

# Sligo County Council

Annual  
Report  
2017



County Hall  
Riverside  
Sligo



# Mission Statement

*‘To maximise economic, social, cultural and community development, deliver efficient and cost effective services in a democratic, accountable and transparent manner in partnership with local communities, voluntary and statutory agencies.’*



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## Sligo County Council

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# Table of Contents

Mission Statement .....	1
Introduction .....	4
Members of Sligo County Council – 2017.....	5
Management Team.....	6
Strategic Policy Committees.....	7
Housing and Corporate Directorate .....	8
Housing and Building.....	8
Cranmore Regeneration Project.....	17
Corporate Services .....	20
Human Resources.....	23
Civil Defence.....	25
Health & Safety .....	25
Planning, Community and Economic Development Directorate.....	26
Development Planning Unit (DPU) .....	26
Enforcement of Planning Control .....	26
Heritage and Conservation Services.....	28
Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) .....	30
Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) .....	31
Community & Economic Development.....	33
Local Enterprise Office.....	40
Sligo Arts Service .....	41
European Volunteering Capital 2017 .....	43
Sligo Library Service and Museum .....	44
Infrastructure, Environment and Fire Services Directorate.....	48
Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution .....	55
Environmental Services .....	57
Parks and Open Spaces - Maintenance & Landscaping.....	59
Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbour .....	62
Veterinary Service .....	64
Fire Services.....	65
Finance .....	66
Income and Expenditure Account .....	66
Balance Sheet .....	67

Motor Taxation.....	68
Procurement.....	69
Appendices .....	70
Appendix 1 Staff Retirements in 2017.....	70
Appendix 2 Conferences and Seminars attended by Councillors in 2017.....	71



## **Introduction**

One of the many highlights for Sligo County Council in 2017 was our designation of 'European Capital of Volunteering' a deserved acknowledgement of the contribution made by our many outstanding community volunteers over many years. To place this accolade in context, there is a long and rich tradition of volunteerism in Sligo, where communities become energised and enhanced by the dedicated people who give so generously of their time for the common good, without any expectation of acknowledgement or reward.

While the elected members and staff are understandably focused on the immediate objective of delivering a quality service across our wide range of activities, they also have a responsibility to consider broader, long term strategic issues e.g. what kind of society do we want to build, how well is Sligo positioned to meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities, particularly in relation to the local economy. Their core representational role involves dealing with immediate issues of concern to the community, but we also have wider remit to work alongside these communities to enable Sligo realise its true potential.

Our ambitions for the growth of Sligo and the Northwest are predicated on the return of this Council to financial sustainability, and in this context the significant improvement in our financial situation in recent years is critical. Major progress has been recorded by the Council in this area and this provides the space to plan for our future with confidence and ambition

Sligo has much to gain from the active and dynamic engagement between Sligo County Council and the communities we serve, and this partnership augurs well for the future of our county.



**Councillor Séamus Kilgannon**  
**Cathaoirleach**



**Ciarán Hayes**  
**Chief Executive**

## Members of Sligo County Council – 2017



**Cathaoirleach**  
January to June 2017  
**Councillor Hubert Keaney**



**Cathaoirleach**  
June to December 2017  
**Councillor Séamus Kilgannon**

### Ballymote-Tobercurry Municipal District

**Councillor Martin Baker**



**Councillor Michael Clarke**



**Councillor Margaret Gormley**



**Councillor Keith Henry**



**Councillor Jerry Lundy**



**Councillor Dara Mulvey**



**Councillor Joseph Queenan**



**Councillor Paul Taylor**



### Sligo Municipal District

**Councillor Declan Bree**



**Councillor Marie Casserly**



**Councillor Thomas Healy**



**Councillor Hubert Keaney**



**Councillor Séamus Kilgannon**



**Councillor Sinéad Maguire**



**Councillor Chris MacManus**



**Councillor Tom MacSharry**



**Councillor Gino O'Boyle**



**Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady**



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# Management Team

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**Mr. Ciarán Hayes**  
*Chief Executive*



**Ms. Dorothy Clarke**  
*Director of Planning  
Community and  
Economic Development*



**Mr. Tom Kilfeather**  
*Director of  
Infrastructure,  
Environment & Fire  
Services*



**Ms. Marie Whelan**  
*Head of Finance*



**Mr. Bartley Gavin**  
*A/ Director of  
Housing &  
Corporate*



**Mr. John Reilly**  
*Head of  
Enterprise,  
Local Enterprise  
Office*



# Strategic Policy Committees

## SPC 1 – Housing and Corporate Services

### Councillors

1. Cllr. Dara Mulvey
2. Cllr. Declan Bree, Chairperson
3. Cllr. Martin Baker
4. Cllr. Joe Queenan
5. Cllr. Gino O’Boyle
6. Cllr. Keith Henry

