Draft

Executive Summary

and

Recommendations

arising from the

Review of the Structure, Systems, Role and Functions

of

Our Lady of Lourdes Community Service Group Ltd

Prepared by

Walker Local Development Consultancy

Wood Green, Kilcoolishal, Glanmire, Co Cork

Contents

Abbreviations

OLoL	Our Lady of Lourdes
OLoLCSG	Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group
OLoLCDP	Our Lady of Lourdes Community Development Project
CSG	Community Services Group
PAUL	PAUL Partnership
LSRA	Limerick Southside Regeneration Agency
LES	Local Employment Service
C.A.R.E.	Community Adult Education Reaches Everybody
Fin Com	Finance Committee
YAG	Youth Advisory Group
CAG	C.A.R.E. Advisory Group
SEAG	Services for the Elderly Advisory Group
CrAG	Crèche Advisory Group
EMC	Estate Management Committee
CMC	Centre Management Committee
BoM	Board of Management
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
EGM	Extraordinary General Meeting

Acknowledgements

The writer would like to thank all of those who gave of their time to meet with him, attend Focus Groups and meetings and who provided information on which to base the details set out in this review. Without the wholehearted support and assistance of all of those involved it would not have been possible to carry out the review and to develop the conclusions and recommendations which have arisen
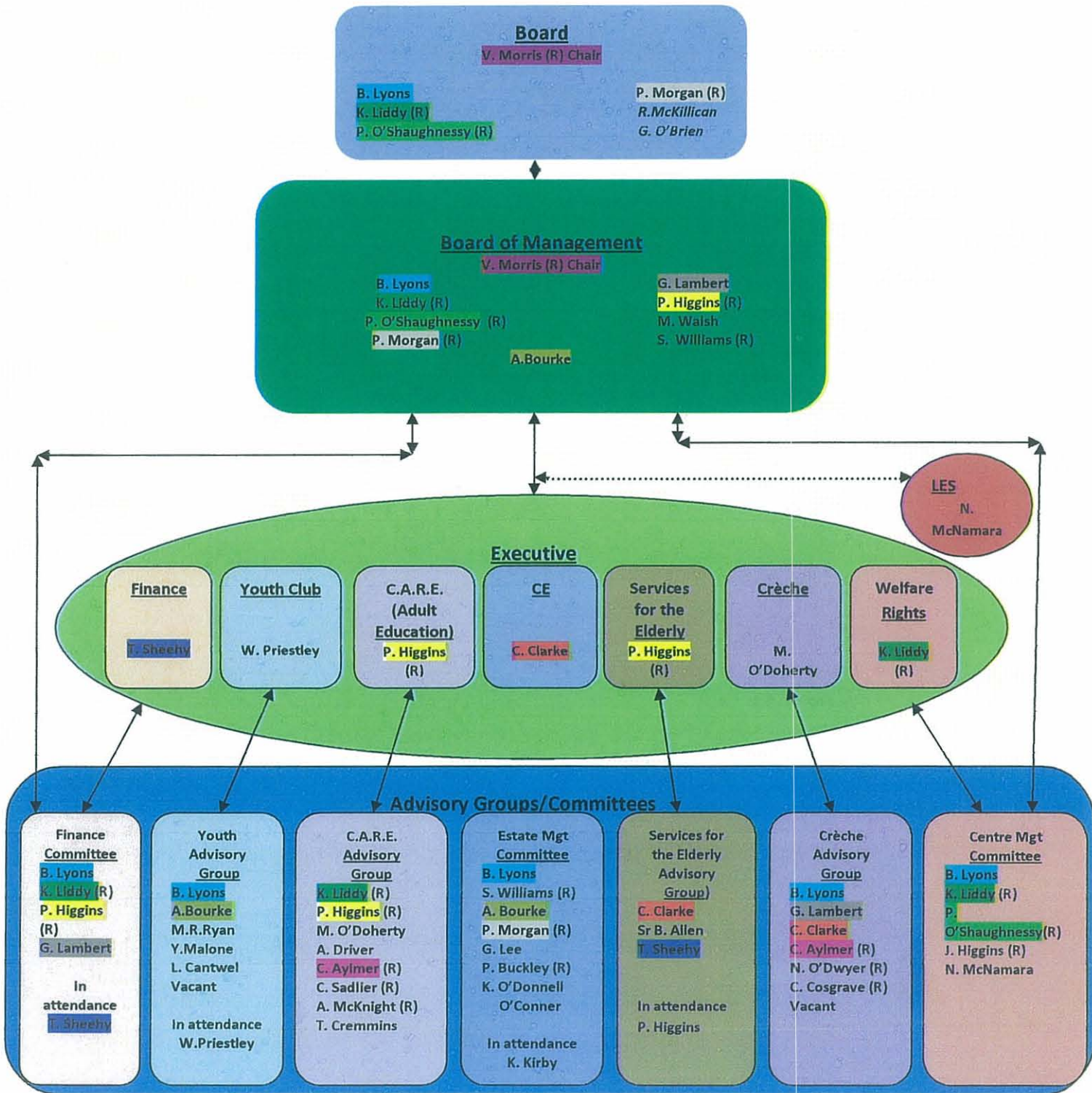
Section 1 – Executive Summary and Recommendations:

Executive Summary

1 - Current Structure:

Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group Ltd (OLoLCSG) is constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee having been incorporated in 1995.

The current management structure is set out diagrammatically in Figure 1

Figure 1

Board
V. Morris (R) Chair

B. Lyons
K. Liddy (R)
P. O'Shaughnessy (R)

P. Morgan (R)
R.McKillican
G. O'Brien

Board of Management
V. Morris (R) Chair

B. Lyons
K. Liddy (R)
P. O'Shaughnessy (R)
P. Morgan (R)

A.Bourke

G. Lambert
P. Higgins (R)
M. Walsh
S. Williams (R)

LES
N. McNamara

Executive

Finance	Youth Club	C.A.R.E. (Adult Education)	CE	Services for the Elderly	Crèche	Welfare Rights
T. Sheehy	W. Priestley	P. Higgins (R)	C. Clarke	P. Higgins (R)	M. O'Doherty	K. Liddy (R)

