



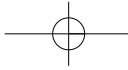
Bord Um Thionóntachtaí Cónaithe Príobháideacha
Private Residential Tenancies Board

Corporate Plan 2009 - 2011



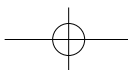
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“Since its foundation, the PRTB has been committed to developing what is largely a new service and to meeting the needs of its customers and stakeholders within the terms of the Act.”



Message from the Chairman



I am delighted to present the Private Residential Tenancies Board Corporate Plan 2009 – 2011. Four years after the establishment of the PRTB it is timely to consolidate and build upon the achievements to date. The PRTB is a very young organisation, and the number of tenancies registered, and the demand for dispute resolution services, have greatly exceeded expectations. This has made it difficult for the Board to deliver on its remit as quickly as we would have wished, despite the sterling work done by staff and management of the PRTB. However, with additional staff and modern office accommodation we are now in a position to implement what is an ambitious vision for the next three years.

The Corporate Plan is quite specific in terms of *what* we aim to achieve, and *when* it is to be achieved.

We will implement a comprehensive ICT strategy over the next two years. This will improve processing times, and provide on-line services such as registration and dispute applications. It will also expand the statistical analysis and reports which we are able to provide. It is our intention to automate the exchange of information with other statutory bodies to strengthen our enforcement procedures. Our research and policy development remit will be expanded further through partnership arrangements with other agencies, such as the Centre for Housing Research, and through a PhD scholarship fund. We will continue to liaise closely with our stakeholders to ensure we are responsive to their needs.

Our Plan also sets out clear targets in relation to Corporate Governance, which will ensure that we adhere to best practice in financial and administrative matters. This will be underpinned by the development and implementation of a Human Resource Management Strategy to ensure our staff is supported in their professional development and in the provision of excellent service to our customers.

The Board of Directors and the staff of the Private Residential Tenancies Board have been closely involved in the development of the Corporate Plan. We are deeply committed to its implementation in full over the next three years.



Tom Dunne, Chairman

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Introduction

Background

The Government's action to both reform and develop the private rented sector resulted in the enactment of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. One of the main outcomes of the Act was the establishment of the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) in September 2004 to oversee the implementation of the new legislation and to manage and develop services to both tenants and landlords in the private rented sector. The Act sought to strengthen the rights of tenants and to support a more professional approach by landlords leading to enhanced tenancy relationships.

Since its foundation, the PRTB has been committed to developing what is largely a new service and to meeting the needs of its customers and stakeholders within the terms of the Act. The PRTB's corporate structures, systems and processes have been evolving since its inception to reflect the level of demand for its services and the legal complexities of its work and remit. The development of this first Corporate Plan is an important step in moving the organisation beyond its embryonic phase and in mapping its future direction. The Plan sets out clearly the strategic priorities and goals for the organisation over the next three years to 2011.

Functions

The PRTB is a statutory body responsible for the operation of a national registration system for all private residential tenancies, for providing a dispute resolution service, disseminating information,

carrying out research and offering policy advice regarding the private rented sector.

In relation to Tenancy Registrations, the PRTB undertakes the:

- a. processing of registrations by landlords and the collection of the appropriate fees
- b. enforcement of registration requirement and action on non-compliance including sanctions against unregistered landlords
- c. publication of a register of tenancies updated twice each year available on the web-site or in hard copy at its offices
- d. supply of a register to each local authority on a functional area basis to assist with the enforcement of standards and rent book regulations.

The PRTB dispute resolution service replaces courts in the majority of landlord and tenant disputes. The board operates a two-stage dispute resolution process. The first stage consists of either mediation (if chosen by both parties) or adjudication. Panels of Mediators and Adjudicators have been appointed for a term of at least three years. The second stage is a public hearing by a Tenancy Tribunal if the matter is not resolved at the first stage.

The PRTB issues binding determination orders following the dispute resolution process and publishes these on its website (with the exception of mediated agreements). The PRTB is empowered through the Act to institute criminal proceedings against a non-compliant party following the issue of determination orders. The nature of dispute

resolution cases referred to the PRTB so far include deposit retention, illegal evictions, invalid Notices of Termination, over-holding, rent arrears, other breaches of tenant obligations, and anti-social behaviour cases referred by third parties.

The provision of a dispute resolution service to landlords and tenants is a key activity of the Board and it recognises that it must offer a meaningful alternative to the courts service. The level of demand for this service has proved challenging for the young organisation, given the legal complexities of the Act itself and the level of staffing provided. The Corporate Plan addresses this challenge in terms of enhanced case management systems, deployment of resources and ICT, and proposals for amendments to the Act.

The Board is mandated through the Act to undertake bodies of research and to advise the Minister accordingly on this and on other matters of policy. It has entered into a partnership arrangement with the Centre of Housing Research (CHR) whereby the CHR manages relevant research projects on behalf of the PRTB. Recent studies on deposit retention and anti-social behaviour have been helpful in informing policy-making and best practice in dispute resolution. The PRTB's website provides accurate and practical information to tenants and landlords and will be developed over the life of the Corporate Plan to include on-line services.

Governance Structures

The PRTB is committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance in compliance

with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Board has prepared and adopted Codes of Business Conduct for its Board Members, Director and Staff, and for Adjudicators and Mediators. In accordance with Section 157 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, the Board has established a number of committees to assist in the discharge of its responsibilities.

The Dispute Resolution Committee is responsible for the establishment of Tenancy Tribunals that hold hearings into disputes brought before them by landlords, tenants and third parties. The findings of a Tribunal are legally binding and may only be appealed on a point of law to the High Court.

Section 189 Committee meets when called upon by the Director on foot of a request received by the Board for an application under section 189 of the Act. The function of the Committee is to decide whether or not the Board should make an application to the Circuit Court in case of an illegal eviction, for example.