### Sectoral Nominations

1. Mr. Brendan Henry – Business/Employers
2. Mr. Gerry O’Connor – Community/Voluntary
3. Ms. Marcella Flanagan – Community/Voluntary
4. Ms. Monica Reilly – Social Inclusion

No. of meetings held in 2017: 5

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## SPC 2 – Environment & Infrastructure

### Councillors

1. Cllr. Jerry Lundy, Chairperson
2. Cllr. Michael Clarke
3. Cllr. Margaret Gormley
4. Cllr. Thomas Healy
5. Cllr. Hubert Keaney/Cllr. Sinéad Maguire
6. Cllr. Paul Taylor/Cllr. Marie Casserly

### Sectoral Nominations

1. Mr. Conor McCarthy – Business/Employers
2. Mr. Eddie Davitt – Agricultural/Farming
3. Ms. Sharon Eastwood – Environment/Conservation
4. Ms. Michelle McMorrow – Community/Voluntary

No. of meetings held in 2017: 2

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## SPC 3 – Planning, Community & Economic Development

### Councillors

1. Cllr. Sinéad Maguire, Chairperson
2. Cllr. Marie Casserly
3. Cllr. Hubert Keaney
4. Cllr. Séamus Kilgannon
5. Cllr. Chris MacManus (March 2017)
6. Cllr. Tom MacSharry
7. Cllr. Rosaleen O’Grady
8. Cllr. Paul Taylor

### Sectoral Nominations

1. Mr. Conor McCarthy – Business/Employers
2. Mr. Anthony McCormack – Trade Union
3. Mr. Gerard Queenan – Agricultural/Farming
4. Ms. Sue Mahon – Community/Voluntary
5. Mr. Marcus Hufsky – Social Inclusion

No. of meetings held in 2017: 4

# Housing and Corporate Directorate

## Housing and Building

### Overview

#### Social Housing Strategy

The Social Housing Strategy was launched by Government in late 2014. It sets out to support the vision that every household should have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price and in a sustainable community.

#### Rebuilding Ireland-Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness

Rebuilding Ireland-Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' was published on 19th July 2016. Its aim was to ramp up the delivery of housing across all tenures, to help households meet their housing needs and also address homelessness. It set ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes, to deliver 47,000 social housing units in the period to 2021 and to make the best use of existing stock (a lot of vacant units in the country). In the latter part of 2017, the figure for delivery of social housing units was revised to 50,000 by 2021, through build (33,500), acquisition (6,500) and leasing (10,000) with a Government commitment to funding of €6 billion to support the delivery.

The Housing Section is active in the following areas:

- Approving households for social housing support
- House allocations
- House maintenance and improvements
- Housing Design & Construction
- Estate Management
- Homelessness
- Traveller Accommodation
- Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability and also the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme
- Private Rented Tenancy Inspections
- Housing Loans and Tenant Purchase Scheme

#### Maintenance and Repairs of Local Authority Housing Stock

The budget provided for the maintenance and repairs of Local Authority Housing Stock in 2017 was €766,497. The Council prioritises repair requests that pose a health or safety risk to the tenant and also requests from older people and those with special needs. The Housing section processed nearly 1400 repair requests in 2017.

#### Housing Assessment

The Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011, as amended, sets out the procedure for assessing households who are seeking social housing support. The assessment shall determine if the household is eligible and in need of social housing support.

1150 households were on the Council housing waiting list as at December 2017. Of these 427 households are availing of assistance under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and 100 households are approved for a transfer to alternative accommodation with Sligo County Council. This leaves a net housing need of 623.

The Housing Section also offers advice on other housing options and supports that households may be eligible to avail of in lieu of social housing or while they are awaiting a housing allocation.

### **Allocations**

The Council allocates properties in accordance with its "Allocation Scheme" which was adopted by the Members in June 2011. A total of 303 offers of tenancy issued in 2017, of which 152 were accepted and 151 were refused.

