental organisations and with the voluntary and community sector towards achieving our goals.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can provide valuable support in the work towards sustainable development and are increasingly engaged in issues across the economic, social and environmental agendas. Partnership processes have assisted in bringing about this change. The Department has developed good working relationships with many NGOs representing various interests and these are identified throughout Part II of this Statement. We will seek to further develop such relationships and improve our liaison with and support for the community and voluntary sector, in particular in relation to policy development and service and programme delivery and in accordance with the direction set in the Government's White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity. In order to secure maximum mutual benefit from these relationships, it will be important that NGOs develop coordinated, cross-sectoral capacity which supports more effective engagement with the policy process. In the environment area, the Department has already provided some financial assistance, and signalled its willingness to provide further funding towards appropriate capacity building.



Resourcing and Managing the Department

Objective

To support the Department's staff in maximising their contribution to the achievement of the Department's objectives and to develop further the strategic approach to the management of the Department.

48

Key Strategies

- Seek to ensure that staff resources meet the operational needs of the Department.
- Maintain and improve the provision of comprehensive and efficient support services for staff including accommodation, information and communications technology (ICT), equipment and accounting and finance.
- Complete the integration of new functions into the Department including implementing decisions relating to the future management and operation of the heritage service.
- Implement the Department's *Human Resources Strategy* including embedding PMDS and improving internal communications.
- Implement the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard for the Department's main office at the Custom House and extend it to other Departmental buildings as appropriate.
- Ensure the continued development of a positive health and safety culture and practices in the interest of staff well being.
- Continue to progress the public service modernisation programme.
- Develop an enhanced financial and management information system.
- Review of expenditure programmes to identify the extent to which objectives are being met and to provide a basis for reordering priorities.

Policy Context

The analysis in Part I identified some of the key challenges facing the Department over the duration of this Statement including delivery on a range of commitments for the Department and the management of the newly structured organisation.

With the change in the Department's portfolio the context for the management and resourcing of the Department has changed significantly: staff numbers have increased from just over 900 to nearly 2,500, over two thirds of whom have come from other Departments; the membership of the Management Advisory Committee has changed; different organisational cultures are coming together. In the first six months the focus of effort has been on effecting the change, on making arrangements for the transfer of staff into and out of the Department, on aligning ICT and accounts systems, on addressing urgent personnel issues – with the objective of incurring the least possible amount of disruption to staff and to customers. A Task Force has also been working on a review of organisational arrangements in the heritage area. Following the publication of a draft report on the review in January 2003, this exercise is now at an advanced stage. Its completion and the subsequent implementation of decisions arising will have further implications for the management and operation of the Department as it is now constituted.

Staff are the Department's key resource. A *Human Resources Strategy* for the Department, developed for the Department through the Partnership process, was published in 2002. It provides the framework within which the Department's key resource will be managed and within which human resources (HR) policies and practices will be developed, implemented and kept under review in the coming years. Those HR policies and practices come under the headings Resourcing the Department, Managing Performance and Development, Supporting Ongoing Learning, Fostering Teamwork and Collaboration, Achieving Work/Life Balance and Promoting a Positive Working Environment. The implementation of actions and the further detailed development of policies will assist in addressing the challenge of making a cohesive corporate unit of the restructured Department.

Actions will be prioritised having regard to needs identified, for example it will be necessary to place a new emphasis on staff mobility within the Department where this is feasible. This will provide staff with opportunities to gain a broader work experience and to bring perspectives gained in one area to bear on their subsequent work in another.

Key importance attaches to the recruitment, retention and assignment of staff who will contribute to and support the achievement of the Department's objectives. *These are people whose skills, experience and knowledge; whose creativity and talent, inspirations and hopes, dreams and excitement; whose personalities, interest, commitment and motivation; and whose time, energy and minds are the Department's key resource.*⁵ While the labour market is not so tight as in recent years, we will be challenged in a different way in ensuring that staff resources meet the operational needs of the Department. Constraints on the administrative budget will increase our need to seek efficiencies in operations, in how we assign and manage work and in the deployment of staff. Meeting the skills set needs for particular roles in the Dúchas Division presents particular difficulties in relation to recruitment and retention of heritage-relevant conservation skills and expertise. In meeting these challenges we will seek to adopt the approach and implement the actions set out in the HR Strategy under the heading Resourcing the Department. This will also have value in meeting the challenge of supporting Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004 which will require priority to be given to provision of staffing resources in certain areas over others for a period of time.