The Research Committee decides what research is necessary, appropriate or desirable for the Board to undertake, makes arrangements for the carrying out of such research, considers the findings of research studies and reports on these to the Board.

The Audit Committee's role is to advise and make recommendations to the Board and Senior Management on any matter pertaining to the Internal Audit function and to consider whether processes are in place to manage risks in accordance with organisational guidelines and business plans.

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The Finance Committee was established to assist the board in discharging the individual and collective legal responsibilities that arise principally in the areas of financial reporting and control. The Finance Committee played a lead role in the preparation of the Corporate Plan.

The PRTB works under the aegis of its parent department – the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government – and receives financial support through the grant-in-aid.

Conclusion

The Corporate Plan is both forward-looking and action-orientated while framed within the legislative framework of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. The Plan aims to strengthen the organisation's capacity to deliver on its mission and mandate and to meet the needs of its customer base from a quality-service and value-for-money perspective. Its success will ultimately be measured in terms of the ambitious targets that have been set out in the Plan.

Mission Statement

To regulate and support the private rented sector by providing efficient and equitable dispute resolution, tenancy registration, and information services to tenants, landlords, the Minister and other stakeholders and to promote best practice in the sector.

Our Vision

Facilitating the development of a well-functioning private rented sector serving the needs of all its stakeholders.



PRTB Mandate

- To provide an efficient and accessible dispute resolution service for landlords, tenants and third parties
- To secure the registration of tenancies in the private rented sector
- To promote best practice through the provision and publication of information and guidelines for landlords, tenants and other interested parties
- To undertake research on the private rented sector
- To provide policy advice to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- To liaise and co-operate with the broader community of stakeholders on matters concerning the private rented sector

Our Core Values

The PRTB seeks to reflect a set of values that underpins and supports the way it works and interacts with all its stakeholders. The following values are central to the fulfilment of our mission and mandate:

- Equity and fairness
- Efficiency and professionalism
- Team-working and staff development
- Client and quality focus
- Openness and responsiveness to change



Environmental Analysis

Overview

This environmental analysis presents a realistic overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the PRTB and the opportunities and threats facing the organisation as of October 2008. It considers *external factors* including economic, demographic, environmental and social factors and *internal factors* such as organisational capacity, corporate policy, ICT capability and governance.

External Issues

Housing Market: The private rented sector is a core contributor to meeting national accommodation needs, particularly for certain populations such as recent migrants, those in receipt of social welfare payments, those unable to afford or access owner-occupation, and various social and affordable housing schemes and employees who require flexibility and mobility. Approximately ten to twelve per cent of the total housing stock is in this sector and all indications are that the number of dwellings available for private renting is increasing. The housing market has a direct and significant influence on the private rented sector and to a lesser degree on the operation of the PRTB. The current trend has been towards increased tenancy registrations and longer-term rentals, influenced no doubt by a slowdown in house purchase and the certainty generated by the Residential Tenancies Act, 2004. With house sales remaining sluggish, the private rented sector is likely to grow in importance in meeting the needs of a diverse range of households.

Rents: CSO data show rents rising since May 2005 including over an eleven per cent increase in the year to January 2008. This reflected a combination of demand, particularly from immigrants and increased renting rather than purchasing due to market conditions. The longer-term rent trend is expected to be relatively moderate given that the overall increase of thirteen per cent since January 2002 is an average annual increase of just over two per cent and a decline in real terms. There is, however, at a time where there is a focus on minimum standards, no guarantee that rents will remain stable. Both CSO and DAFT figures show a decline in rents in the first quarter of 2008 and this trend has escalated in recent months. Alongside the decline in rents, some evidence is emerging of rent arrears becoming a more significant issue than hitherto. The Board has commissioned the Centre for Housing Research to provide a comparative overview of how other jurisdictions have managed this issue and, on receipt of this report, the Board will be better equipped to make appropriate policy recommendations.

Demand for Rentals: Up to date immigration trend figures indicate that there has been a reduction in overall immigration and that the longer-term trend will align closely with economic performance. In real terms employment for non-nationals increased indicating an increased immigration figure. A reduction in demand coupled with continuity in rental stock levels would be expected to have a positive effect on landlord and tenant interactions which could lead to a drop in dispute numbers.

Relationship with Minister: A key issue for the Board, in terms of continuity, is its relationship with its parent department, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the maintenance and enhancement of the symbiotic relationship that has evolved over the past number of years. The Minister, through the Department, appoints members to the Board and sets the tenure and remuneration of those members. The Department has oversight of the Board in areas such as staff numbers, grades and remuneration and the engaging of consultants and advisers. The Department assists the Board in the matters of operational guidelines and legislation amendments and provides day-to-day assistance through membership of the Board and committees. The Board needs the consent of the Minister in charging and receiving registration fees.

It is open to the Minister to assign additional responsibilities to the PRTB in accordance with the Act. While the PRTB is managing a significant body of work and effectively operating at capacity there is always a possibility that additional functions will be added to its remit. The Board's responsibility is to the implementation of the Residential Tenancies Act in support of a fair and equitable private rented sector that meets the requirements of the Act. The Board considers that it would not be practical at this time to significantly add to the PRTB's remit given its current stage of evolution.

Customer Relationship: The customer is central to all our activities. The client base includes more than 450,000 landlords and tenants that are currently registered and those using the dispute services. This is likely to increase with more effective

enforcement measures and increased awareness of the PRTB and its functions and services. The Board's external relationships and interactions are a critical factor for its success. We must recognise the part played by the DEHLG, local authorities and other stakeholders in assisting the PRTB's operations and our part in meeting the expectations of their organisations. A key relationship for the Board is with its parent department – the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Other important external relationships are with bodies such as Threshold and the Irish Property Owners' Association, who have a particular interest in this area, and with the other public sector organisations concerned with housing-related issues such as the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Local Authorities.