Advisory Groups/Committees

Finance Committee	Youth Advisory Group	C.A.R.E. Advisory Group	Estate Mgt Committee	Services for the Elderly Advisory Group)	Crèche Advisory Group	Centre Mgt Committee
B. Lyons	B. Lyons	K. Liddy (R)	B. Lyons	C. Clarke	B. Lyons	B. Lyons
K. Liddy (R)	A.Bourke	P. Higgins (R)	S. Williams (R)	Sr B. Allen	G. Lambert	K. Liddy (R)
P. Higgins (R)	M.R.Ryan	M. O'Doherty	A. Bourke	T. Sheehy	C. Clarke	P. O'Shaughnessy(R)
G. Lambert	Y.Malone	A. Driver	P. Morgan (R)		C. Aylmer (R)	J. Higgins (R)
	L. Cantwel	C. Aylmer (R)	G. Lee		N. O'Dwyer (R)	N. McNamara
In attendance	Vacant	C. Sadlier (R)	P. Buckley (R)	In attendance	C. Cosgrave (R)	
T. Sheehy		A. McKnight (R)	K. O'Donnell	P. Higgins	Vacant	
	In attendance	T. Cremmins	O'Conner			
	W.Priestley					
			In attendance			
			K. Kirby			

The colour coding in Figure 1 denotes where an individual participates in two or more elements of the management structure.

There is a 7 person Board of Directors which is supported by a 10 person Board of Management.

There are a total of 8 Operational Areas. One of these Operational Areas, the Local Employment Service, while being located in the Community Centre with the two part time receptionists being employed by the CSG but funded by PAUL/LES, is operated in conjunction with PAUL Partnership/LES with the Mediator being employed directly by the LES.

Each of the Operational Areas is headed up by a member of staff either on a full time (Finance, Youth Club, Community Employment and the Crèche) or part time (C.A.R.E., Services to the Elderly and Welfare Rights/Community Information Service) basis. The C.A.R.E. and Services to the Elderly Operational Areas are headed up by the same person (full time) hence their description as being headed up on a part time basis.

The Operational Areas are supported by 7 Advisory Groups/Committees which currently have a total membership of 31 ranging from 4 members up to 8 members. Of these 31 people, 12 (39%) are residents of OLoL parish.

This structure is cumbersome and there is a very high level of both inter Operational Area and across the Board, Board of Management and Advisory Group/Committee membership. While this should in theory lead to a high level of inter Operational Area activity understanding and coordination this does not appear to be the case. Neither does it facilitate effective management or make for clarity as to where the responsibilities for the governance of the organisation lie.

2 - Day to Day Management:

OLoLCSG has not historically had a full time manager which has resulted in the Board of Management having to provide the overall day to day management of the organisation. This has, in the recent past, been mitigated to a large extent by the appointment of a part time manager. However this is understood to be a short term arrangement.

The lack of a full time manager has resulted in the various different Operational Areas acting to some extent as "Independent Republics" with a consequent lack of coordination and resulting reduction in efficiency. It has also resulted in unnecessary stress on those members of staff who are responsible for the various Operational Areas as they have, until relatively recently, not had a defined person to report to or to go to for advice when confronted by a problem which required input of a policy/managerial nature. This has often resulted in the problem having to wait for consideration at the next Board of Management meeting with consequent loss of morale and effectiveness.

3 - Sub structures:

As outlined above and as illustrated in Figure 1(page 19), the substructure has been provided by 7 separate Advisory Groups/Committees, all of which meet individually on a regular basis –

  ➤ The Finance Committee [Fin Com](5members all of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

  ➤ The Youth Advisory Group [YAG] (Nominally 7 members – currently there is 1 vacancy - 2 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

    It should be noted that the planned membership of the YAG is 12 comprising the Chair, 3 community representatives, 1 VEC representative, 1 CDP representative, 4 Youth Project representatives and an optional further 2 members. Currently there are no community representatives on this group. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

  ➤ The C.A.R.E. (Adult Education) Advisory Group [CAG] (8 members, 3 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

  ➤ The Services for the Elderly Advisory Group [SEAG] (4members, 3 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

  ➤ The Crèche Advisory Group [CrAG] (Nominally 7 members – currently there is 1 vacancy - {childcare expert }- 4 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

- ➢ Estate Management Committee [EMC](8 members, 2 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

- ➢ Centre Management Committee [CMC] (6 members, 4 of whom serve on one or more Advisory Groups/Committees)

There is thus a reasonably coherent support sub structure. However with the current 46 available positions being taken up by a total of 29 people (there being currently 2 vacant positions) there is a greater than desired level of cross membership between the individual Advisory Groups/Committees. This tends to result in people outside the organisation perceiving the CSG as being a "closed shop" and possibly clique dominated.

The sub committees do not have constitutions and do not operate in a similar manner one to another. There are no common membership, nomination, representation, election or rotation procedures across the Advisory Groups/Committees. The membership is in general by invitation with each Advisory Group/Committee tending to operate in its own fashion which has grown up over the years. This can lead to the domination of a Committee/Advisory Group by a single member or small number of members, which can further reinforce the perception in some quarters of the "closed shop" syndrome.

4 - Analysis of Board Membership:

Of the 7 Board members
- ➢ 5 are volunteers,
- ➢ 2 are salaried members of staff

  It is understood that 4 of these have been on the Board since the CSG was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1995

- ➢ 2 new members have recently been co-opted to the Board, one being a member of staff at Mary Immaculate College, having considerable Community Development experience, particularly in the research sector and the second having wide experience in the business sector.
- ➢ 4 are resident in the parish and these have all been on the Board since the incorporation of the CSG in 1995. This is a further potential cause of the CSG's perception as being a "closed shop"

The gender balance is 67 % male and 33% female.

There are properly constituted nomination and election procedures for membership of the Board. However there are no representative nomination procedures or rights of nomination for named organisations to nominate persons for election to the Board. There is a nominal 3 year rotation procedure but there is a clause in the Articles of Association which states that in the event of there being no alternative nominees for election, a retiring Board member may offer themselves for re-election. This results in there being no effective rotation or length of service controls as is borne out by some of the Board members having been on the Board for 15 years.