⁵ *Department of the Environment and Local Government Human Resources Strategy – May 2002.*

The number of locations from which the Department operates has increased: staff are located in 82 centres outside Dublin, at 8 locations in Dublin and a number are in the field. While this facilitates local delivery of service and suits staff whose preference is to live and work in the regions it also presents management challenges including more limited mobility and promotion opportunities for some staff and difficulty in having effective communications across the organisation. Internal communications therefore take on a new importance in the context of this changed structure. Over the duration of this Statement we will build on the progress made in the separate parts of the Department in recent years so as to further improve internal communications across the organisation and to assist in the development of a cohesive corporate culture. This will be advanced through the Partnership process, through various networking opportunities including senior manager conferences and divisional conferences, through training programmes and through developing further the strategic approach to the management of the Department.

Building on the progress already made in the separate parts of the Department occupational health and safety measures will be developed through the Partnership process and updated safety statements, where necessary, will be put in place to reflect the changes in the Department's structure. Health and safety organisational issues will be reviewed to ensure that they reflect best practice and promote a positive health and safety culture.

While staff are the key resource of the Department they in turn need resources to enable them to perform effectively. These include suitable accommodation for everybody, ICT, tools and equipment for specialist work. In the light of the expansion of the Department's accommodation infrastructure we will review and put in place arrangements for optimal service provision across the organisation.

As the Department with lead responsibility for environment matters we are conscious that good environmental performance is as relevant in our workplace as it is everywhere else. The office environment is demanding on many resources, including energy, water, paper, equipment and other consumables and as part of our green housekeeping policy over recent years, we have placed particular emphasis on conservation and demand management in our implementation of the ISO 14001. Our purchasing policies have also given priority, where possible, to environmentally-friendly goods and services.

One of the overarching goals of the Strategic Management Initiative is to make more effective the use of resources in the public service. This includes ensuring that staff and other resources are deployed effectively. To facilitate this, it is essential to have robust financial and management information systems which can clearly identify allocation of resources to specific objectives. The traditional civil service accounting methodology did not always meet this need. The Government have agreed on a new management information framework which is to be customised by each Department to meet its own specific requirements. This is a major project which we expect to implement early in 2004 and which will then provide improved information for planning and resource allocation.

It is also important that all of our programmes are subject to regular review to ensure that they are achieving their objectives. Our major capital programmes are subject to rigorous ongoing appraisal by external evaluators under the requirements of the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme and Regional Operational Programmes. Other programmes are subject to examination under the Expenditure Review process which is overseen by the Department of Finance. In addition, the Department's Internal Audit Unit reviews our internal control systems and also verifies the effectiveness of the management and control systems in respect of EU co-financed operations for which the Department and its agencies are responsible.

In continuing to progress the public service modernisation programme we will embrace the new vision for the programme as it emerges with the energy, enthusiasm and pragmatism that the Department has adopted to date with success. We acknowledge that change is slow and that the modernisation programme must be taken on by staff at all levels in the organisation if it is to have real meaning and to be sustained. Our approach thus far has allowed us to be flexible and accommodating in implementing the Strategic Management Initiative and we will maintain that approach in moving forward.

Key Performance Indicators

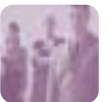
- Finalisation and implementation of decisions on organisational arrangements in the heritage area during 2003.
- Implementation of actions identified in the *Human Resources Strategy*.
- Training for PMDS completed by all staff by end 2003.
- Training and development expenditure to meet target 4% of payroll.
- All targets relating to the Government's equality policies met.
- Satisfaction with the level and quality of internal communication as measured by staff surveys.
- Ready accessibility to each staff member of the full range of information and communications technology, equipment and other supports and services necessary to support his or her work.
- Progress in meeting targets and objectives set out in the environmental management system for the Department's main office at the Custom House.
- New health and safety organisational arrangements developed and put in place as necessary.
- Progress in developing the customised management information framework.
- Review of expenditure programmes (other than EU co-funded).
- Extent of use of business planning and the PMDS in the management of the Department.
- Extent to which the public service modernisation programme is progressed and implemented in the Department.

