

MAYNOOTH SPAN PROJECT

“A Councillor’s Perspective on Council Governance”

Cllr. Niamh Bhreathnach
28 March 2007



Governance

“.. Rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised, particularly as regards, openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence”

*See White Paper on “Better
Regulation”, Department of the
Taoiseach, January 2004*



COUNCILLORS

- Councillors come from a diverse backgrounds
- Common objective of “serving the electorate”
- Blackrock Ward has a 22,665 electorate
- Accountability through ballot-box



COUNCIL

- Councillors are not the Council
- Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown joined-up the “Borough” and parts of DCC
- Myriad executive functions from Architecture to Waste management.
- Mr. Owen Keegan, Manager
- Cllr. Eugene Regan, Cathaoirleach



Central Legislation and Central Funding

- Councillors power being eroded
- Increasing reliance on Central Funding
- Manager executive functions increasing
- Legislation underpinning Council Agenda
e.g. **Protection of the Environment
Act 2003**



Protection of the Environment Act 2003 Section 52 (8)

“Notwithstanding the provisions of any order made under any other enactment, the making of a charge in respect of the provision of a waste service and any exercise of the power of waiver under subsection (3) shall each be an executive function”



Full Diaries

- Councillors have a range of functions to discharge (24/7)
- My membership includes
 1. DLR County Council
 2. Council Strategic Policy Committees
 3. Council Area Committeesand
VEC, IADT, Southside Partnership, HSE, Dublin Tourism, and two Audit Committees .



SPAN Project

- Councillors have little time to stand back and reflect on how governance and planning can be improved
- SPAN Project has allowed the different players to meet and reflect on the effectiveness of Local Government



Working SMARTLY

We should be working to these objectives:

- ☐ Specific
- ☐ Measurable
- ☐ Accepted
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Time-dependent



Going Forward

- Local Government Reform
- Community Platform – earlier involvement
- SPAN is a model of good practice
- All players must make real effort if SPAN seeds are to bear fruit