5 - Analysis of Membership of the Board of Management:

As outlined in paragraph 1 the Board of Management [BoM] is nominally comprised of 10 members.
- ➢ 2 are longstanding members (since incorporation) of the Board and as well as being members of the Board and of the Board of Management they participate in 3 and 1 Advisory Groups/Committees respectively. One of these is a salaried member of staff who heads up an Operational Area (Welfare Rights)

- ➢ 5 are resident in the parish – 2 of whom are the Board members mentioned above with 1 of the remaining 3 being a salaried member of staff heading up 2 operational areas (Adult Education and Services for the Elderly) and participating in 3 Advisory Groups/Committees.

- ➢ 1 is the Co-ordinator of the OLoLCDP who also participates in 2 Advisory Groups/Committees.

- ➢ 1 represents PAUL/LES and participates in 3 Advisory Groups/Committees.

- ➢ 1 is a volunteer from the voluntary sector

The above analysis illustrates the very considerable level of cross membership within and between organisation structures. This can be, and is, perceived externally, probably unfairly, as resulting in the organisation being operated

by a very tight knit group of people who may not, in the opinion of those external to the organisation, have the interests of the community at large as their first priority.

The current gender balance on the Board of Management is 4 (40%) male and 6 (60%) female.

6 - Analysis of Overall Board, Board of Management and Substructure Membership:

Currently there are a total of 60 positions across the Board, the Board of Management and the Advisory Groups/Committees of which 58 are filled by a total of 33 people. This illustrates the high level of multi position/across function membership on the part of a significant number of those involved.

Of these 33 people, 13 (39.4%) are residents of OLoL parish with 6 being residents of Council owned areas and 7 being residents of privately owned areas within the parish.

The overall gender balance is12 (36.4%) male and 21 (63.6%) female

7 are salaried staff members, with a further 2 being salaried staff members of associated activities (LES and Estate Management)

7 - Function, Vision Aims and Objectives of OLoL CSG:

(i)   Functions:

In its "Strategic Vision" document which the CSG prepared early in 2009 it saw its **Vision/Function** as being –

To think and act outside their "traditional box" in order to build their organisational and management capacity so as to demonstrate their ability to deliver required services through being recognised as the preferred community partner for either their current or future possible stakeholders.

(ii)   Key Aims/Objectives

These were defined as to -

➤   Continue to provide strategically planned and coordinated services and to improve their existing service delivery programme

➤   Work with the Limerick Regeneration Agency as a key partner in the planning and development of a major strategic initiative which would –

"Raise the spirits and motivation of the people in their community and provide a tool to break down the very definite social barriers which exist in the community".

The strategic initiative in question was the development of a fully functional health centre servicing the south city area that would facilitate an operational primary care team and which would ideally house a one day surgical facility.

➤   Become recognised as an enabling body providing a structure around and through which they and other community based service providers could –

Come together to -
  -    Plan,
  -    Coordinate
  -    Provide

High quality services based on the particular-
  -    Skills,
  -    Understanding,
  -    Knowledge
  -    Resources

-of the various organisations involved

Thus avoiding –
- Duplication of effort
- Waste of resources

-and

Maximising the potential for synergy –
- between the various organisations involved.

In this context the Strategic Vision document lists the provision of the following –

- ➤ Crèche services
- ➤ Youth services
- ➤ Adult education services
- ➤ Services to the elderly
- ➤ Community enterprise development
- ➤ Special projects
- ➤ Internal governance improvements and staff development

While the Strategic Vision document of April 2009 sets out the broad vision of OLoLCSG it does not leave the reader with a clear view of the organisation's precise –

- ➤ Vision
- ➤ Aims
- ➤ Objectives
- ➤ Priorities
- ➤ Strategies
- ➤ Actions
- ➤ Performance Indicators

It is vital therefore that a detailed Strategic Planning exercise be carried out, based on clearly identified and prioritised needs, taking into account the resources which OLoLCSG is likely to have available to it or can broker through its network with the agencies.

The plan should cover a period of up to three years and should be reviewed annually and amended in the light of experience and or changed circumstances.

8 - OLoL CSG Resources:

The organisations resources fall into four categories –

- ➤ Infrastructure
- ➤ Equipment
- ➤ Personnel
- ➤ Financial

Analysis of these resources reveals -

(i)   Infrastructure and Equipment Resources:

The infrastructural and other equipment resources available are comprised of the Community Centre complex.

This falls into three elements –

- ➤ The original Community Centre building
- ➤ The Crèche
- ➤ The Youth Club

The Community Centre and the Youth Club Buildings are both on two floors while the Crèche is a single storey facility.

The Community Centre is comprised of -

Ground Floor –

Reception area with IT and photocopying facilities
The CE Supervisor's office with IT equipment
The Welfare Rights (perhaps more accurately described as a Community Information and Support Service) office with IT facilities.
The Main Hall which is also used for the Community Coffee Shop
The kitchen equipped for the preparation of hot meals for the Meals on Wheels and In Centre dining room services.
The School Meals kitchen
The Senior Citizens room
The Hairdressing and Chiropody room
Male and female toilet facilities

1st Floor

Estate Management Office with IT facilities (Single person office)
A Meeting /Board Room
A Computer Training Room with IT training facilities
The LES office suite – 2 offices with IT facilities
The Financial Administrator's office (Single person office) with IT facilities
The Staff canteen
A meeting/training room
A single person office used by the Gardaí and the LRA
A study room
A craft room
A large Training room
JI Team Leader's room
Male and female toilet facilities

The Crèche:

The Crèche is a purpose built facility which is HSE approved for 20 full time and 30 part time childcare places

The Youth Club:

The youth Club building is on two floors and is comprised of - Ground Floor – Hall and office with IT facilities

1st Floor: - Games room, Resource room – with IT facilities, Office - with IT facilities and Kitchen

Other equipment includes –

> A van for the delivery of Meals on Wheels.

The CSG thus has a reasonably well equipped and spacious facility. It is fair to say that the original building – that is the Community Hall, was not purpose built and thus is not ideal for use as a community centre. The building is wheel chair accessible with a chairlift being available to the 1st floor. Over the years strenuous efforts have been made to upgrade the building which has resulted in its now being a great deal more user friendly and welcoming than it was say 10 years ago. The Board and Board of Management have to be congratulated on their unceasing efforts over the years to upgrade the building. However it is still not an ideal facility.

The Crèche on the other hand is a recently completed purpose built facility which is fully up to the standards required of a state of the art childcare facility.

The Youth Club is also a recently completed facility and is also wheel chair accessible with a lift to the 1st floor.