Business Units

All Sections in the Department are involved in the implementation of strategies in this area. However Personnel Section has the lead role in relation to staffing and accommodation; the Organisation/ICT/FOI Unit has the lead role in relation to information and communications technology; the Change Management Unit has the lead role in coordinating the business planning process, in relation to the HR Strategy and training including PMDS and in relation to supporting Partnership and Communications internally. The development of the management information framework, the coordination of the expenditure review process and routine accounts work are led by the Departmental Finance and Accounts Section which is also responsible for managing the estimates and appropriation accounts processes. The new Departmental Functions Task Force has the lead role in carrying out the review of the organisational arrangements in the heritage area. It is also responsible for coordinating the effective integration of the wider range of new functions during the initial period after their assignment to the Department by the Government. Environmental Awareness Section, with the assistance of the Green Team, coordinates the development and implementation of the environmental management system for the Custom House.

Key Inter-Relationships

The Department liaises closely with the Department of Finance and with unions representing staff in relation to personnel, including pay issues. We work with CMOD and a number of external training providers in meeting our target spend of 4% of payroll on training and development. We work with both the Department of Finance and the Department of the Taoiseach in relation to their roles in the coordination the public service modernisation programme. The Department of Finance takes the lead role in overseeing both the development of the management information framework and the expenditure review process. We work closely with the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee in relation to expenditure and financial management. We liaise closely with the Office of Public Works in relation to their responsibility for office accommodation and for the maintenance of the Custom House.



Serving Our Customers

Objective

To provide a very high level of quality customer service which takes account of changing needs and expectations.

54

Key Strategies

- Implement the Customer Service Action Plans.
- Support the Parliamentary process and the operation of Government business.
- Enhance access to and delivery of information and service to the Department's customers through the use of technology.
- Achieve better regulation by improving the process of policy formulation, ensuring legislative quality and enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of regulation.
- Ensure good two-way cooperation and communication with local authorities.
- Maintain good consultation with the local government representative associations.
- Ensure the effective operation of the agencies under our aegis.

Policy context

Part II of this Statement sets out the objectives and key strategies geared towards achieving the Government's aims in the various areas for which we have responsibility. In working towards the achievement of these objectives and in implementing these strategies we engage with a broad customer base which includes individual members of the public, elected representatives, local authorities, our agencies, other Government Departments and Offices, international organisations and the many voluntary and representative groups whose business interacts with the Department.

The Department's approach to providing a quality service to its customers is outlined in the *Customer Service Action Plan 2001 - 2004* for the Department and in specific sections of *A Strategy for Enhanced Customer Service 2001 - 2004* for the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. While the implementation of these Plans will continue it will also be necessary over the duration of this Statement to consider the development of a new Plan to accommodate and coordinate in particular the customer service dimensions of our new areas of responsibility.


The Department's business generates a large volume of documentation for Government business, Parliamentary Questions, adjournment debates and discussions at Oireachtas committees. Ministers must also deal with a heavy workload of public engagements, meetings, representations and other correspondence. All of these Ministerial duties require a very high level of support work throughout the Department for which challenging standards of service are set.

The provision of a quality service to the Department's customers is also influenced by two key drivers of change - eGovernment and Better Regulation. eGovernment offers the potential to significantly improve the quality of services to the Department's customers and to facilitate more efficient working within and across Departments. eGovernment also has implications for Better Regulation particularly with respect to the accessibility of regulations and the eCabinet and eLegislation Projects as outlined in *New Connections*, the Government's action plan on the Information Society.

eGovernment is the use of technology to enhance access to and delivery of Government information and service to citizens, business partners, employees, other agencies and Government entities. eGovernment is also about how different arms of Government interact with each other and how the internal processes and systems across the public service can better contribute to achieving strategic objectives.

