To / The Mayor and each Member of South Dublin county council

**Re: Corporate Plan Annual Report 2015 – Sect. 134 of the local Government Act 2001**

Dear Member,

Please find attached a comprehensive report on the progress made on the objectives and associated strategies of our Corporate Plan during 2015 being the first year of this five year plan period. Notwithstanding ongoing challenges, progress has been positive across all areas of activity.

In the area of Economic Enterprise and Tourism Development we continued and enhanced our support to existing and new business. The €1.2m Business Support Fund which represents 1% of commercial rates, is being targeted effectively at supporting the SME sector. The LEO is effectively positioning itself as a first stop shop for all business. In this context, it supported the creation of 58 jobs and provided training to 500 participants. A new Marketing Strategy was completed for Grange Castle Business Park which welcomed new FDI business during 2015, with the expansion of Microsoft, the opening of Grifols and the sale of lands to Interxion .The strategic future proofing of the Park and its environs was advanced significantly during the year, with the finalisation of design and CPO for the upgrade of the adjacent Adamstown and Nangor roads, the advancement to planning of a substantial energy upgrade and additional land acquisition. The publication of our Tourism Strategy is an important building block in our Economic Growth Strategy. Opportunities to enhance our tourism offer are now being advanced. In particular, the Clondalkin Round Tower Visitor Centre is out to tender and the Dublin Mountain Flagship Project will conclude its feasibility phase in early 2016. Plans for a new library in North Clondalkin have been finalised and will progress to tender in 2016.

The commencement of the review of our County Development Plan thankfully coincides with a much needed upturn in planning activity. The 22% increase in planning applications has included for 2,200 residential units which we urgently need to see progress to commencement. Seventy three road improvement projects and 30,000sqm of footpath repairs represents to major activity areas under the transportation heading, together with a continued emphasis on the progression of cycling and mobility projects, such as those at Palmerstown and Dodder Valley. The Village Enhancement Programme has progressed through all stages of planning, with the Palmerstown scheme completed and Rathcoole on site. The upgrading of 400 public lights to low energy LED represents the commencement of our five year Energy Efficiency Programme in this area.

Housing, both public and private represents the single biggest challenge to the wellbeing and economic prospects of our citizens. In this context it also challenges the fundamentals of our Corporate Plan. The construction sector has been slow to mobilise behind demand, which in turn has placed unsustainable demands on the private rental sector, with resultant rents causing economic homelessness. Increased planning activity and the ambition contained in the Social Housing Strategy provide hope, but significant progress needs to be made in 2016. While 246 housing allocations were made this year, the focus of activity has necessarily been on acquisitions and private rental arrangements, while we plan our construction programme. We concluded planning for 118 units and progressed to tender for a further 57. Our social inclusion and interagency work continue to yield positive community dividends, while our emphasis on health and wellbeing, is I believe exemplary and will increasingly influence our approach on programmes and projects into the future. Our community engagement and development objective was considerably enhanced during the year, with the creation of the PPN and the launch of our Community Grants and Endeavour awards.

Environmental quality and public realm will always influence visual and broader public perception. It is in this context that we finalised our Tree and Litter Management Policies during the year. Additional resources to underpin their implementation, together with initiatives like the Roundabout Sponsorship and N81 improvement, will contribute greatly to the aesthetic appearance of the County, in addition to the ongoing work in areas such as street cleaning, grass cutting, illegal dumping and the tackling of dereliction. Quality of life considerations are central to our continued investment in 1750 acres of parkland including 163 pitches. Our local Play-space Programme is advancing well with 14 completions, while the agreed Pavilions Programme will progress to planning in early 2016. Our regulatory and enforcement role necessitated 3,444 inspections, while the standout performance indicator was our 99.7% water quality compliance figure.

The foregoing achievement must also be viewed in the context of considerable resource constraints. Following seven years of retrenchment, the employment embargo was gradually removed during 2015. The considerable loss of corporate memory and the inevitable delays of a now crowded recruitment landscape has had an impact on capacity in the short term. This has necessitated careful workforce planning and prioritisation while we repopulate the workforce. I expect this situation to have eased by mid-2016 but it has been slow. Financial performance has been strong as we continue our focus on procurement and process improvement to increase efficiency. ICT is a fundamental enabler of change and is being resourced and focused in this regard. Our recently published External Communication Plan will further focus improvements in service to our citizens. In this latter regard we dealt with 166,344 telephone calls, attracted 13,000 social media followers, handled over 80,000 customer service requests and facilitated 508 press queries.

In summary while progress has being somewhat hampered by short term human resource capacity issues, I would conversely suggest that very significant progress has been made in this context. During 2016 we will move from planning to implementation in a number of key areas, none more so than housing which remains our biggest challenge. The general economic outlook continues to improve and while the gains need to be carefully managed at local level the immediate outlook is positive. In this regard I see no reason to alter or scale back the ambition of our Corporate Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel McLoughlin

Chief Executive