(ii)   Personnel resources:

OLoLCSG have, in common with virtually every community based organisation in the country, over the years been and currently remain, heavily dependent on FÁS and the CE or JI programmes for the bulk of their personnel resources. Currently OLoLCSG has a 15 participant CE programme which is supported by a full time CE Supervisor. This equates to 8.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees.

The CE team are deployed as follows –

Crèche	9 participants	
Kitchen	3 participants	
Reception	2 participants	
Housekeeping	1 participant	
Total	15 participants or	7.5 FTEs
Supervisor	1 Full time	1.0 FTE
Overall CE employment		8.5 FTEs

In addition to the CE team the CSG employs –

Administrator	1 Full time	1 FTE
Crèche	7 Full time	7 FTEs
	5 Part time	2.5 FTEs
Kitchen	1 Part time	0.5 FTE
School Meals	2 Part time	1 FTE
Environment Workers	2 Part time	1 FTE
Community Cafe	1 Part time	0.5 FTE
Welfare Rights	2 Part time	1 FTE
Caretakers	2 Part time	1 FTE
Youth Workers	1 Full time	1 FTE
	2 Part time	1 FTE
Youth Service Coordinator	1 Full time	1 FTE
LES Receptionists	2 Part time	1 FTE

Overall Total   45 people (34 Part time and 11 Full time) **or 28 Full Time Equivalent employees**

In addition to the above the LES Mediator and the Community Officer (Estate Management) are based in the Community Centre but are not employees of the CSG.

(iii)   Financial Resources:

An analysis of the organisation's income for the year ended 31st December 2009 shows that the details of OLoLCSG income in that year were as follows –

	€	Revenue` €	Capital €
2009 – Total income	1,204116		
Grants			
Limerick City Council	64,000 (5.3%)	64.000	
Regeneration Agency	20,000 (1.7%)	20,000	
FAS	307,094 (25.5%)	307.094	
POBAL	244,815 (20.3%)	228.866	15.949
PAUL	42,653 (3.5%)	42,653	
LES	56,410 (4.7%)	56,410	
HSE	47,080 (3.9%)	47,080	
VEC	18,107 (1.5%)	18,107	
Sport Capital	2,500 (0.2%)		2,500
Sub Total	802,659 (66.7%)	784,210	18,499
Service Income (External)			
School Meals	86,291 (7.2%)	86,291	
Senior Citizens	42,441 (3.5%)	42,441	
Crèche Fees	134,369 (11.2%)	134,369	
Tuesday Night Club	947 (0.1%)	947	
Sub Total	264,047 (21.9%)	264,047	
Service Income (Internal)			
CSG Transfer	118,824 (9.9%)	118,824	
Sub Total	118,824	118,824	
Other Income			
Interest	208 (0.0%)	208	
Miscellaneous	18.377 (1.5%)	18,377	
Sub Total	18,585	18,585	
Total Income	1,204,116	1,185,667	18,449

Net operational funding

The net operational funding, excluding capital grants, in 2009 was € 1,185,667 or 98.5% of total income.

	Cumulative%
➢ 25.9% is accounted for by CE	25.9%
➢ 19.3% is accounted for by childcare funding from POBAL	45.2%
➢ 22.3% is accounted for by income from services provided by CSG	67.5%
➢ 8.4% is accounted for by funding received via PAUL (Welfare Rights and LES)	75.9%
➢ 5.4% is accounted for by funding received from Limerick City Council	81.3%

Thus the largest source of funds, as is the case with very many community based organisations, is that received through the Community Employment programme. However it is noteworthy that the second largest source of funds is that received through the income from services provided. This is a very considerable achievement and reflects much credit on the work done to date by all of those involved in the direction, management and operation of the CSG.

However there is still a significant shortfall in the funding which would be required to support a full time manager for the organisation. The CSG has and is putting significant effort into the development of community based social enterprise in order to strengthen its internal cash inflow and thus to enable it to employ a full time manager from within its own resources. However in the short term it will have to look to some of the principal stakeholders such as PAUL, the LCC and the LSRA to subvent the cost of employing a manager.

It is also noted that, while considerable effort has been put into the development of income from community based enterprise and significant success has been achieved, there is no Advisory Group with the sole remit of supporting this aspect of the CSG's activities.

Impact Assessment:

Taking into account –

➤ The full time equivalent employees of OLoLCSG	28
➤ Children attending the Crèche(total 66 with 40 being from OLoL parish)	66
➤ The beneficiaries of the Meals on Wheels Service/ In Centre meals provision	73
➤ The participants in the Tuesday Evening Club	20
➤ The beneficiaries of the School Meals Service	245
➤ The Welfare Rights Service (Community Information and Support Service) – 1st time visitors	118
➤ Possible total Youth Club participants	160
➤ The LES caseload participants	205
Total	**915**

We find that a minimum of circa 915 people benefit directly on an ongoing basis from the day to day activities of OLoLCSG.

Not all of these live within Our Lady of Lourdes parish.

It is fair to say that in addition to the direct benefits enjoyed by the client groups listed above; there will be additional trickle down benefits to the families of -

➤ The employees of OLoLCSG
➤ The families of the children attending the Crèche
➤ The families of the children benefitting from the school meals
➤ The families of the 1st time visitors to the Welfare Rights service plus a proportion of the repeat visitors and their families
➤ The families of the LES caseload participants

- for instance a family with say two children benefitting from the school meals service are in effect in receipt of a financial benefit of circa €750 per year. This is a significant easement for them and may, as well as contributing to the recipient children's educational benefit, enable them to avail of additional food, clothing or other goods or services which they would otherwise not be able to afford

- and the people benefitting from the services/activities provided by –
➤ Estate Management Services
➤ The chiropody and hairdressing services available in the Centre, which while they are not delivered by CSG are facilitated by them through the provision of the base from which the services operate

It is estimated that the population of Our Lady of Lourdes at the time of the 2006 census was circa 4,091.

This means that potentially 22% of the people living in the parish benefit directly from the day to day activities of the CSG together with the significant additional "trickle down" effect on an ongoing basis.

This indicates a very significant positive impact arising from the day to day activities of the organisation.