In adopting the Quality Customer Service Principles, the Department gave a commitment to an eGovernment approach to the delivery of its services in particular with reference to the principles of Timeliness and Courtesy, Choice, Better Coordination and Information as set out in the *Customer Service Action Plan 2001 - 2004*. Since the publication of that Plan *New Connections* was published. *New Connections* recognises that the unfolding influence of information and communications technologies (ICT) across all areas of economic and social activity in the 21st century is leading to a fundamental change in how business – including the business of Government – is conducted. *New Connections* promotes eGovernment as part of the key infrastructures that are the necessary basis for progress as an Information Society, and advocates a key leadership role for Government in driving wider engagement with ICT through its own business processes and service delivery arrangements. A headline aim of *New Connections* is to have all public services that are capable of electronic delivery available online, through a single point of contact, by 2005.





In the implementation of *New Connections*, the Department has been given the lead role in coordinating the development of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure, the focus of which will be the integration of spatial data (or geographically referenced information) with all wider information-management processes across Government. The Department is in the process of scoping the project with all interested parties and arising from this, will come forward with a timetable for the development of the Data Infrastructure. Within the Department, the availability of integrated spatial data is critical to a number of areas of operation including the implementation of the *National Spatial Strategy* and the provision of geographic information systems relating to heritage. The Department will also progress a number of initiatives such as a system to handle the sale and tracking of the use of heritage cards; a system to facilitate the publication of plant catalogues and reference information by the Botanic Gardens; a system to facilitate the more efficient collection, analysis and reporting of house price information from lending institutions; and a system to more effectively manage consultation on development applications. In partnership with the local authorities and the Local Government Computer Services Board, the Department will continue to develop the *Integrated Housing System* so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the housing services; to provide for electronic tendering for water services projects; to provide for online access to planning applications including the lodging of appeals and the electronic submission of comments on draft plans and on planning applications and to provide for greater use of electronic statistical data on planning.

The Department will work with local authorities to extend and enhance the use of electronic procurement in line with the *Strategy for the Implementation of eProcurement in the Irish Public Sector*.

The recent completion of the National Vehicle and Driver File, which provides online access to the national database of vehicles and drivers from all motor tax offices, has provided for better customer service to a range of the Department's motor tax customers including an Garda Síochána, the National Car Testing Service and the motor trade. It also provides a number of opportunities for the Department and motor tax offices to enhance the services they provide to vehicle owners and drivers. This will include the introduction of an online motor tax renewal service which is one of the Government's flagship eGovernment projects. Customers will also be able to notify the Department of a change of vehicle ownership online and we will work with the Department of Transport to enable applications for driving licences to be received over the internet.

In addition, the Department will progress the implementation of the electronic voting and counting system, referred to in Part II of this Statement, in modernising electoral administration.

Better Regulation enhances the quality of public service by reducing the volume and complexity of regulation, maximises the use of resources by reducing the costs associated with regulation including the Exchequer costs associated with administering an unwieldy regulatory system, and it contributes to national development by removing barriers to enterprise and freeing up markets thereby helping to sustain our economic and social progress.



In Part II, a number of areas of improvement have been identified such as the development of a modern legislative and regulatory framework for water, the consolidation and modernisation of legislation governing the National Monuments, the updating of environmental legislation in line with EU Directives, the updating of financial practices in local authorities, maintaining a modern legislative framework in the local government and franchise areas, and maximising efficiencies in the planning process through full coordination across the Department.

The Department will continue to pursue its Better Regulation programme by simplifying administrative procedures, improving the quality of regulation and reducing the quantity of regulation through greater advance consultation, as well as minimising barriers to enterprise. Legislation for which the Department is responsible, will be kept under review and where possible, will be consolidated or repealed. The Department will continue to introduce legislation having regard to the principles of Better Regulation, the Regulatory Impact Analysis process and the development of the Government's White Paper on Regulation.

The Department depends on local authorities and other agencies for the delivery of many of its services and the implementation of its policies. Through **improved coordination** with local authorities and with agencies, the Department strives for the effective and efficient implementation of its policies so that a better quality of service is delivered to customers.