Economic Situation: The PRTB is a demand-driven service and, while committed to delivering a quality service, is like every other agency attempting to ensure the ongoing delivery of this service in a more challenging economic climate. Reorganisation of internal processes in recent months, which became possible due to the increase in permanent staff, means that the Board is in a strong position to, at a minimum, maintain the existing high quality service but also, through continuous innovation, to enhance the quality of the service offered. Despite the ongoing optimal allocation of resources and staff to deliver this service, we are nonetheless cognisant that any substantial increase in caseload, or a decrease in staffing or financial resources due to the prevailing economic conditions could adversely impact on the quality of the service we aim to provide.

Internal Issues

Context: The PRTB commenced in a difficult and inaccurately anticipated environment in terms of the number of tenancy registration applications, the number of incomplete registration applications, an inadequate IT system, the legal complexities of the dispute resolution process and the number of disputes received. It has, however, over the last four years managed the various challenges it faced and is also well set in terms of financial resources and experience to deliver on its remit. In particular, the Board and the Minister quickly realised that the original sanction of 8 full-time staff was inadequate to service the organisation and, as of July 2008, 40 full-time permanent staff were employed by the Board in addition to a number of agency staff. The PRTB will also assume the functions of the Rent Tribunal from 2009. While this in itself will not consume excessive staff time, in the context of increasing demands on all existing staff, every additional function allocated to the Board incrementally must be considered in the context of our ability to provide the speedy and quality service we strive to deliver.

The level of demand for dispute resolution services and the legal complexity of the process have given rise to increasing backlogs in disputes being finally determined. The average number of tenancy applications received has risen steadily since the PRTB was established and the number of incomplete applications still remains high at approximately 25%. The Board has been considering its organisational ability and capacity to manage these challenges and how delivery is to be

achieved. This Corporate Plan sets out clear strategic priorities underpinned by an implementation plan.

Further Part 4 Tenancies: Part 4 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 provides that a further Part 4 tenancy will commence on the expiry of 4 years from the commencement of a previous tenancy. This means that tenancies must be re-registered where they have existed for 4 years. The first 4-year cycle expired on the 31st August 2008 and the PRTB informed landlords of their obligation to re-register the further Part 4 tenancy as appropriate. Reminder letters were issued to almost 50,000 landlords who had reached the 4 year cycle in September 2008. A list of Frequently Asked Questions was prepared, the website was updated to reflect the changes and advertisements were placed in the newspapers. Additional training was also provided for staff. The impact of this was that the volume of incoming post and telephone queries increased significantly. This additional workload has placed huge demands on the staff and resources of the PRTB, particularly in the Registrations and Finance area and, while the numbers of tenancies which require to be re-registered will reduce over time, to between 2,000 and 5,000 monthly, it highlights the effect of legislation on the administration of a public sector agency.

Use of ICT: The delivery of quality customer service and improved efficiency and effectiveness require a customer-focused approach. The development of an ICT strategy is currently underway to support significant improvements and fundamental changes in the way services are arranged and delivered. The

PRTB is actively exploring the opportunities to deploy technology that maximises value for money, increases productivity and delivers greater efficiency and effectiveness for its clients. To this end, the ICT Strategy will identify the effective use of ICT to simplify and integrate work and data flows; maximise the return on technology investment; support an integrated service delivery model and the measurement of outcomes to ensure that internal efficiencies are achieved and customer expectations are assessed and met. The successful delivery of online services and the integration of three discrete systems are central to the future operations of the PRTB. This will be implemented over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan.

Deployment of Resources: In light of the existing funding and the recent increase in staffing, the PRTB is in a better position now to manage its future. It is, however, critical that we use available resources to the best advantage of the PRTB and that we identify, prioritise and systematically deploy our resources towards delivery of our core functions. The focus of our attention must be an efficient delivery on first-stage dispute resolution. The Board has made proposals in relation to the amendment of the Residential Tenancies Act which are expected to be enacted in Spring 2009. It will continue to monitor the implementation of the Residential Tenancies Act and consider if a further amendment to the Act would improve operational processes.

Reputation: Confidence in the organisation, as well customers' and stakeholders' support must be maintained and nurtured. The relationship between the Board and Executive is crucial and is

underpinned by honest and constructive dialogue given that the core aim for all is to ensure the PRTB has a viable and certain future.

Summary

In conclusion, the conduct of the Environmental Analysis in conjunction with the Board, executive and stakeholders has provided a clear frame of reference for the identification of organisational priorities and the setting of targets for the first Corporate Plan of the PRTB. Given the fluidity and uncertainty of the environment in which it operates and the complexity of its legal bases under the Act, the PRTB acknowledges the necessity to embrace change and to respond to the needs of customers, stakeholders and staff in its decisions and operations. The Board and staff are mindful of responding to changing circumstances and the need to plan for the systematic delivery of high level achievable goals and targets underpinned by a comprehensive, target-driven implementation programme.