10 - Strengths and Weaknesses of OLoLCSG:

During the discussions and consultations with the Board, Board of Management, members of the Advisory Groups/Committees, individual members of staff, service users and parish residents a wide range of strengths and weaknesses were mentioned. Analysis of these indicate that –

The principal **STRENGTHS** of the organisation are perceived as being –

➤ The Centre and the fact that it is there – *"take away the centre and you wouldn't have a community"*
➤ The standard of maintenance of the Centre and its continuous development – viz - the Community Cafe etc
➤ The facilities and the range and variety of services which are available and their continuous expansion

- It is in effect a "One Stop Shop" and a fine example of Community/Social Enterprise
- The quality and soundness of the management structures, particularly its financial management
- The improved management information now becoming available
- The commitment of everybody involved in the organisation, the Board, the Board of Management, the Staff and the many Volunteers involved
- The mutual trust, understanding regard for each other and awareness of stress points which exists on the part of all involved
- The strength, skills and quality of the staff
- The level of cooperation and team work which exists
- The knowledge and expertise which resides in the organisation born of up to 25 years of individual experience
- The knowledge and understanding of the community and its needs
- The commitment to, pride in, delivery and quality of the wide range of value based services
- The networks, both internal and external, which exist throughout the organisation
- The longstanding and the high quality of the relationships which exist with the various agencies with which the organisation is involved

The principal **WEAKNESSES** are perceived as being

- Governance issues (as addressed in Paragraph 11 – page 13, below)
- Lack of standardised, clear -
    - Structures
    - Policies
    - Practices
  across the organisation to provide clarity and support for all those involved.
- Lack of consistency in relation to procedures and practices as between the Advisory Groups/Committees
- Lack of financial resources/funding
- A possible lack of trust as between the various management structure elements
- A tendency for a degree of "minding one's own patch" rather than looking to the overall interests of the organisation and its clients
- Lack of adequate formalised Strategic Planning
- Lack of coordination across the organisation in terms of management and activities
- Lack of equality of area and interest representation on Board and Advisory Groups/Committees
- Perceived preferential treatment in relation to certain areas and groups and lack of an inclusive of all ethos
- Perception that people from certain areas are not welcome
- "Closed shop" Syndrome
- Lack of positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged
- Perceived lack of openness and transparency in relation to the organisation's structures, management and operation
- Lack of effective linkage with the whole parish and generally poor PR with consequent lack of awareness of activities and services available.
- Lower than desirable level of involvement of the client groups in management structures.
- Failure to reach the "Hard to Reach"
- Constraints on authority of Advisory Groups/Committees with consequent lack of empowerment and damage to morale
- Lack of adequate management/performance information
- Lack of adequate training for Board, Advisory Group/Committee Volunteers and members of staff
- Lack of consistency in HR practices, approaches and terms and conditions of employment across the organisation with contributions not always being recognised.
- Gaps in service provision - for instance lack of
    - Community Bus
    - Lack of sports activities involvement
    - Need for greater access to the Youth Club
    - Ever present problem of attracting volunteers to participate in the management and operation of the organisation from within the Community

It is clear that the weaknesses in the governance, organisational structures, policies, procedures and practices significantly undermine the considerable strengths of the organisation and detract from its very real achievements, ongoing service provision and positive impact. If therefore the organisation is to achieve its full potential and Strategic Vision of -

"Thinking and acting outside their "traditional box" in order to build their organisational and management capacity so as to demonstrate their ability to deliver required services through being recognised as the preferred community partner for either their current or future possible stakeholders" –
- then these issues must be addressed.

11 - Governance Issues:

A detailed analysis of the governance of the organisation was carried out together with the members of the Board of Management based on the Governance of Voluntary Sector Organisations Review carried out in 2009 by The Wheel and published by Boardmatch.

This review indentified 6 headings under which an organisation's governance should be assessed –
1. Governance
2. Board Composition
3. Board Development
4. The role of the Chairperson
5. Board role in identifying, balancing and meeting stakeholder expectations
6. Setting an organisation's governance processes and strategic agenda.

These 6 headings and their component elements were discussed in detail with the members of the Board of Management and subsequently an analysis of the outcome of the discussion when compared with the indicators in question was carried out

This indicates that the internal governance of OLoLCSG does not measure up well against best practice as set out in The Wheel/Boardmatch guidelines.

An analysis of the 42 indicators involved in this assessment is set out in Table 1 below. This shows that on balance the organisation's governance is questionable to non compliant. The results were –

- ➤ Compliant indicators   17 (40.5%)
- ➤ Questionable indicators   11 (26.2%)
- ➤ Non Compliant indicators   14 (33.3%)

This means that in relation to 25 (57%) of the 42 indicators, OLoLCSG performance, on the Board of Management's own analysis, is either questionable or non compliant with good governance practice.

On a somewhat broader basis, out of the 8 sub headings the ratings were –

Table 1 – Analysis of OLoLCSG Governance Assessment

Compliance	Yes	?	No	Pass	?	Fail
Governance	4	2	3			√
Suggested actions for individual Board members	3.5	1.5	2		√	
Board Composition	1	1	3			√
Possible results of lagging behind organisations needs	2	2			√	
Board Development	1		3			√
Role of the Chair	2.5	1.5		√		
Role of the Board in identifying and meeting stakeholder expectations	3	1		√		
Characteristics of a well governed organisation		2	3			√
	17	11	14	2	2	4

Table 1 above shows that on the basis of the eight sets of indicators used OLoLCSG –

- ➤ Fails on 4 of the 8 headings
- ➤ Is questionable on 2 of the eight headings
- ➤ Passes on 2 of the eight headings

It is clear that in the issues of financial probity, control and accountability that OLoLCSG operates to satisfactory and proper standards.

However in terms of –

> ➢ Governance including management structure and Board composition
> ➢ Board development
> ➢ Review/Characteristics of a well governed organisation

- the practices and procedures fall well short of those which delineate a well governed organisation.

For the future well being of the organisation it is vital therefore that these issues are confronted and addressed.

12 - OLoLCSG Image:

It became clear during the consultations that the image of OLoLCSG in the wider community was not as positive as either its service impact would tend to indicate or the organisation would wish it to be. There is clearly a significant divide within the community as to those who view the Centre in a positive light and who access the services it provides and those who, for whatever reason feel that they are -

> ➢ Excluded from the organisation's operation
> ➢ Not welcomed as participants in the activities which it provides

This issue needs to be addressed in a deeper manner than simply enhancing the organisation's PR function in the community. It requires that the organisation examines its values, structures and processes to ensure that all who might wish to participate feel that –

> ➢ They can have a stake in and can be involved in the operation of the organisation
> ➢ The services which it offers are readily available to all
> ➢ That all are welcome

Recommendations

1 – Overall Structure:

The present structure of the organisation as illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 1 – see page 3 - is not conducive to and does not facilitate effective management.