### **Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)**

The implementation of the above payment (HAP) is a key Government priority and a major pillar of the Social Housing Strategy 2020. It is a new form of social housing support where the Councils can provide housing assistance for households with a long term housing need including long term rent supplement recipients. The scheme will remove a barrier to employment by allowing recipients to remain in the scheme if they gain full-time employment. HAP will also improve regulation of the rented accommodation being supported and provide certainty for landlords as regards their rental income.

HAP went live in Sligo on the 16th November 2015 and as at December 2017, 535 tenancies have been set up. Nationally there are 31,470 active HAP tenancies across all local authority areas. It is the intention of the Council over a period and in line with Government policy to transfer all rent supplement applicants and recipients in the County into HAP.

### **Differential Rent Scheme**

The Council operates a Differential Rents Scheme on the basis that tenants are charged a weekly rent in accordance with their ability to pay.

### **Estate Management Programme**

The Council in managing its housing stock uses the resources of its Estate Management Officers, Housing Investigation Officer, Tenant Support Worker, Community Wardens and also cooperates with Residents Associations and the Gardaí to ensure that in so far as possible all Council estates are pleasant and safe areas to reside.

All complaints in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Estate Management issues are documented and followed up on in terms of Estate Management policies and strategies. The Estate Management Unit has developed policies designed to be consistent and fair in its approach to dealing with all complaints and aims to resolve issues in accordance with housing legislation and functions.

### **Resettlement Tenancy Support & Sustainment**

To minimize the instances of homelessness occurring and to assist in cases where homelessness does occur the Council has put in place a commissioned Resettlement Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service with Focus Ireland. The aim of this service is to support individuals and particularly families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### **Disability**

The Council, in conjunction with the HSE, has now completed a Strategic Plan for Housing People with a disability for Sligo. The plan was adopted on 25th May 2016. The preparation of the strategy plan involved the identification of current and future needs (over the next five years) for people with disabilities using the information available to the Council from waiting lists and consultation with relevant statutory authorities, service users groups and disability organisations. The overall need was identified at 528. A significant challenge identified is dealing with the accommodation needs of people residing in the two learning disability congregated

settings located at Cregg House, Rosses Point and Cloonamahon, Sligo.

A number of housing developments are currently being proposed by Sligo County Council. This potential supply options were identified in the Plan and a target set that a minimum of 15% of all units in developments of ten units or more will be designed specifically for people with a disability. In developments of less than ten units, consideration will be given to providing one unit in each. Approved Housing Bodies will also be encouraged to target new build and acquisition projects to cater for persons with a disability.

The Plan is time lined to run from 2016 – 2020. It has been recognised that the Plan needs to be realistic in its targets .The ability of Housing providers in County Sligo to deal with the disability needs identified is a real challenge given that a substantial element of the need has built up in the county over decades.

### **Traveller Accommodation**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2014-18 has a focus upon meeting the needs of Traveller families through the provision of capital works on halting sites and the securing of tenancies through RAS, the Approved Housing Bodies and Council tenancies. In addition some families will have success accessing the private rented sector through HAP and rent supplement although there continues to be difficulties expressed by Traveller families in accessing this market. Consideration is given to the purchase of houses for Traveller families in areas of choice and to meet specific or special needs. The Council continues to work with families in need of accommodation assistance either directly or with Sligo Traveller Support Group. The overall accommodation secured for the period 2014 to 2017 is 78% of the target for the life-time of the full plan-just slightly under 80% target.

### **Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme**

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government introduced the new Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 on the 1st of January 2016 to enable tenants buy their homes. Tenants must meet the eligibility criteria set out under the Scheme in order to be eligible to purchase their house. The new scheme involves discounts for purchasers linked to household income (40%, 50% or 60%) and a discount- related charge on the property that reduces to nil over a period, unless the house is resold or the purchaser fails to comply with conditions of the sale. Where the tenant purchaser resells the property before the end of the charge period, he or she is required to pay back to the housing authority a portion of any profits arising from the sale.

Sligo County Council has to date received 90 applications for the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme.

### **Private Rented Accommodation Standards**

Minimum standards for rental accommodation are prescribed by means of Regulations made under Section 18 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1992, updated by the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009. The relevant standards are currently set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017.

All landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that their rented properties comply with the aforementioned Regulations and responsibility for the enforcement of the Regulations rests with the relevant local authority. The Council is active in the area of enforcement of the

standards in private rented accommodation, and carried out 317 inspections in 2017.