PRTB Focus

The Corporate Plan is action oriented and is designed to deliver on the Board's vision, mission and mandate in a manner that meets the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 and is responsive to the needs of stakeholders. The Plan recognises the need to demonstrate value for money, best practice and a strong customer orientation. It is built on the following six Key Result Areas that reflect the main strategic issues for the organisation over the life of the Plan:

1. Provide a professional, accessible and speedy dispute resolution service supported by effective case management principles, within the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004
2. Maintain a register of tenancies in accordance with the Act and to provide and manage an up-to-date database for information, policy-making and statistical purposes
3. Promote best practice in the sector through our research, information, publications, policy advice and dialogue with stakeholders

4. Foster an outward-looking organisation based on innovation and use of ICT in service delivery and with an emphasis on team and staff development
5. Build the organisation's leadership and governance capacity at all levels
6. Ensure that the PRTB has the appropriate human and financial resources in order to deliver on its mandate based on a value-for-money ethos

Within the framework of the six Key Result Areas, a number of priority outcomes are identified for each area with allied specific targets that will guide the work of the organisation in a clear, focused and measurable way. In addition, a series of linked performance indicators are set out to assist with the monitoring of the Plan and with the evaluation of its outcomes.

The Plan was developed in consultation with the Board, the Executive, PRTB staff and the key stakeholders.



Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area One

Provide a professional, accessible and speedy dispute resolution service supported by effective case management principles, within the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Responding to applications for dispute resolution services from landlords, tenants and third parties
- b. Managing and servicing the mechanisms set out in the RTA to reach resolution of disputes in a fair, transparent and equitable way
- c. Providing management and statistical information pertaining to dispute applications, processes and outcomes
- d. Reviewing the provisions of the RTA 2004 on an on-going basis and making recommendations for amendments to the Minister as appropriate
- e. Developing and implementing a new case management system as part of the ICT strategy
- f. Ensuring effective use of resources to support the dispute process and to address any backlogs within the lifetime of the plan

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

- 1.1 To continue to manage the dispute resolution process in terms of the scrutiny and logging of new cases received; setting up of paper based adjudications or hearings as appropriate; reporting of outcomes to parties as required and managing the appeals process
- 1.2 To manage the large volume of email and telephone traffic on the dispute process in general and on the progress and outcomes of specific cases
- 1.3 To provide executive support to the various dispute resolution-related committees and sub-groups of the PRTB and to service their meetings
- 1.4 To swear affidavits in respect of enforcement cases, both civil and criminal, and to prepare for and make court appearances as required
- 1.5 To manage the panels of adjudicators and mediators in terms of their selection, appointment and training and to liaise with individual adjudicators and mediators in respect of specific cases and the reporting requirements
- 1.6 To quality assure the reports arising from hearings and appeals and to develop policies on the timeframe of submission of reports
- 1.7 To convene the Section 189 Committee of the Board on an emergency basis to deal with cases of illegal evictions
- 1.8 To review the fee structure for dispute resolution services on an on-going basis

Case Management

- 1.9 To develop and implement an integrated case management system as part of the ICT strategy for the organisation
- 1.10 To implement a system of on-line registration of disputes
- 1.11 To thoroughly test any new or modified system to ensure that it is user friendly, yields useful and accurate management information and statistics and provides case tracking to manage the throughput of cases
- 1.12 To review and analyse in a systematic way the outcomes of the dispute resolution processes as a basis for policy-making and promoting best practice
- 1.13 To move towards a system of e-files holding scanned documentation and using e-signatures
- 1.14 To cost the enforcement, tribunal and adjudication services on a value for money basis
- 1.15 To significantly reduce waiting times for disputes processing within the lifetime of the new plan and to continue to promote the use of mediation as a first step in dispute cases
- 1.16 To ensure that up-to-date findings and statistics on the Board's Determination Orders are published on the PRTB website

Staffing

- 1.17 To deploy staff resources to ensure a professional and speedy service to customers

- 1.18 To continue to train and develop staff to reflect the complexity of the workload and to maintain corporate knowledge arising from staff turnover
- 1.19 To manage the contracting of legal services and to examine how to further apply these services to reduce backlogs

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Applications for dispute application resolution services processed in a timely and accessible manner, and generally within five to six months, resulting in a more effective service to all parties
- Dispute resolution mechanisms applied and managed according to the RTA and Determination Orders enforced as required
- Management and statistical information arising from the dispute resolution function gathered and analysed in a timely and user friendly basis
- Review of the Act with recommendations for amendments made to Minister as required
- Integrated case management system developed, tested and introduced as part of the ICT Strategy and by deadlines set out therein
- Resources – staff, financial, contract services and ICT – adequately deployed to ensure an effective service to clients and to manage any backlogs
- On-going review of dispute resolution to identify areas of possible improvement

Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area Two

Maintain a register of tenancies in accordance with the Act and to provide and manage an up-to-date database for information, policy-making and statistical purposes

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Launching the on-line tenancy registration system and continuing to process in excess of 6000 registrations of tenancies per month
- b. Continuing to promote compliance with the Act through various communication channels
- c. Developing partnership arrangements with other organisations and advocates of the PRTB (such as the Citizens Information Board) in the provision of information nationally
- d. Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date tenancy register and providing for data exchange with relevant parties as appropriate
- e. Ensuring the system supporting registration is cost effective, in line with best practice and complies with the RTA 2004

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Registration Processing

- 2.1 To develop and implement systems to ensure that Part 4 of the Act is effectively and efficiently managed as a first-time activity and thereafter to continue the roll-out of these systems
 - 2.2.1 To develop and launch an on-line registration system as part of the ICT strategy
 - 2.2.2 To integrate the Registration system with the Accounts system
- 2.3 To oversee the smooth running of data input, fee processing, scrutiny of forms, acknowledgement and issue of registration numbers in respect of registration applications
- 2.4 To manage processes relating to incomplete applications (currently about 25%) and to monitor these levels and to identify ways of reducing errors
- 2.5 To review fee levels as required in conjunction with the Board
- 2.6 To review the cost effectiveness of the current registration system on an on-going basis.
- 2.7 To manage systems to facilitate payment of five-sevenths of the registration fee income to Local Authorities under the direction of the Minister