It is recommended that the structure should be altered to that illustrated in Figure 2 – see page 16.   This envisages –

> ➢ The enlargement of the Board,
> ➢ The appointment of a full time manager
> ➢ The disbandment of the Board of Management
> ➢ The development of an additional Advisory Group (Community Enterprise Development Advisory Group)

(i) **Proposed Board Reconstitution:**

(a) **Structure** - This will replace the current two tier Board and Board of Management structure with a single Board, all of the members of which will be directors of the organisation, with expanded membership, representative of all of the stakeholders and particularly of the various sections of the community.

(b) **Board Composition** - It is proposed that the Board should be comprised of -

Community representatives (to be nominated by the OLoL Community Umbrella Group)	4	35.8%
Nominee of a Community based organisation other than OLoLCDP	1	
Nominee of OLoLCDP	1	7.1%
Funding organisation nominees	3	21.5%
A senior Garda Siochana nominee from Roxboro	1	7.1%
Home School Community Liaison Officer nominee	1	7.1%
Staff nominee	1	7.1%
Co- opted by the Board	2	14.3%
Total	14	

It is recognised that this is a major change and will require careful planning and implementation over a significant period of time.

It would not be in the best interest of the organisation for the existing Board and Board of Management to be disbanded at one stroke. The commitment, knowledge, understanding and contribution of the current Board members, Board of Management, staff and sub group members must be recognised as must their work and their achievements over the years which have resulted in the very significant ongoing positive impact of the Centre and the services which it provides as listed in paragraph 1.9 – page 10 above.

However it is suggested that the following process should be followed in this regard –

(ii)   Change over process:

(a)   The Board and Board of Management should appoint a small executive group and empower them to oversee the change over process.

(b)   The Board and the Board of Management should be coalesced into a single 12 person body comprised of the present members of the Board and the Board of Management. To comply with legal requirements this may require amendment of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. This should be investigated with the organisation's legal advisors and any necessary changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association should be formulated and put to an EGM.

(c)   At the first AGM after the EGM to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association, 3 of the members of the coalesced Board should resign and 5 new Board members from among the 14 nominees listed above should be elected to the Board. The Board will then be comprised of 14 members.

Any of the 4 members who have resigned at this point may, if eligible and having been nominated by one of the proposed nominating bodies stand for re – election after a period of two years.

(d)   At the second AGM a further 4 members of the coalesced Board/Board of Management should retire and 4 new members should be nominated for election by relevant organisations as listed at 1.1. (b) above. The Board will continue to be comprised of 12 members. The same rules for renomination of those members who have stood down will apply.

(e)   At the third AGM the final 5 members of the coalesced Board and Board of Management should retire and 5 new members should be nominated for election by the relevant organisations as listed in 1.1.(b) above. The Board will then have the recommended 14 members.

(f)   At all subsequent AGMs those directors who have served on the Board for 3 years should retire by rotation. They may if renominated by their relevant nominating body offer themselves for re election for a further 3 year term. At the end of their second 3 year term they must stand down as members of the Board. They may after a period of two years, if nominated by their nominating body, offer themselves for re election for a three year term at the end of which they may, if nominated, offer themselves for re election. If elected they must, at the end of this three year term retire in perpetuity from the Board.
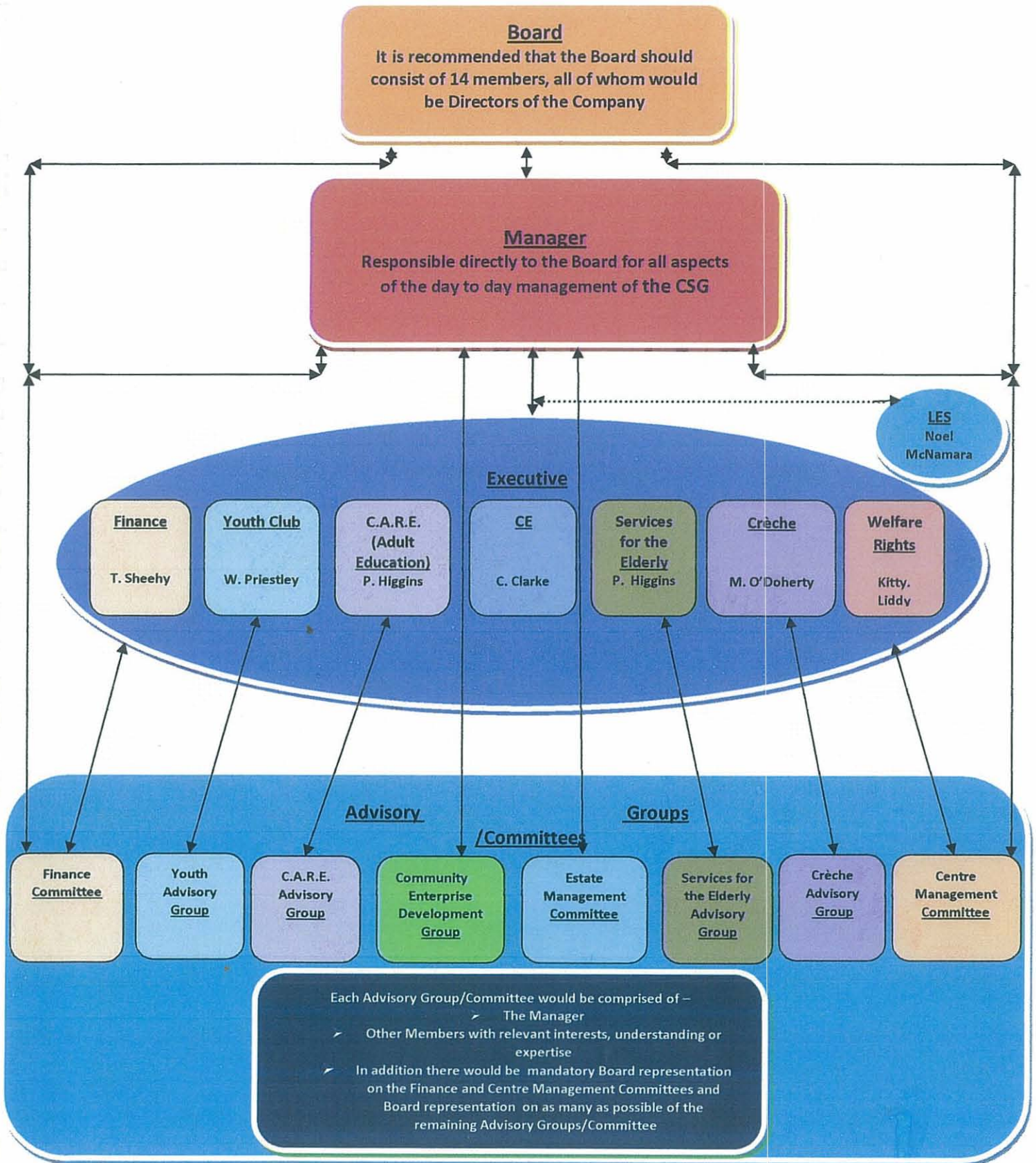
This process while being somewhat complex has the following advantages –