**Homelessness**

Every effort is made by the Council to respond effectively and appropriately to those who present as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Sligo County Council has a Homeless Action Team (HAT) which regularly meets to assess individual cases and to adopt approaches to best support and assist homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless and to put in place support services for them. This case management approach is key to achieving the principle contained in national policy of a housing led approach whereby homeless persons should be accommodated in the first instance in suitable accommodation with or without supports rather than in so called expensive emergency accommodation. This has proven very effective for the Council. Households are also assisted with move-on to independent living. Assistance can also be provided in certain instances by way of B&B accommodation.

Services are available at the following locations:

- Maryville, Finisklin (Sligo Social Services Council Ltd) – Capacity of 15 beds.
- Ballytivnan (Sligo Social Services Council Ltd) – capacity 5 beds.
- Shalomar (Finisklin Housing Ltd) – capacity to provide total no of beds of 21, comprising of 17 in main house and 4 x 1 bed units to rear
- Provision of 23 units of transitional supported housing at Citygate.
- 2 units for families requiring intensive supports under SLA with Focus Ireland.

Sligo County Council continues to be the lead authority for the North West Region (Sligo, Donegal and Leitrim) and is responsible for budget management and the co-ordination of funding for the region.

**Housing Capital Programme**

The target of units set for delivery for the Council for this Programme under the Social Housing Strategy in the period 2015 to 2017 was **101 (294 delivered as set out hereunder)**.

▶ 2015	64 no.
▶ 2016	95 no.
▶ 2017	<u>135 no.</u>
▶ <b>Total</b>	<b>294 no.</b>

The target could be met by:

- a) LA Housing (Construction and Acquisition, including Part V acquisitions)
- b) Capital Assistance Scheme (C.A.S.)
- c) Returning Vacant Social Housing Properties to Productive Use Programme (Voids Programme).



## a) LA Housing (Construction and Acquisition, including Part V acquisitions)

### Housing Construction Schemes-in pipeline

Sligo County Council is actively advancing a number of Schemes to provide housing to those most in need. The schemes are being advanced through a four stage Social Housing Approval Process, which is required by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government. Each stage requires Department approval. These are as follows:

**Stage 1:** Project Feasibility & Capital Appraisal.

**Stage 2:** Project Design, Costs Planning approval, followed by a Part 8 Planning submission to the members of the Council.

**Stage 3:** Project Detail Design Development and Cost Plan for Pre-Tender.

**Stage 4:** Project & Tender Review of Costs & Tender Submission. The Stage 4 approval allows the project to proceed to construction and for the Council to appoint a contractor.

### Scheme details:

**Father O Flanagan Terrace – 22 houses:** Eight dwellings have been completed this year and the remainder will follow next year.



**Knappagh Road, Sligo – 28 Dwellings:** Stages 1 and 2 approved by the Department. The Part 8 planning process has been completed. A design team has been procured. Stage 3 documents are to be submitted to the Department in Quarter 1/ 2018.

**Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill – 20 Dwellings (Phase1):** Stage 1 approval has been received for 20 dwellings. Developing Carrowbunnaun will entail road widening and land acquisition which entails getting agreement with third parties and securing finance. Discussions are ongoing with interested parties including the Department.

**Rosses Point Road – 14 Dwellings:** Stages 1 and 2 have been approved by the Department. The Part 8 planning process has been completed. A Stage 3 Capital Appraisal is now being prepared for submission to the Department in early 2018.

**Collooney – 15 Dwellings:** Stages 1 and 2 have been approved by the Department. The Part 8 planning process has also been completed. A Stage 3 Capital Appraisal is now being prepared for submission to the Department in early 2018.



**Caltragh, Culleens – Rural Dwelling:** Stages 1, 2 and 3 have been approved by the Department. The Stage 4, Post tender report and documentation has been submitted to the Department and approval to proceed is awaited.

**Connolly Park, Tubbercurry Regeneration / Remedial Works Programme:** The Council are currently working with Department Officials to progress a Programme that, over a period, would see units in the estate being brought back to productive use, together with the carrying out of some demolition works and also the construction of a number of new builds. A Stage 1 Capital Appraisal was issued to the Department in December 2017 for demolition works to four vacant houses together with proposals to construct 10 new dwellings in their place and on adjoining land.

**Future Capital Projects:** It is also the intention to develop further housing projects in the county. Departmental approval will be required in each case. Projects at St. Josephs Tce. (1 unit) Dromore West and Maugheraboy will be the next set of projects to be prepared and issued to the Department for approval.