Registration Database

- 2.8 To maintain a complete database of registered tenancies and to publish a public register twice per annum
- 2.9 To provide an annual listing to Local Authorities of registrations in their respective areas to assist them in their inspection remit

- 2.10 To participate in data exchange with other public sector bodies such as the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social & Family Affairs as appropriate
- 2.11 To create and produce a rental index using the registration database; this will assist the Board in advising the Minister

Registration Information and Enforcement

- 2.12 To take enforcement measures against non-compliant landlords, up to and including court proceedings
- 2.13 To review and monitor legislation in relation to non-compliance
- 2.14 To develop the partnership arrangements with other organisations nationwide to disseminate information regarding legal requirements to register on behalf of the PRTB
- 2.15 To represent and promote the work of the PRTB in appropriate fora
- 2.16 To continue to maintain and develop the PRTB website as a first point of information
- 2.17 To liaise with other state and voluntary bodies and NGOs on matters relating to the private rented sector
- 2.18 To follow-up on and track referrals regarding non-registration of tenancies

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- The large volume of tenancy registration applications efficiently processed and the on-line registration system developed, tested and implemented as part of the corporate ICT strategy in Q1 of 2010
- Tenancy registration requirements and compliance communicated and promoted with all relevant parties on an on-going basis
- Partnership arrangements with various bodies such as the Citizens Information Board to disseminate PRTB information developed and consolidated
- Up-to-date tenancy registers accurately maintained and published and data exchange facilitated with other bodies as appropriate

Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area Three

Promote best practice in the sector through our research, information, publications, policy advice and dialogue with stakeholders

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Providing the Minister with advice concerning policy in relation to the private rented sector
- b. Developing and publishing guidelines for good practice by those involved in the sector
- c. Collecting and providing information relating to the private rented sector, especially information on concerning prevailing rent levels
- d. Commissioning targeted research that both monitors trends and analyses the shifts in the socio-economic environment and that draws on the PRTB experience of resolving disputes

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Good Practice Guidelines

- 3.1 To actively promote the use of PRTB guidelines and other information services to the public and to update this information as required based on best practice and customer feedback
- 3.2 To provide a national information service for landlords, tenants and third parties on the operation of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 through agencies such as the Citizens Information Board
- 3.3 To publish specific guidelines on Deposit Retention and Anti-Social Behaviour in association with the Centre for Housing Research
- 3.4 To ensure that our publications are accessible, user friendly and meet the needs of all customers

Collection and Provision of Information

- 3.5 To undertake analysis of key data sources to produce statistics and reports needed to inform the Board, and the Minister, in policy-making
- 3.6 To facilitate the development of a rent index to meet the needs of the private rented market and to secure the provision of geo-maps of the sector to assist Local Authorities in devising strategic housing plans
- 3.7 To liaise and collaborate with other statutory and voluntary agencies with relevant databases, in particular the Central Statistics Office

Research

- 3.8 To research further the most common causes of disputes with a view to informing the dispute resolution processes
- 3.9 To monitor and review the sub-contracting arrangement for research with the Centre for Housing Research and to liaise on a regular basis with the Centre
- 3.10 To manage the PhD scholarship fund and to select a recipient on a biennial basis
- 3.11 To examine why cases are appealed before tribunals to improve the effectiveness of the dispute process

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Evidence-based advice concerning policy in the private rented sector provided to the Minister
- Good practice guidelines and other PRTB information produced and published in formats to meet the needs of our client base
- Relevant and comprehensive information and statistics relating to the sector collected, collated and provided to stakeholders in a timely and user friendly manner
- The targeted programme of research delivered and disseminated in order to facilitate the development of a well regulated sector

Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area Four

Foster an outward-looking organisation based on innovation and the use of ICT in service delivery and with an emphasis on team and staff development

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Developing and implementing an integrated ICT strategy to contribute to overall organisational effectiveness
- b. Developing a customer charter as a vehicle for delivering quality customer service
- c. Continuing to build customer confidence in the services of the organisation based on staff professionalism and competence and the use of ICT in service delivery
- d. Reviewing both the format and content of customer information on an on-going basis to ensure its relevance and accessibility
- e. Promoting teamwork as a way of providing effective and efficient services

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Customer Service

- 4.1 To develop a customer charter and customer service action plan for the PRTB
- 4.2 To ensure that customer dealings with the PRTB are positive and benchmarked against service levels in other similar organisations
- 4.3 To establish customer panels as appropriate to define customer requirements and to review customer feedback and complaint mechanisms
- 4.4 To survey a sample of the users of dispute resolution services to ascertain levels of satisfaction with the PRTB interface with customers
- 4.5 To continue to develop greater linkages with local authorities, the Citizens Information Board, and other organisations to facilitate the widest possible dissemination of information to landlords, tenants and others
- 4.6 To continue to place PRTB literature in libraries, educational establishments and in public offices of the Health Services Executive and other public places

ICT Capability

- 4.7 To continue to develop an integrated ICT strategy to support our core functions – tenancy registration; dispute resolution services; research and policy; finance and accounting functions; and to enable the interrogation of the databases to provide more comprehensive management and statistical information

- 4.8 To implement the strengthened ICT capability to reduce waiting and response times in respect of registration applications and dispute resolution services
- 4.9 To examine the existing processes as part of the ICT strategy development and to manage the tendering and procurement processes arising from the new Strategy
- 4.10 To work towards the development of an accurate and integrated database of registrations, cases and customers
- 4.11 To further develop features of the PRTB telephone system to enhance call management
- 4.12 To develop the website to facilitate on-line registration and to allow customers to check their tenancy registration and other related information online