While both the Department and local authorities acknowledge their excellent working relationships, we recognise that there is scope for improving that relationship. The further development of the public service modernisation programme in the local authority sector and good inter-sectoral workings should assist in this. But we also recognise and acknowledge that there is a need for the Department to better appreciate the challenges and difficulties experienced at local level in implementing policies and programmes. Intensive consultation with local authorities has become the norm with arrangements in place for structured dialogue at official and political levels, as well as specialised working groups for particular tasks. We will seek to further improve our communications and our consultative processes and arrangements with local authorities and with the local government representative associations so as to improve mutual understanding and co-working.

There are **17 agencies**⁶ under the aegis of the Department and we rely on their effective operation for the successful implementation of many of our strategies. Specific references to the Department's liaison with these agencies are outlined in Part II of this Statement. The agencies are in the main, non-commercial, undertaking quasi-judicial/regulatory, advisory and developmental functions and the provision of services for local government. Over the period of this Statement we will seek to enhance the synergies between the agencies and the Department, between the agencies themselves and between the agencies and local authorities. And we will keep under review the functions and the organisational arrangements for our agencies having regard to the progress made in the implementation of this Statement, to changes in our operating environments and to the Department's Corporate Governance responsibility in relation to the agencies.

Improved coordination and more active collaboration between Government Departments is a key theme and principle of the Government's modernisation programme. The Department leads on or participates in a range of **cross-Departmental initiatives** as detailed in Part II. The effective and efficient support and cooperation of other Departments and their agencies will be critical to the successful implementation of many of our strategies. We will seek to further enhance our cross-Departmental working relationships over the duration of this Statement.

⁶ These are listed in Appendix 3.



Key Performance Indicators

- Implementation of new systems to improve service delivery across the Department.
- First phase of online renewal of motor tax available in 2003.
- The degree to which the actions, insofar as they relate to the Department, set out in *New Connections* are implemented by the end of 2005.
- The degree to which the recommendations, insofar as they relate to local authorities, set out in the *Strategy for the Implementation of eProcurement in the Irish Public Sector* are implemented by the end of 2005.
- The extent to which administrative procedures have been simplified.
- The extent to which legislation is assessed by reference to the Quality Regulation Checklist.
- The level of competition for services within the local government sector.

Business Units

All Business Units in the Department are involved in serving the Department's customers including supporting the Minister and the Ministers of State particularly in relation to their parliamentary duties while the Offices of the Minister and the Secretary General have the lead role in coordinating the Department's support of the parliamentary process including the Department's Legislation Programme. The Press and Information Unit coordinates the Department's liaison with the media.

The lead role in the coordination of the Department's Customer Service Action Plans and Better Regulation programme rests with the Change Management Unit. Environment International Section coordinates the tracking of draft EU legislative proposals.

Organisation/ICT/FOI has the lead role in the coordination of eGovernment initiatives working with Business Units on specific projects including Vehicle Registration and Motor Tax Units, Housing Policy and Supply, Planning and Education and Visitor Services. Local Government Policy Section has the lead role in coordinating liaison with local authorities including the extension of the modernisation programme to the local government sector.

A number of Business Units have responsibilities in relation to the ongoing monitoring and review of the operation of our agencies. Corporate Services Division provides support to those Business Units in relation to specific areas as required (finance, staffing, modernisation programme) and coordinates responses to requests for information and Parliamentary Questions. Local Government Personnel Section provides support in relation to remuneration.



Key Inter-Relationships

In the implementation of the Customer Service Action Plans, eGovernment strategy and Better Regulation programme, the Department liaises with all its customers but in particular has close working relationships with the Department of the Taoiseach, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Ombudsman and the Oireachtas including the Joint Committee on European Affairs and the Reach Agency. In the delivery of electronic services to vehicle owners and drivers the Department has a close working relationship with the Department of Transport.

The Department also works closely with local authorities and its agencies as set out in Part II under Key Inter-Relationships and it has a close working relationship with a number of local government representative organisations such as the Local Authority Members' Association, the General Council of County Councils, the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland and the County and City Managers' Association.