### **Acquisitions**

74 no. houses have been acquired since 2015 and have been allocated, (after carrying out improvement works) to households on the housing list. The Council also has a number of other houses at either sale agreed or contract signed stage (not included in this figure).

### **Capital Assistance Scheme (C.A.S.)**

The Department) in August 2017 announced a 'Call for Proposals, 2017' under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) to Approved Housing Bodies (A.H.B.s) to submit proposals to Local Authorities for the delivery, through either construction or acquisition, of housing accommodation, to cater for priority groups including:

- elderly;
- homeless persons (including 'care leavers' exiting state care on reaching the age of 18);
- people with a disability, with a particular emphasis on moving people with disability from a congregated settings into community based living.

There is no deadline for submission of applications in what is effectively an open 'rolling' call for applications. No applications have been received to date although there have been a few enquiries from A.H.B.s. 17 no. units have been delivered under CAS during the period 2015-2017. In addition the following Scheme is being progressed.

**Cuan Iosa, Ballymote, Co Sligo – 8 houses.** Stage 1 was approved by the Department in August 2017. A Stage 2 Capital Appraisal and Cost plan are being progressed and will *be* submitted to the Department in January 2018

### **Returning Vacant Social Housing Properties to Productive Use Programme**

#### **(Voids Programme)**

This Programme is directed at housing units where the cost of remediation greatly exceeds the cost of the normal end-of-lease maintenance and is capped at €30,000 of Department funding per unit.

#### **Delivered 2015 to 2017.**

2015- 39 no. (Funding provided € 439,924)  
2016- 68 no. (Funding provided €1,097,909)  
2017- 67 no. (Funding provided € 332,447)\*  
**Total- 174 no.**

*\*€ 332,447.00 has been provided by the Department in 2017 for 25 houses. Funding for the remaining 42 houses in the sum of €743,388 has been sought from the Department.*

### **Long Term Vacant/Derelict Social Housing Units**

In late July 2016 the Department announced that funding would be made available to the Council to fund the remediation/ return of a number of long term vacant/derelict social housing units. The cost of Unit repair had to exceed €30,000. The Council sought funding in 2016 and 2017 from the Department under this Programme. In total 20 houses, at a cost of €941,807, have been remediated to date with one final unit to be remediated in 2018.

### **Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP).**

The target of units set for delivery for the Council under the Social Housing Strategy in the period 2015 to 2017 is 200. The target could be met by **a) Leasing** and **b) Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)**:

#### **a) Leasing Programme – Target 2015-2017: 68units**

11,400 housing units have been targeted for delivery nationally during 2015-2017 under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SCHEP), previously known as the Social Housing Leasing Initiative. Units under this Programme can be delivered in a variety of ways to include:

- Multi-unit developments directly leased by Councils:
- Individual units either leased or through rental arrangements that can be acquired using Council delegated sanction, and
- Units leased, purchased or constructed by A. H. B's

7 units have been delivered to date. The Council are currently in discussions with developers and Approved Housing Bodies for additional leased units. Generally for Sligo leased units are not easily sourced and the target set is considered unachievable (exceeding targets elsewhere will counter the shortfall).

#### **b) Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) – Target 2015-2017: 132 units**

The Rental Accommodation Programme assists households who are in receipt of Rent Supplement for more than 18 months and who have been assessed by the Housing Authority as having a long term housing need (excluding asylum seekers or other non-nationals who do not have leave to remain in the State permanently). 98 units have been delivered to date.

### **Other Work Programmes**

#### **Adaptations and Extensions to Local Authority Stock**

Each year the Department provides funding to the Council to enable it where necessary to carry out adaptations and extensions to Council stock. Works in a number of cases facilitated tenants in being able to leave hospital and return home to their homes. 10% is provided from the Councils own revenue resources with the balance of 90% funded by the Department. An allocation of €503,796.49 (of which 90% has been funded by the Department) was spent in 2017 for adaptations to 60 no. Council houses.

#### **Extensions Programme 2017**

2 no. extensions have been provided to Council houses in 2017. A further programme to provide 4 extensions to Council houses has been advanced to deal with special needs demands and overcrowding. Works will commence in 2018.

#### **Repair and Leasing Scheme**

A key component of the *Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* is a new scheme, the Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Scheme, which targets the delivery of social housing and also ensures that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible. The Scheme is open to owners of houses or apartments that have been vacant for at least one year (proof required) and which require an amount of repairs to bring the property to the required standard for rented properties. Repair and improvement works necessary to suitable vacant properties are to be funded by Local Authorities or Approved Housing Bodies (A.H.B.) in return for the property being made available for social housing through a lease for a period of between 10 and 20 years. The cost of the works is deducted from lease (rent) payments over an agreed lease period.