Teamworking

- 4.13 To continue to develop teamworking in the organisation as a means of creating a strong customer service ethos and as a motivational tool
- 4.14 To empower work teams to manage their own work flows and outputs to meet agreed performance standards
- 4.15 To encourage a culture of innovation and continuing improvement and to provide team-building supports as required.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- ICT Strategy developed and fully implemented by 2011
- A full suite of online services tested and operating effectively
- ICT services across the PRTB fully integrated with each other
- Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan developed in consultation with staff and clients within the lifetime of the Plan
- Innovation in service delivery encouraged and applied across the core functions of the organisation to ensure better response times to clients within the terms of the RTA
- Customer information proofed for relevance, accessibility and readability on an on-going basis
- Team-working approaches to service delivery continuously fostered

Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area Five

Build the organisation's leadership and governance capacity at all levels

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Continuing to embed best practice corporate governance procedures within the organisation
- b. Developing organisational structures to support the mandate of the organisation under the terms of the RTA 2004
- c. Developing the strategic capacity of the organisation particularly at Board level
- d. Encouraging leadership at all levels in the organisation and ensuring effective levels of delegation
- e. Servicing the Board and its committees and other sub-structures efficiently and providing quality management information to support decision-making processes

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Structures

- 5.1 To effectively service and provide secretarial support for the Board and its sub-structures: Finance, Audit, Research, Section 189 and the Dispute Resolution committees and the panel of adjudicators and mediators
- 5.2 To explore how the input of Board Members into areas of research might be better structured and facilitated
- 5.3 To refine the terms of reference for sub-committees to provide further clarity on respective executive and board roles
- 5.4 To record the decisions of the 189 Committee formally into the minutes of Board meetings and to record cases referred to this Committee and to the Circuit Court
- 5.5 To embed an appropriate system of communications and work planning among the newly expanded senior management team
- 5.6 To benchmark arrangements relating to governance and conditions of employment in other similar bodies as a basis for decision-making regarding the operation of the PRTB
- 5.7 To provide appropriate induction for newly appointed senior managers to maintain corporate knowledge

Governance

- 5.8 To continue to separate the strategic work of the Board and its dispute resolution remit and specifically to review the management of the dispute meetings

- 5.9 To provide for the delegation of functions by the Board to the executive in the interests of organisational effectiveness
- 5.10 To arrange an annual review of the Corporate Plan by the Board and Executive and the provision of quarterly reports by the Director to the Board on progress on specific aspects of the Plan
- 5.11 To review codes of conduct for Board members, adjudicators, mediators, the Director and staff as required
- 5.12 To develop an annual calendar for the work of the Board
- 5.13 To commence both an evaluation of and consultation for the next cycle of corporate planning in early 2011

Strategic

- 5.14 To report to the Minister on an annual basis and to publish annual reports, financial statements and other documentation in a timely manner and in accordance with the RTA
- 5.15 To develop annual business plans based on the targets set out in the corporate plan
- 5.16 To develop strong working relationships with the DEHLG and other state bodies and stakeholders
- 5.17 To develop an external communications strategy in respect of public relations and corporate Information regarding the PRTB

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Best practice governance procedures embedded in the organisation
- Clearer definition of roles, responsibilities and terms of reference agreed to enhance organisational effectiveness
- Greater strategic capacity and focus at Board level developed
- Effective leadership and delegation demonstrated at all levels throughout the organisation
- The Board and its sub-structures effectively serviced and supported to ensure quality decision- and policy-making

Key Result Areas, Priority Outcomes, Specific Targets and Performance Indicators

Key Result Area Six

Ensure that the PRTB has the appropriate human and financial resources in order to deliver on its mandate based on a value-for-money ethos

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- a. Providing an effective and responsive HR strategy to build organisational capacity
- b. Implementing appropriate systems of recruitment, induction, training and development, performance management and knowledge management to ensure professionalism at all levels
- c. Creating a workplace that continues to foster teamworking and learning within a customer service ethos
- d. Ensuring that all financial operations of the PRTB are conducted to the highest standards consistent with its status as a body in receipt of public monies and public trust
- e. Calculating and analysing costs related to the key functions of registration and dispute resolution in order to inform corporate decision-making regarding the future configuration of services and their cost bases
- f. Optimising use of fee income reserves to develop the organisation and its operations for the future and to meet increasing demand

SPECIFIC TARGETS

Human Resource Management

- 6.1 To prepare a HR Strategy in consultation with the Board and staff
- 6.2 To continue the roll-out of PMDS in a timely and staff-centred way
- 6.3 To ensure that all recruitment and selection is conducted in line with public service policies and procedures
- 6.4 To manage, on a specific needs basis, the requirement for recruitment of temporary agency staff
- 6.5 To formalise the position of existing seconded personnel within the organisation
- 6.6 To maintain the complement of sanctioned posts and to recruit suitable replacements as vacancies arise

Training and Development

- 6.7 To develop and implement a training strategy for all staff, Board members, mediators and adjudicators

Audit and Financial Reporting

- 6.8 To use the ICT strategy and the roll-out of associated projects to streamline financial management systems and to focus financial and resource allocations
- 6.9 To ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies including the examination, evaluation and reporting on the adequacy of the internal control systems and to implement the three-year rolling Internal Audit Plan to address risk management issues proactively

- 6.10 To prepare annual financial statements to meet audit standards and to maximise the financial resources of the PRTB and ensure their effective use on a value-for-money basis
- 6.11 To prepare Annual Reports and to update the risk register on a timely basis

Income

- 6.12 To ensure the drawdown and proper expenditure of Exchequer funds
- 6.13 To encourage the use of credit card payments for the dispute and registration services

Procurement and Payroll

- 6.14 To continue to improve procurement policies and procedures for tenders and purchases in line with the PRTB's status as a stand-alone entity and to apply withholding tax as appropriate
- 6.15 To review payroll processes in respect of permanent and seconded staff and to formalise the recoupment of salaries of seconded staff