➤ The experience of the current Board and Board of Management members will be retained over a maximum of three years while new members are elected and have an opportunity to become acquainted with the needs and workings of the organisation.

➤ The Board membership base will be broadened and the Board will be given an opportunity to become more representative of all areas/interests within the community and other stakeholders.

➤ There will be an agreed and implemented rotation procedure.

➤ There will be a maximum Board membership term of 6 years, followed by a minimum break of two years and a maximum second membership term of 6 years. This will ensure that there is a reasonable turnover of Board members while at the same time providing for a satisfactory level of skill and knowledge retention on the Board.

Appedix 1 – page 21 sets out the above process in tabular form.

It is recommended that the new management structure should be based on the model set out in Figure 2 below

Figure 2

Board
It is recommended that the Board should consist of 14 members, all of whom would be Directors of the Company

Manager
Responsible directly to the Board for all aspects of the day to day management of the CSG

LES
Noel
McNamara

Executive

Finance	Youth Club	C.A.R.E. (Adult Education)	CE	Services for the Elderly	Crèche	Welfare Rights
T. Sheehy	W. Priestley	P. Higgins	C. Clarke	P. Higgins	M. O'Doherty	Kitty. Liddy

Advisory Groups /Committees

| Finance Committee | Youth Advisory Group | C.A.R.E. Advisory Group | Community Enterprise Development Group | Estate Management Committee | Services for the Elderly Advisory Group | Crèche Advisory Group | Centre Management Committee |

Each Advisory Group/Committee would be comprised of –
➢ The Manager
➢ Other Members with relevant interests, understanding or expertise
➢ In addition there would be mandatory Board representation on the Finance and Centre Management Committees and Board representation on as many as possible of the remaining Advisory Groups/Committee

(iii) Manager:

Experience within the organisation over the recent past with the presence of a part time manager has shown the benefit of having an on-site managerial presence.

It is therefore recommended that the Board should, as their highest priority and as a matter of the utmost urgency, put in place a process to recruit and appoint an adequately resourced full time manager.

Their aim and objective should be to complete the recruitment process over a 4 month period and to have it completed no later than the end of Quarter 1, 2011.

This should take precedence over the proposed Board and Board of Management changes but should under no circumstances be allowed to put these changes on the long finger

It is recognised that this will place significant financial strain on the organisation. The Board should immediately therefore seek the financial support of the major stakeholders, PAUL Partnership/Limerick City Council/ Limerick Southside Regeneration Agency/FÁS, to enable this appointment to be made and to continue until such time as the organisation can develop activities which will provide adequate internal financial resource to support the position.

The manager must have the total support of the Board and be given the authority and scope of activity to enable him/her to be fully responsible for the day to day running of the organisation. The details of the manager's responsibilities and authority must be clearly spelt out in their job description/terms of employment.

(iv) Existing heads of Operational Areas/Functions:

The existing heads of Operational Areas – Community Employment, Finance, Youth Club, Services to the Elderly, the Crèche and Welfare Rights will report directly to the manager. There is some confusion as to the exact status of the C.A.R.E. project, in that it is understood to operate on a separate financial footing from the CSG. It is recommended that apparent anomalies of this type should be examined and addressed in order to avoid confusion and consequent loss of effectiveness.

(v) Advisory Groups/Committees:

It has been noted that each of the Advisory Groups/Committees operate in a more or less independent manner. There does not appear to be a common operating basis or common terms of reference in relation to membership or other issues.

It is recommended that this issue should be tackled as having 8 (see proposed structure diagram – Section 9 – page 40) somewhat "Independent Republics" within the organisation will lead to confusion and lack of coordination.

Advisory Groups/Committees should therefore be asked to develop details of their responsibilities and activities within the framework of an agreed company procedures format.

In addition, as the development of community enterprise activities to bolster the financial strength of the organisation is seen as being a key element in its medium to long term development, it is recommended that a suitably constituted Community Enterprise Development Group should be set up to spearhead these activities.

It is also recommended that there should continue to be a sustainable level of cross representation between and among the Advisory Groups/Committees in order to assist in coordination and transfer of information.

(vi) Human Relations Practices and Procedures:

The organisation has well founded HR practices and procedures which are overseen by the Centre Management Committee. However there appear to be problems in relation to the application of common terms and conditions of employment across the various operating areas. This is understandable as the conditions which apply to funding and remuneration levels from different funding agencies vary considerably and are not within the control of the organisation.

However the CSG should endeavour to operate, as far as is possible, on an equitable basis in this regard. The CMC should therefore examine as a matter of urgency any differentials which exist and recommend actions to the Board to ensure that these are minimised as far as is possible.

It is also recommended that an individual review process for all employees should be put in place which will, in a non-threatening and positive manner, assist them in assessing how they are performing and in the development of personal goals and action plans which will assist them in developing their skills, capabilities and performance.

(vi) Governance:

(a) Board Composition, Nomination Procedures, Rotation, Re election and Term of Office:

These have been dealt with in some detail in paragraphs 1 and 2 above. However the issue of proposed nominating bodies was not adequately covered.