The maximum cost of repairs allowed under the Scheme will be €40,000. The Council will consider properties in all areas but will in particular be interested in properties in its high demand areas. There will have to be a social housing demand for a property and also the property has to be assessed as being viable to provide social housing. Details of the Scheme are on the Council Website. Eight applications have been made in 2017 with two rejected and the remaining six the subject of further discussions.

### **Buy and Renew Scheme**

Under this Scheme the Council can buy and renew housing units in need of remediation, and make them available for social housing use. The focus will be on older stock, particularly as part of the response being made in tackling dereliction and improving streetscapes/supporting renewal. It is expected that Buy and Renew properties would have been vacant for a period before being acquired for social housing purposes. The Council have identified a number of possible acquisitions under this Scheme.

### **Housing Loans**

Applicants may be considered for house purchase loans who did not previously own a dwelling and who have been refused by a Bank/Building Society. The Housing (Local Authority Loans) Regulations 2009 set out the requirements and process for the approval of loans by a Local Authority.

### **Housing Grants**

Housing Adaptation Grants for older People and People with a Disability Schemes

The Allocation under this heading for the Council for 2017 was €1,350,000 of which €270,000 (20%) is provided from the Council's own revenue resources.

The three applicable schemes are:

- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability.
- Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme.
- Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People.

The Grants supported over 190 no. applicants to improve their homes.

## Cranmore Regeneration Project

2017 saw the commencement of the implementation phase of the Sligo East City, Cranmore & Environs Masterplan following its launch by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Mr Simon Coveney on the 1st December 2016.



The Regeneration Masterplan describes an overall vision and a number of physical projects and social and economic initiatives to address needs. €19.3m of funding for projects has been identified by the Department. These projects will provide much needed investment to improve housing in the area, open spaces and roads, as well as investment in community facilities. The Plan focuses on the Cranmore area, but also includes a range of projects in the wider East City Area.

The Regeneration Vision is:

- *To make the area a more attractive place to live with better, convenient connections to existing and new facilities, locally and in the rest of Sligo.*
- *To enable individuals and communities in the area to avail of emerging opportunities and access to employment, education, health and family support services.*
- *To secure the area as a location of choice for future generations in which to live, work and visit.*

The three elements to deliver the Regeneration Vision are:

- *Social Plan*
- *Economic Plan*
- *Physical Plan*

During the year, a technical team was approved. Houses adjoining the Cranmore Offices were rehabilitated as additional office accommodation and an implementation strategy was presented to the Cranmore Regeneration Steering Group in July 2017.

The following are details of projects being progressed from the **PHYSICAL PLAN**:

### **Provide quality spaces for community facilities:**

- **New Community Facility**

There are two key organisations, Cranmore Community Co-op and Abbeyquarter Community Centre, providing services in the Cranmore and East City Area that will be critical to informing the vision for the new centre. During the year, a Facilitator and Business Planner were appointed to work with the two agencies to advance the development of a vision for the new facility using the 'bottom up' approach. Work is ongoing on this project with the organisations.

- **Restoration of Riverside Lodge, Doorly Park**

It is an objective in the Masterplan that the restoration of the

Lodge be explored, as it provides an opportunity to create a new public/community space close to the river, adjoining park and recreation areas. The building is a piece of local heritage, and a protected landmark structure, at a key location within the area. The building is in the ownership of Sligo County Council, but lack of funds has prevented any essential maintenance work. It has fallen into disrepair in recent years, and the roof is in need of attention. The Council has secured funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs of €30,000 under the Structures at Risks Fund 2017 to secure the building and arrest the decay and potential for dereliction and work commenced in September 2017 and will be complete in a number of weeks weather permitting. The Council are working to secure funding to carry out other conservation work. A proposal to lease the property to Sligo Tourism Development will go before the Council with a proviso that facilities are available in an agreed format to the community.

- **Improve access to Quality Amenities and Open Spaces:**

The Masterplan contains an objective to support the development of water-based recreational opportunities and associated facilities at Doorly Park. During the year, an application was made for funding to Inland Fisheries Ireland to engage an environmentalist to conduct a survey of the impact of the installation of fishing stands on the Garavogue River, in the Doorly Park area. This will form the basis for a further application in 2018 for the physical work involved in the installation of the fishing stands.