Financial and Cost Data

- 6.16 To cost PRTB functions, including overheads, especially in relation to dispute resolution and registration as a means of assessing the value for money and efficiency of the current business model and operations
- 6.17 To obtain and analyse information on the cost and modus operandi of comparative services as part of on-going strategic

- review and benchmarking processes to ensure quality and value for money
- 6.18 To examine the implications of the report on deposit retention furnished by Candy Murphy and Associates and to bring forward proposals to the Board as appropriate

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- HR Strategy, including a Training and Development Strategy, developed with agreed roll-out over the life of the Plan
- Appropriate systems of recruitment, induction, training and development, PMDS and knowledge management implemented to support the professional delivery of services within a customer service ethos
- Financial reporting on PRTB operations conducted in compliance with the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies and with a value-for-money focus
- Costing of key PRTB functions undertaken and monitored on an on-going basis
- Grant-in-aid and fee income fully and appropriately utilised to ensure organisational effectiveness

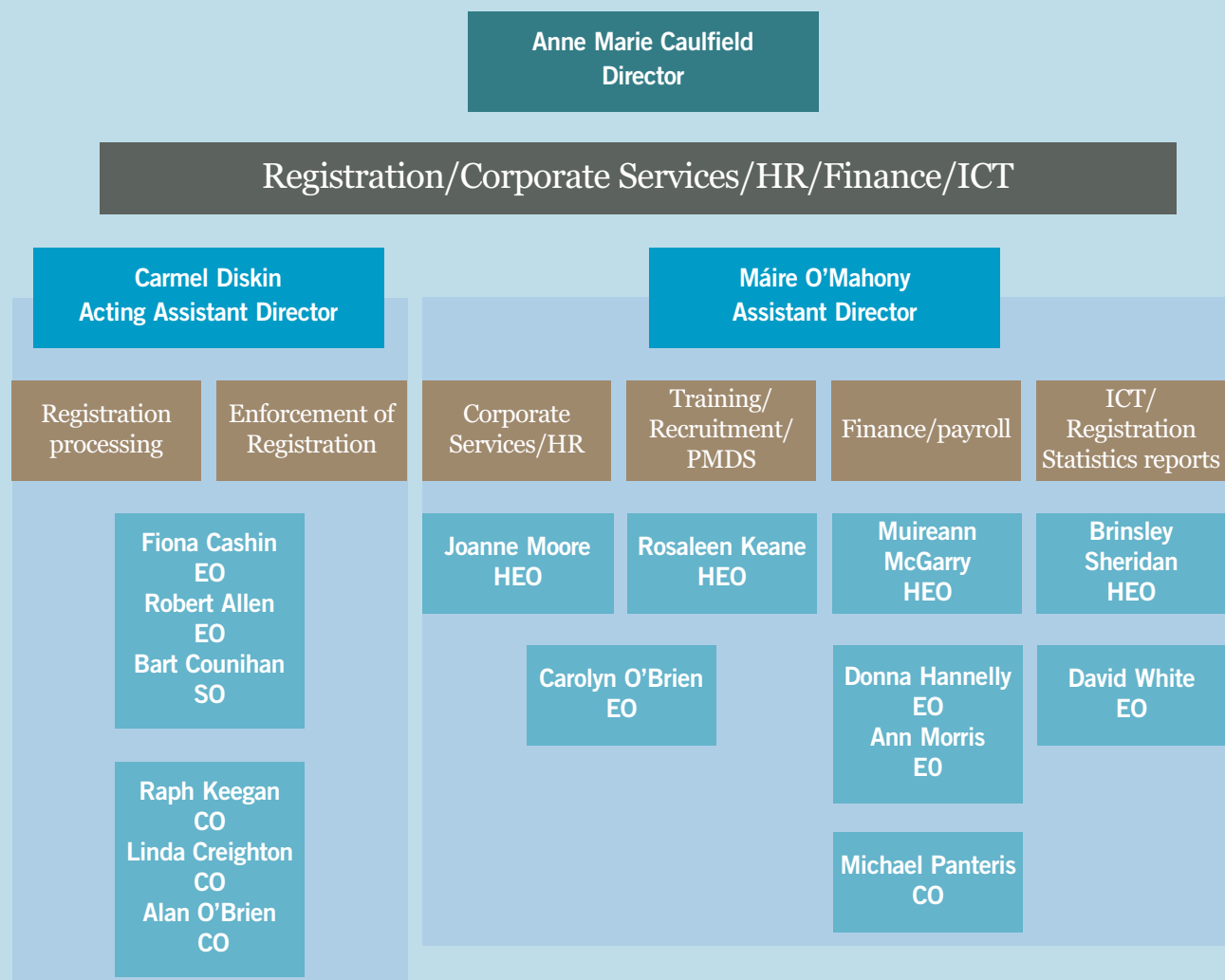
Appendices

Appendix I: Membership of the Board

Tom Dunne (Chairperson)	Head of School of Real Estate and Construction Economics, Dublin Institute of Technology
Aideen Hayden	Solicitor and Chairperson of Threshold
Anne Colley	Solicitor
Prof. Bairbre Redmond	Vice Principal, College of Human Sciences, University College Dublin
Cian Ó Lionáin	Principal Officer, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Ciaran McNamara	Assistant City Manager, Dublin City Council
Dervla Quinn	Solicitor
Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan	Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin
Fintan McNamara	Property Professional
Mary Heaslip	Auctioneer and Valuer
Orla Coyne	Solicitor
Thomas J. Reilly	Irish Property Owners' Association
Tony Taaffe	Solicitor