In addition, the Department participates on the Inter-Departmental High Level Group on Regulation and provides support to the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society.



This Statement of Strategy is one element of the Department's strategic management process. It identifies the Department's objectives and the strategies being pursued to achieve them. It reflects the demands and challenges that confront us at present and seeks to set a direction for the work of the Department towards the implementation of Government programmes over the next three years.

We recognise that we are operating in a changing environment: new demands and challenges will undoubtedly arise beyond those which we have anticipated. It is essential therefore that we monitor and review progress towards the achievement of our objectives. This monitoring and review will inform decisions on the redeployment of resources and the reordering of priorities that may be necessary to meet the demands of a changing environment and of changing customer needs and consumer preferences. It will assist us in our ongoing efforts to align activity at all levels across the Department. It will take place at various operating levels.

The ongoing monitoring and review of the Statement is an integral part of the strategic management and planning role of the Department's **Management Advisory Committee**.

Our **Business Plans** serve as an essential tool in monitoring and reviewing progress at the business unit level. They are produced on an annual basis and are reviewed periodically throughout the year.

The **Performance Management and Development System**, provides a framework for the monitoring and review of performance at individual level.

Reporting on progress

The Department will publish an **Annual Report** detailing our progress in implementing this Statement. This will meet our statutory obligations under the Public Service Management Act 1997 to provide an annual progress report to the Minister on the implementation of the Statement. The Annual Report will outline progress towards the achievement of our objectives and on the implementation of our strategies. It will address issues that have arisen since the publication of this Statement and it will also detail the measures which we have adopted in response. Progress in implementing the Customer Service Action Plans will also be reported in the Annual Report.

Other opportunities will be provided for monitoring and review in reports made regularly by the Department in relation to specific functional areas; these include the Mid Term Review of the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme, Environment Bulletins, Housing Statistics Bulletins, the annual reports of the Local Government Audit Service and Met Éireann, Construction Industry Review and Outlook and the National Climate Change Strategy Progress Reports. In addition the annual and other reports of the agencies under the aegis of the Department provide further opportunity for monitoring and review in relation to particular areas; examples include the Environmental Protection Agency's *Ireland's Environment - A Millennium Report* as well as the Agency's, *Air Quality Monitoring Annual Report*.

Part IV

APPENDICES



Process followed in the preparation of the Statement of Strategy

The Secretary General has statutory responsibility under the Public Service Management Act 1997 for the preparation and submission of a strategy statement to the Minister within 6 months after the appointment of the new Minister. This Statement of Strategy has been prepared and submitted with the support of the Management Advisory Committee and a cross-Divisional Steering Group and through a process of consultation within the Department and with key stakeholders.

The consultation process within the Department involved meetings of the Management Advisory Committee, meetings of the cross-Divisional Steering Group, and meetings within each Division and within all Business Units in the Department so as to provide the opportunity for staff to exchange views on, and to discuss the Division's input and the Unit's input to, the Statement. This approach was also designed to encourage greater staff participation in the development and ownership of the Statement.

In addition, the preparation of the Statement was considered by *Comhar* - the National Sustainable Development Partnership and by the County and City Managers' Association at respective meetings held with them. Input was also invited from the agencies operating under the Department's aegis. This external consultation process provided the opportunity for external input to the development process.

The output from the internal and external consultation processes was considered by the cross-Divisional Steering Group and the Management Advisory Committee in drafting the Statement.

In the course of finalising the Statement, the draft Statement of Strategy was made available to all members of staff to provide them with a further opportunity to provide input and comment on the document.

Structure of the Department

The Department is organised into six Divisions which are supported by administrative Sections and professional staff. Each Division is headed by an Assistant Secretary who, with the Secretary General and the Legal Adviser, are members of the Management Advisory Committee. This Committee has a particular role in strategic planning, policy coordination and personnel and organisation matters.

The EU/Internal Audit Unit reports directly to the Secretary General.

The Local Government Audit Service, headed by an Inspector of Audits, is a constituent part of the Department.

