

# **Valuation Office**

## **Statement of Strategy**

**2011 - 2014**

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## **Our Mandate**

The core function of the Office is the production and maintenance of fair and equitable valuation lists of commercial and industrial properties under the provisions of the Valuation Act, 2001. These valuation lists provide the basis for the assessment and levying of commercial rates by local authorities.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to deliver a high-quality impartial valuation service.

## **Our Vision**

To develop a high-performing and responsive organisation, with a shared culture and common purpose; we will deliver on our mandate, using leading-edge emerging technologies, through the provision of excellent services in a customer-friendly environment

## **Our Values**

Each member of staff is committed to the development of an organisation, the mission of which is underpinned by the following core values:

### **Honesty and Integrity**

We are committed to carrying out our work in an impartial, objective, ethical and professional way

### **Quality service to our stakeholders**

We are committed to meeting the needs of our stakeholders through the provision of a high quality service.

### **Responsiveness and adaptability**

We will strive to ensure that our systems and processes are flexible and adaptable and are capable of responding to the demands of our stakeholders

### **Positive Working**

We are committed to the creation of a positive work environment which recognises that the basis of success is both teamwork and individual contributions.

### **Commitment to Personal and Organisational excellence**

The Office acknowledges the contribution of each member of staff and is committed to fostering an environment where everyone is encouraged to reach their full personal potential.

The Office is also committed to the safeguarding of an environment that develops and enhances the expertise, knowledge, competencies, capacity and capability of individual staff at all levels of the organisation to carry out their roles in a professional manner.

# **Environmental Analysis**

## **External Environment**

The key external environmental issues of concern to the Office are:

### **Political**

- The Valuation Act 2001 provides for a revaluation of all commercial property in the State. The assessment of modern valuations for 180,000 properties presents an unprecedented challenge to the Office.
- There is a demand from stakeholders and expectation that the organisation will deliver the revaluation nationwide within a reasonable timeframe and at an acceptable cost.
- As well as revaluation, there is ongoing demand for prompt action on requests from our customers for Revisions to the existing Valuation List.
- There are pressures from external stakeholders to increase the efficiency of our operations. To this end, the Valuation Office has proposed amendments to the Valuation Act 2001 for consideration by Government.
- The recommendations of the McCarthy report included a proposal for the amalgamation of the Valuation Office with the Property Registration Authority and Ordnance Survey Ireland.
- The Government's decision to decentralise the Valuation Office to Youghal has been deferred for review in 2011
- We are participating actively in the Government's Comprehensive Review of Expenditure and Public Sector Reform as outlined in the current Programme for Government.

## **Economic**

- The economy is expected to grow at a low level for the period covered by this Strategy Statement. This is almost certain to be reflected in ongoing low levels of activity in the property market
- The maintenance of adequate budgetary and staffing levels to meet our business needs and efficiently deliver on our mandate may present a challenge in the current public finance environment
- The downturn in economic activity will place increasing demands on Local Authorities to maximise their potential rates revenue.
- Analysis of market developments is a more complex task in the current property environment.
- In the current environment there is an even greater need for the Office to communicate with stakeholders in an open and transparent way.

## **Social**

- There is a continuing shift in Irish demographics with an increasing proportion of the population living within 80 km of Dublin. Approximately 50% of the work of the Office will continue to be concentrated in this growth area.
- Legislative and social pressures will require continuing initiatives to make the work environment more appreciative of diversity as well as offering equality of opportunities and working conditions as flexible as possible.
- In the present circumstances, the implementation of work/life balance policies presents a particular challenge in the management of workloads and resources to maintain effective delivery of services.

## **Technological**

- Continuing advancements in technology will improve the quality, timeliness and delivery of our valuation services.

- The increased development and availability of both fixed and wireless broadband services will improve points of service delivery.
- The public now demand greater access to on-line services and that public service providers make greater use of information and communications technology. The Office will implement a range of revision and revaluation on-line services to our customers within the timeframe of the Offices e-Government Plan.
- Emerging GIS/GPS<sup>1</sup> technologies in field mapping and desktop mapping will support the delivery of efficient and effective valuation services.

### **Customer requirements**

- The rates of representation and appeal against valuations are expected to increase as ratepayers seek to reduce the burden of rates.
- Demand for an acceleration of the revaluation programme will increase from ratepayers seeking to address perceived inequities in their rates.
- The Office needs to ensure that ratepayers fully understand the valuation process, and their rights in relation to representations and appeals and that we are as open as possible in dealing with them.
- There is also a growing demand for greater efficiency in the delivery of our valuation services, in particular the development of online services to ratepayers and local authorities.
- In regard to the Revision of the existing valuation list, the task is to deliver the revision service in an efficient manner so that we meet the revision needs of our customers and where possible release resources that can be deployed in accelerating the Revaluation Programme. The Valuation Office has submitted amendments to the Valuation Act 2001 for consideration by Government. These amendments will seek to simplify procedures and increase efficiency of our operation.
- We have consulted both our external and internal customers in the preparation of this Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Geographic Information System (GIS) / Global Positioning System (GPS)

## **The Internal Environment**

The key internal environmental issues of concern to the Office are

### **Strengths**

The Valuation Office has access to a vast repository of corporate knowledge. Many of our staff members have been with the Office for the duration of their careers and they have gained valuable experience and expertise in the delivery of our services.

The Office maintains a strong focus on customer needs and evidence shows that we are generally trusted by our customers.

Staff members have demonstrated a capacity to adopt new technology and to explore new ways of completing tasks.

### **Weaknesses**

Due to changing demographics in the Office in the last five years and a loss of experienced staff the challenge for the organisation and for staff will be to share corporate knowledge effectively at all levels.

A considerable proportion of the data held in the Office is not in an accessible format and needs to be captured electronically.