#### **Improve Housing Quality and Opportunity:**

- **Refurbishment works to 96 units (Pilot Programme):**

Funding has been approved under the Regeneration Programme for a Pilot Project covering Energy Efficiency, Housing Quality and Environmental Improvement works. Work is progressing on the procurement of consultants.

- **Void refurbishment:**

Work is continuing on the refurbishment of a further 11 No. properties some of which are needed for decant properties to facilitate the pilot programme.

- **Improve access and links: Joe McDonnell pedestrian/bicycle link to Chapel Hill:**

A draft proposal has been designed and consultations are ongoing with residents.

The following are details of projects being progressed from the **SOCIAL PLAN**:

- **Education and Learning Strategy:**

One of the key objectives of the Masterplan is to address educational disadvantage. It sets out an ambitious programme of works/initiatives to address fundamental issues which affect the estate and which prevent residents from meeting their full potential. Funding has been secured from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local

Government for the appointment of an Education Coordinator. This post is to be provided by way of a Service Level Agreement with the Sligo Education Centre. The recruitment process is underway and will be completed by the end of the year. Other initiatives identified in the Masterplan, such as Family Learning, the Incredible Years Programme and Right to Read are currently being developed. The East City Music Generation Programme has been delivered in a number of schools in the area and has been a major success.

- **Health and Wellbeing:**

A number of initiatives are being progressed under this strategy to meet the actions in the Masterplan such as:

- Facilitation of space for the Abbeyquarter Men's Group for the location of a polytunnel
- Support for Cranmore Age Friendly Group
- Applications have been made for funding for a number of projects under the Healthy Ireland Initiative.

- **Family Support:**

The following initiatives are continuing under this strategy:

- Breakfast Club
- Tenancy Support and Sustainment Project

### **Community Safety and Housing Management Strategy:**

During the year, the Community Safety Taskforce developed a work plan based on the actions set out in the Masterplan and are working through projects. A key priority is the upgrade and extension of the CCTV system. Funding was secured from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for the upgrade of the existing system and tenders have been sought for the installation and commissioning of an upgrade to the system. Further funding for the extension of the system will be sought from the Department of Justice under the Community based CCTV Scheme. Approval for the extension of the system was received from the JPC and approval from the Garda Commissioner has been sought. These are requirements prior to an application being submitted to the Department of Justice.

## Corporate Services

The range of services provide by Corporate Services include:

- Administration of Council and Municipal District meetings
- Providing administrative services for the Cathaoirleach and chairs of Municipal District's
- Support for elected members
- Preparation of the register of electors
- Freedom of Information
- Provision of media and Information Services, administration and the delivery of customer services
- Town Twinning
- Etc.

## Council Meetings

The meetings coordinated by Corporate Services include monthly Plenary meetings, bi-monthly Municipal District meetings for Sligo and Ballymote-Tobercurry, Corporate Policy Group, Joint Policing Committee, Disability Consultative Committee, Procedures Committee, Twinning Committee and Audit Committee.

## Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting of Sligo County Council held in June 2017, Councillor Séamus Kilgannon was elected as Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council for a one year term. Councillor Keith Henry was elected as Leas-Cathaoirleach.

## Local Representation and Civic Leadership

Corporate Services provides Administrative support for the Cathaoirleach and the chairs of the Municipal Districts. In 2015 the 'Cathaoirleach's Awards Scheme' was revived, an initiative which was devised to reward the special volunteers who have given exemplary service to their community. At a ceremony in County Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017, awards were presented in the categories of Arts & Culture, Community, Environment & Heritage, Schools, Young Enterprise, Sports, 'Spirit of Sligo' and Year of Volunteering.



The Council also hosts Civic receptions and receptions hosted by the Cathaoirleach to honour people who have given distinguished service or have excelled in a particular endeavour. The following is a representation of events which were hosted by Sligo County Council during 2017.



**Retirement of Councillor Seán MacManus**

One of Sligo's longest serving and experienced public representatives announced his retirement from Sligo County Council at its February 2017 meeting. **Extract from minutes of meeting below.** Seán's son Chris was co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Council.