Met Éireann, headed by a Director, is a constituent part of the Department.

Environment

Waste Infrastructure and Regulation
Waste Prevention and Recovery
Environment Policy
Air/Climate
Water Quality
Environment International
Environment Awareness
North/South
Nuclear Safety
ENFO

Local Government

Local Government Policy
Local Government Personnel
Local Government Finance
Franchise
Fire Services and Emergency Planning
Non-National Roads

Development and Planning

Construction
Spatial Planning
Urban and Village Development
Planning
Public Private Partnership

Local Government Audit Service

Corporate Services and Water Services

Personnel
Departmental Finance and Accounts
Organisation/ICT/FOI
Change Management
Local Services
Water Services Investment Programme
Water Services Policy
Press and Information
Offices of the Minister and Ministers of State
Office of the Secretary General
New Departmental Functions Task Force

EU/Internal Audit

Housing

Housing Policy and Supply
Housing Management and Affordable Housing
Housing Construction
Housing Grants
Traveller Accommodation and Voluntary Housing
Private Rented Sector
Social Inclusion

Heritage - Dúchas

Heritage Policy
National Monuments and Architectural Protection
National Parks and Wildlife
Historic Properties and Education and Visitor Services

Met Éireann


Location of the Department's Main Offices

The location of the Department's main offices are detailed below.

Custom House, Dublin 1.	Irish Life Buildings, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.	Findlater House, Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.	25 Clare Street, Dublin 2.	59 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secretariat to the Minister, Ministers of State and Secretary General ■ Press and Information Unit ■ Policy Divisions/ Business Units (Environment, Local Government, Development and Planning, Housing, Roads, Fire Services, and Franchise) ■ Personnel, Finance, Change Management, ICT Unit and Freedom of Information Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water Services including Inspectorate ■ Public Private Partnership ■ EU/Internal Audit ■ Financial Management Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-National Roads ■ Roads Inspectorate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nuclear Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accounts
LoCall: 1890 20 20 21	LoCall: 1890 20 20 21	LoCall: 1890 20 20 21	LoCall: 1890 227 227	LoCall: 1890 321 421
Tel: (01) 888 2000	Tel: (01) 888 2000	Tel: (01) 888 2000	Tel: (01) 670 7444	Tel: (01) 647 3000
Fax: (01) 888 2888	Fax: (01) 888 2888	Fax: (01) 888 2888		

email: department@environ.irlgov.ie
press-office@environ.irlgov.ie
minister@environ.irlgov.ie

website: <http://www.environ.ie>

<p>6 Ely Place Upper, Dublin 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education and Visitor Services ■ Personnel (Industrial) <p>LoCall: 1890 321 421</p> <p>Tel: (01) 647 3000</p> <p>email: department@environ.irlgov.ie press-office@environ.irlgov.ie minister@environ.irlgov.ie</p> <p>website: http://www.environ.ie</p>	<p>7 Ely Place, Dublin 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Historic Properties ■ Heritage Policy ■ National Parks and Wildlife <p>LoCall: 1890 321 421</p> <p>Tel: (01) 647 3000</p>	<p>Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Monuments and Architectural Protection ■ National Parks and Wildlife <p>LoCall: 1890 321 421</p> <p>Tel: (01) 411 7100</p>	<p>Government Offices, Ballina, Co. Mayo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Housing Grants ■ Water Services (Rural Water Programme) ■ Accounts <p>LoCall: 1890 30 50 30 (Housing Grants) 1890 20 20 21 (other offices in Ballina)</p> <p>Tel: (096) 2 4200</p> <p>Fax: (096) 2 4221 (Housing Grants) (096) 2 4222 (other offices in Ballina)</p>	<p>Vehicle Registration Unit, Shannon Town Centre, Shannon, Co. Clare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vehicle registration <p>LoCall: 1890 411 412</p> <p>Tel: (061) 36 5000</p> <p>Fax: (061) 36 3480</p>	<p> Environmental Information Service, 17 St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2.</p> <p>ENFO's services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ query answering service; ■ exhibitions; ■ reference library; ■ public access to the Internet; ■ video viewing and lending service; ■ Children's Corner; ■ CD-ROMS; ■ information leaflets; ■ education resource packs; ■ national and international reports; ■ other information from national and international agencies. <p>LoCall: 1890 200 191</p> <p>Tel: (01) 888 2001</p> <p>Fax: (01) 888 3946</p> <p>email: info@enfo.ie</p> <p>website: http://www.enfo.ie</p>
--	--	---	---	---	---

LoCall: allows callers anywhere in the country to contact the Department at the local call rate.