It is recommended that the Board should be comprised of nominees from –

The Community Umbrella Group	4
A community based organisation other than the CDP	1
OLoLCDP	1
Funding organisations	3
Staff	1
An Garda Siochana – Roxboro Road	1
Home School Community Liaison Officer	1
Co-opted by the Board	2
Total	14

In addition the LCC Ward representatives should continue to be invited to attend Board meetings as non voting members.

This provides for a minimum of 5 nominees from the Community, 3 Funding agency such as PAUL, FÁS, LCC, LRA, nominees, a staff nominee a nominee of An Garda Siochana (Roxboro Road), the Home School Community Liaison Officer and two independent members to be co-opted by the Board.

In order for this system to operate satisfactorily it is essential that there should be a properly constituted, independent and fully operating Community Umbrella Group. The current Umbrella Group is understood to more or less moribund and it is therefore vital that this should be resurrected as quickly and effectively as possible. It is very important that this should be done as it will provide a means of countering the current widely held perception of the CSG as –

➢ Being a "closed shop"
➢ Not operating in an open, equitable and transparent manner
➢ Excluding residents from some areas from use of the Centre and participation in its management

(b) Frequency of Meetings:

It is recommended that the Board should meet once a month with a maximum period between meetings being 6 weeks.

(c) **Meeting notification practice:**

It is recommended that the Board meeting notices should be sent out two weeks in advance with Board paper: and agendas being circulated a week in advance. The Agenda for each meeting should be prepared by the manager and agreed with the Chair prior to its circulation. If a member wishes to raise a particular issue they should, if urgent, contact the manager who will then discuss it with the Chair. If it is a routine issue it should be raised under any other business and scheduled for the next meeting.

(d) **Quorum:**

It is recommended that the quorum for any Board meeting should be 1/3rd of the members plus 1

(e) **Voting procedures:**

It is recommended that where there is an equality of votes on any proposal the Chair should have a casting vote.

(f) **AGM procedures:**

It is recommended that the AGM should be held not later than 6 months after the end of the organisation's previous financial year and not more than 14 months after the previous AGM.

Notification should be circulated to Board members and nominating bodies 3 months prior to the meeting with papers and agenda following one month before the meeting. Where a Director is due to retire by rotation he/she and their nominating body should be notified 3 months prior to the meeting. Nominations for re-election or election as appropriate should be handed to the relevant company officer at least 1 month prior to the meeting.

(g) **Special General Meetings:**

It is recommended that Special General Meetings may be convened by the submission of a proposal signed by at least 25% of the enfranchised Board members detailing the precise topics to be addressed. This should be done at least a month before the proposed meeting date.

(h) **Board Development:**

It is recommended that coupled with the reconstitution of the Board, relevant tailor made training should be provided for the Board. This should contain sections covering –

> The role and responsibilities of a director of a Company Limited by Guarantee
> The scope, aims and objectives of –
>> The Local Community Development Programme
>> The Limerick Regeneration Agency Masterplan
>> The Limerick City Council Development Plan
>> The Community Employment Programme
>> The PAUL Partnership Strategic Plan
> Strategic Planning, its objectives and the processes involved
> Team work and its importance in maximising the operational effectiveness of an organisation such as OLoLCSG
> Evaluation – its importance and the processes best suited to the activities of a voluntary sector organisation such as OLoLCSG
> The importance of feedback and best practice in providing feed back to stakeholder organisations and the community at large

(i) **The Chair and his/her role**

The Chair plays a key role in the success of an organisation such as OLoLCSG. It is vital that they have the trust of their Board and that they are in a position to be independent of any of the interests which may be represented on the Board. In this context it would be desirable that the Chair should be from an independent background and possibly be one of the two Board members to be co-opted by the Board as a whole.

(j)   Balancing and Meeting Stakeholder Expectations:

The key element here is the development and implementation of a properly constructed Strategic Plan. Hence the importance of providing relevant training in this regard for the Board.

It is recommended that on the appointment of the manager one of the first tasks which should be carried out is the development of a strategic plan setting out the organisation's

> ➢ Vision/Mission
> ➢ Aims
> ➢ Prioritised objectives
> ➢ Related strategies and actions

together with -

> ➢ Suitable performance indicators

This will enable the Board to identify the various stakeholder expectations and to define their resulting accountabilities. This will in turn assist the Board in –

> ➢ Remaining alert to all its accountabilities
> ➢ Keeping the different accountabilities in balance
> ➢ Ensuring that the organisation's internal governance system is in line with its needs
> ➢ Reporting performance and value attained in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

(k)   Review Procedures:

It is recommended that the Board should put on place as an integral element of its programme of activities a review process, which should be carried out at a minimum of once every three years covering –

> ➢ The basic responsibilities and powers of the Board
> ➢ The general and specific duties of the Chair and individual Board members
> ➢ Membership rules (including eligibility, suspension and expulsion, as well as mechanisms for nomination, election, co-option etc.)
> ➢ The approach to meetings (how many per year, who convenes, how decisions are reached and recorded, emergency decisions outside of regular Board meetings etc.)

The purpose of this review process is to ensure that the governance practices of the organisation are kept up to date and are altered as an when necessary to reflect any changes which have arisen either within the organisation itself or the environment in which it operates.

Proposed Board Change over Process, Nomination and Term of Service details

	After EGM	1st AGM	2nd AGM	3rd AGM	4th AGM	5th AGM	6th AGM	7th AGM	8th AGM	9th AGM
Current Board Members	12	12	9	5						
Current Board Members to stand down		3	4	5						
Residual Current Board Members		9	5	0						
New Board Members to be nominated/elected		5 (A)	4 (B)	5 (C)						
Total new Board Members		5	9	14						
Total Board Members	12	14	14	14						
Board Members to resign by rotation and who may, if renominated be re-elected					5 (A)	4 (B)	5 (C)			
Board Members who have served for 6 years to stand down for a minimum of two years								5 (A)	4 (B)	5 (C)
New Board Members to be nominated								5	4	5

Note – if a Board member should resign during either their first or second terms, then their nominating body would be asked to nominate a replacement. This person would then have to resign by rotation after 3 years. If renominated they could serve for a further 3 years and would then have to stand down for at least 2 years. At the end of this 2 year period or longer they could, if there was a vacancy to be filled, be renominated and could serve for a further 3 years, followed by a further 3 years after which they would have to stand down in perpetuity.