The existing statutory framework within which the Office operates is cumbersome and can lead to inefficiencies in a number of areas.

The Office needs to better manage its performance so as to raise its productivity and outputs, and to avail of information technology and other means to assist with this task.

## **Opportunities**

The Office faces a huge challenge over the next three years. There is a great opportunity for each member of staff to be a part of the Valuation Office in a changing work environment. We have a diverse, knowledgeable and experienced workforce to help meet that challenge.

The Revaluation project is an opportunity for the Valuation Office to move forward and bring our Valuation lists up to date. It is also an opportunity for staff to develop their skills and competencies.

We have to look at new and smarter means of undertaking the work and derive every assistance from information technology and online services.

The Office continues to take advantage of developments in GIS and GPS systems which are currently to the forefront of technological advancement in order to modernise our processes and methodologies.

The Office has a comprehensive database of all commercial properties throughout the country which will be populated with current information following the national revaluation. This information, which includes survey data information, may be marketable to planners and other commercial interests.

Appropriate opportunities for outsourcing some elements of our operations, in conjunction with advances in technology, will assist the office in delivering on its mandate.

## **Threats**

The rate of progress up to 2010 in the roll out of the National Revaluation is insufficient to complete the project in a timely manner. Failure to complete the project within a reasonable timeframe and budget is a major threat to the reputation and credibility of the Valuation Office.

Loss of experienced staff at all levels of the organisation is a current threat, given the moratorium on recruitment, the age profile of senior staff and the retirement incentives in place up to February 2012 for those who wish to retire early.



## Goals

1. Produce and maintain up-to-date valuation lists
2. Provide an efficient effective accessible quality service to our customers to meet their evolving needs
3. Maximise organisational capacity by developing appropriate human, management, financial and technological resources to foster a modern, capable, responsive and results-orientated organisation.

### ***Goal 1 - Produce and maintain up-to-date valuation lists***

#### **Objectives**

- Transform the Delivery of our Valuation Services using innovative work practices to achieve greater efficiencies and significantly improve our outputs
- Complete the revaluation of specific Local Authorities in accordance with the roll-out plan.
- Deliver a timely effective Revision service for existing valuation lists
- Prioritise the Data Capture project with emphasis in those areas scheduled for revaluation during the lifetime of this Statement of Strategy
- Examine ways to accelerate the revaluation programme

#### **Strategies**

1. Continue to develop our ICT systems
2. Review processes and procedures
3. Pursue implementation of necessary changes to the Valuation Act
4. Explore synergies with other Government organisations at central and local level
5. Examine and, where appropriate, implement alternative valuation methodologies and work practices , including the scope for Outsourcing and Self-Assessment systems
6. Implement Performance Measurement Systems based on outputs

#### **Performance Indicators**

- Outputs increased to a level commensurate with the speeding up of our programme.
- Percentage National Revaluation completed
- Proportion of our Revision service delivered as against agreed Service Level Agreements
- Number of cases reduced at First Appeal
- Number of cases altered following Tribunal Appeal

- ***Goal 2 - Provide an efficient, effective, accessible, quality service to our customers to meet their evolving needs***

## **Objectives**

- Identify, agree and meet customer needs
- Improve our communication with and our service to our customers using all available media
- Provide technical advice to other Government organisations as appropriate

## **Strategies**

1. Engage and consult with customers and promote Service Level Agreements as appropriate
2. Deliver on our commitments in the Quality Customer Services Action plan. Provide for an on-line customer survey facility.
3. Monitor and review service delivery
4. Increase online services in line with our e-Government plan including
  - Submission of on-line requests by ratepayers and local authorities
  - Electronic return of requests to local authorities
  - A facility for ratepayers to make on-line representations and appeals to the Commissioner
  - A facility for ratepayers to access valuation reports, representation outcome reports and appeal -outcome reports.

## **Performance Indicators**

- Level of satisfaction in Customer Surveys (Local Authority and Ratepayer)
- The rate of increase in the delivery and use of our online services

***Goal 3 - Maximise organisational capacity by developing appropriate human, management, financial and technological resources to foster a modern, capable, responsive and results-orientated organisation.***

### **Objectives**

- Progress the development of a flexible organisational structure
- Continue to develop a skilled, committed and focused and flexible workforce
- Pursue organisational efficiencies so as to ensure appropriate accountability and value for money.
- Improve our services by exploiting emerging ICT developments
- Progress the development of a positive (*results oriented*) working environment
- Cultivate a positive and enthusiastic attitude among staff to ensure delivery of the goals of the office.
- Advance the change proposals identified in the Action plan under the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement) and deliver on stated commitments

### **Strategies**

1. Deliver our services within budget
2. Develop communication approaches that will involve every member of staff in the delivery of our commitments in this Statement of Strategy.
3. Engage staff at all levels in the development of innovative solutions
4. Secure maximum alignment between individual and organisational goals
5. Establish individual responsibilities and accountability at all levels in the organisation
6. Promote commitment to the organisations goals in line with our stated values
7. Advance improvements in corporate governance and financial management
8. Continue to develop our Risk Management Policy
9. Manage and develop staff through the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)
10. Participate constructively in the examination of proposals for the merger of the Valuation Office with the Property Registration Authority and Ordnance Survey Ireland
11. Examine the scope for shared services with other Departments and Offices
12. Continue to develop the Performance Budgeting system.

### **Performance Indicators**

- Delivery of services within available resources
- Percentage of staff satisfaction in survey results
- The delivery of organisational targets on quality and outputs
- A contemporary Risk Register with a satisfactory monitoring and reporting structure
- The level of participation in the PMDS process
- Satisfactory reports from the Internal Audit Unit, the Audit Committee and the Comptroller and Auditor General.
- Annual Cost Recovery