Agencies

Details of the agencies operating under the aegis of the Department of the Environment and Local Government are set out below.

An Bord Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 872 8011
LoCall: 1890 27 51 75
Fax: (01) 872 2684
email: bord@pleanala.ie
website: <http://www.pleanala.ie>

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

The Library Council,
53-54 Upper Mount Street,
Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 676 1167
Fax: (01) 676 6721
email: info@librarycouncil.ie
website: <http://www.librarycouncil.ie>

Building Regulations Advisory Body

Room 2.13,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 888 2371
LoCall: 1890 20 20 21
Fax: (01) 888 2693
email: aidan_smith@environ.irlgov.ie

Comhar

17 St. Andrew Street,
Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 888 3990
LoCall: 1890 200 327
Fax: (01) 888 3999
email: comhar@environ.irlgov.ie
website: <http://www.comhar-nsdp.ie>

Dublin Docklands Development Authority

Custom House Quay,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 818 3300
Fax: (01) 818 3399
email: info@ddda.ie
website: <http://www.ddda.ie>

Environmental Protection Agency

PO Box 3000,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
Co. Wexford.
Tel: (053) 60600
Fax: (053) 60699
email: info@epa.ie
website: <http://www.epa.ie>

Fire Services Council

Custom House,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 874 4760
Fax: (01) 677 9278 and 888 2888
email: fire-services-council@environ.irlgov.ie
website: <http://www.environ.ie>

Heritage Council

Rothe House,
Kilkenny.
Tel: (056) 70777
Fax: (056) 70788
email: mail@heritagecouncil.ie
website: <http://www.heritagecouncil.ie>

Housing Finance Agency

Eden House,
15-17 Eden Quay,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 872 5722
Fax: (01) 872 5878
email: cosec@hfa.ie
website: <http://www.hfa.ie>

Irish Water Safety Association

The Long Walk,
Galway.
Tel: (091) 564400
LoCall: 1890 42 02 02
Fax: (091) 564700
email: info@iws.ie
website: <http://www.iws.ie>

Local Government Computer Services Board

Phoenix House,
27 Conyngham Road,
Dublin 8.
Tel: (01) 609 7000
Fax: (01) 609 7001
email: secretary@lgcsb.ie
website: <http://www.lgcsb.ie>

Local Government Management Services Board

35-37 Ushers Quay,
Dublin 8.
Tel: (01) 671 8400
Fax: (01) 677 0023
email: info@lgmsb.ie
website: <http://www.lgmsb.ie>

National Building Agency

Richmond Avenue South,
Milltown,
Dublin 6.
Tel: (01) 497 9654
Fax: (01) 497 2540
email: info@nba.ie
website: <http://www.nba.ie>

Private Residential Tenancies Board

Canal House,
Canal Road,
Dublin 6.
Tel: (01) 888 2960
LoCall: 1890 20 20 21
Fax: (01) 888 2819
email: prtb@environ.irlgov.ie
website: <http://www.environ.ie>

Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland

3 Clonskeagh Square,
Clonskeagh Road,
Dublin 14.
Tel: (01) 269 7766
Fax: (01) 269 7437
email: rpri@rprii.ie
website: <http://www.rpii.ie>

Rent Tribunal

Custom House,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 888 2000
LoCall: 1890 20 20 21
Fax: (01) 888 2688
email: rent_tribunal@environ.irlgov.ie

Temple Bar Renewal

Custom House,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 888 2000
LoCall: 1890 20 20 21
Fax: (01) 874 8312
email: gary_ryan@environ.irlgov.ie
website: <http://www.environ.ie>





Printed on Recycled Paper containing
100% post consumer waste