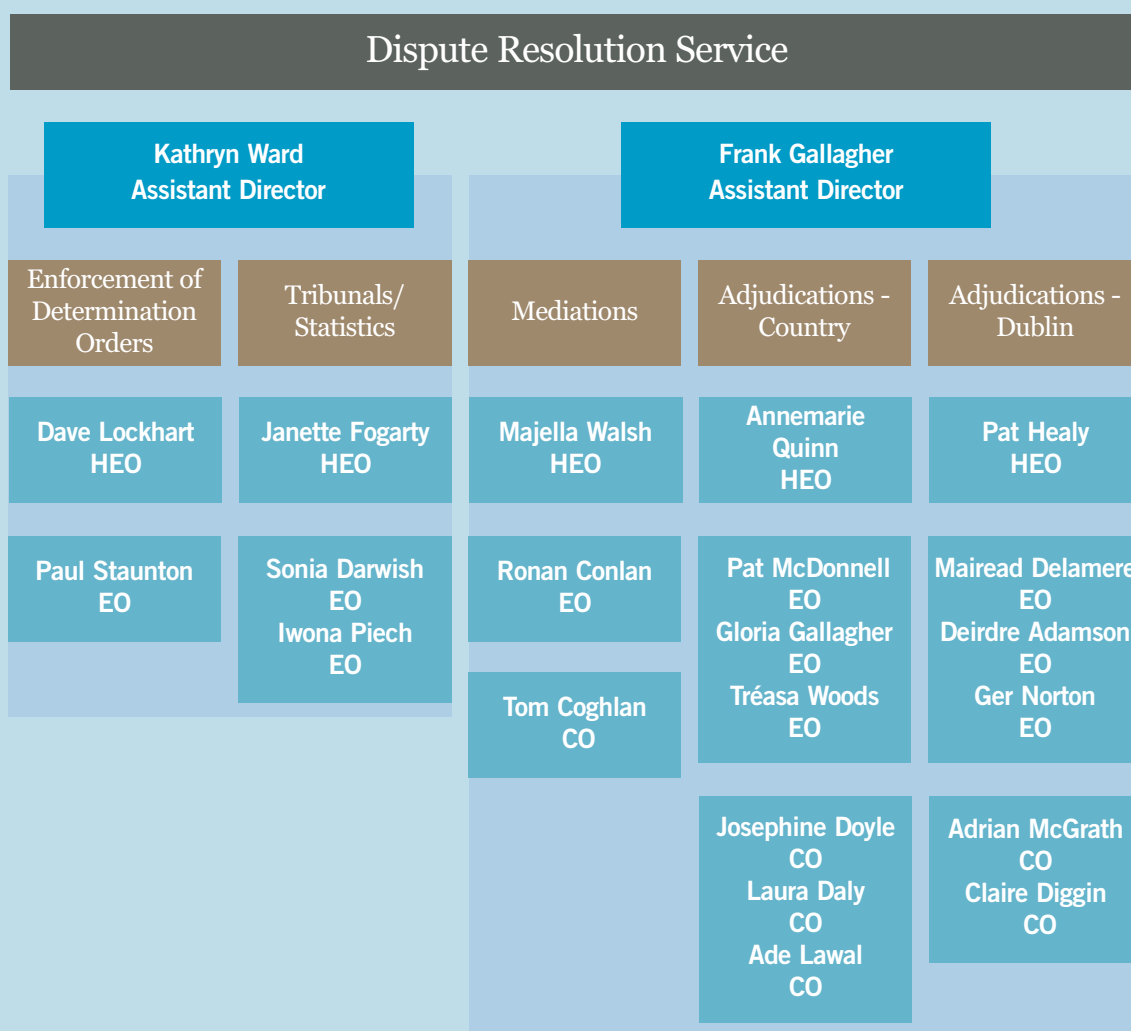
Director	Anne Marie Caulfield
Assistant Directors	Kathryn Ward Frank Gallagher Máire O'Mahony Carmel Diskin (Acting)

Appendix II: Organisation Chart



HEO - Higher Executive Officer
EO - Executive Officer
SO - Staff Officer
CO - Clerical Officer

Appendix II: Organisation Chart - Continued



HEO - Higher Executive Officer
EO - Executive Officer
SO - Staff Officer
CO - Clerical Officer

Appendix III: Membership of the Sub- Committees and Panels

DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

Tom Dunne (Chairperson)

Gus Cummins

Anne Colley

Charlie Corcoran

Orla Coyne

John C. Elliott

Michael Farry

Cian Ó Lionáin

Aideen Hayden

Mary Heaslip

Bill Holohan

Fintan McNamara

Liam Nolan

Liam O'Donnell

Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan

Dervla Quinn

Prof Bairbre Redmond

Pat Riney

Tony Taaffe

Kyra Donnelly

Geraldine Feeney

Paul Good

Nesta Kelly

John Lynch

Mary Morris

Henry Murdoch

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tom Dunne (Chairperson)

Cian Ó Lionáin

Aideen Hayden

Fintan McNamara

Eoin O'Sullivan

Anne Colley

SECTION 189 COMMITTEE

Tom Dunne (Chairperson)

Orla Coyne

Tom O'Reilly

Aideen Hayden

Cian Ó Lionáin

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan (Chairperson)

Tom Dunne

Aideen Hayden

Mary Heaslip

Fintan McNamara

Dr. Bairbre Redmond

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Noel O'Connell (Chairperson)

Dermot Byrne

Cian Ó Lionáin

Aideen Hayden

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Dunne (Chairperson)

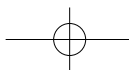
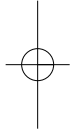
Aideen Hayden

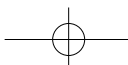
Anne Colley

Dervla Quinn

Orla Coyne

Cian Ó Lionáin





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