*"Councillor Sean MacManus recalled his memories of people and occasions throughout his 23 years as a Member, having being elected to Sligo Borough Council in 1994 and Sligo County Council in 1999. He took great pride in his role as a public representative and had very special memories from his two terms as Mayor. While there was a sense of wistfulness on taking his leave, he will cherish the friendships he made and extended his best wishes to Councillors and staff.*

*Members commended Sean on his exemplary service both at local and national level, and referred to the many occasions where his expertise, experience and encouragement had been invaluable to them in their role as a Councillor. He was regarded as an outstanding public representative who was invariably honest, open and transparent.*

*The Chief Executive Ciarán Hayes said he wished to add his comments to those made by the Members. In particular, he referred to the visit of the British Royal Family and Councillor MacManus's interest in G.A.A. The Chief Executive said it was important that the work carried out on the Local Economic and Community Plan by Councillor MacManus in his role as Chair of the Local Community Development Committee (L.C.D.C.) would be acknowledged.*

*He extended his thanks on his own behalf and on behalf of the staff for the contribution Councillor MacManus had made and his integrity, confidentiality, vision, professionalism and leadership.*

*The Cathaoirleach congratulated Councillor MacManus on a long and distinguished career, and said Sean enjoyed universal respect across all political boundaries. While they may have been on different sides of many debates in the Council Chamber, he always found Sean very fair, a man of great passion and integrity".*



### **Register of Electors**

Since the publishing of the 2013 Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee report, County Sligo has been divided into two electoral areas (previously five), Ballymote-Tobercurry and Sligo. Following the Local Elections held in May, 2014 8 No. Members were elected to the Municipal District of Ballymote- Tobercurry with 10 No. Members elected to the Municipal District of Sligo.

Sligo County Council prepares the Register of Electors annually and as always a major effort was made to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness in compiling the Register. On the final Register for 2016/2017, 53,110 electors were registered.

### **Freedom of Information**

Since Freedom of Information legislation was introduced in 1997, there is a right of access to official records held by the Council, the right to have personal information held on them corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 application fees were abolished and the search, retrieval and copying fees reduced. **In 2017, 72 applications were received.**

### **Information Services/Media Requests**

The Section provides information services to the Elected Members, staff and media, monitors and updates our website in conjunction with IT Section. The section is also responsible for issuing media releases and coordinating responses to media queries. Among the publications produced are the Annual Report and the Corporate Plan, the current Plan expires in 2019.

### **Social Media Channels**

The Council continued to proactively use social media channels to communicate with our customers and promote local authority event and initiatives. The number of followers on the Council's social media channels continued to grow in 2017.

### **Customer Services**

The Customer Service desk in County Hall continues to provide front-line services to the public. In 2017 no formal customer complaints were received.

### **Emergency alerts**

Corporate Services works with Information Technology Section to coordinate and issue 'out of office' emergency alerts, particularly in relation to roads and water services.

### **Performance Indicators**

The council's performance is measured by a series of Performance Indicators, set nationally by the National Oversight and Audit Commission. While the indicators for 2017 are still being compiled, the indicators for 2016 are available on <http://noac.ie/noac-reports/>

### **International contacts/ Town Twinning**

While Sligo has signed three formal Twinning Agreements – with Crozon, Kempton and Tallahassee – it has developed a range of international contacts and regularly welcomes Ambassadors, dignitaries and other guests to County Hall and City Hall.

In 2017, Sligo County Council welcomed the Spanish and Austrian Ambassadors and hosted receptions for the NYPD Emerald Society and the Bergen Shipmasters Association Choir.

### **Corporate Policy Group**

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) consists of the Cathaoirleach and the Chairperson's of the SPC's and is supported by the Chief Executive. The role of the CPG includes advising and assisting the Elected Council in the formulation, development, monitoring and reviewing of policy for Sligo County Council. Full decision making power however remains with the Elected Council. The CPG met on 6 occasions in 2017.

### **Disability Consultative Committee**

Sligo County Council's Disability Consultative Committee was re-established as a sub-committee of the Authority's Housing and Corporate Strategic Policy Committee. Its main function is to advise the Local Authority on policies to improve services, and to make recommendations on disability proofing of policies, projects and actions. The Committee is made up of elected members, representatives of the disability sector and community organisations, and members of Council staff. The Committee met 4 times in 2017.

### **Joint Policing Committee**

The Garda Síochána Act 2005 provides for the establishment of a Joint Policing Committee in each Local Authority. The purpose of the Joint Policing Committee is to develop greater consultation, co-operation and accountability between An Garda Síochána, Local Authorities and elected members, with the participation of the Community and voluntary sector, on the management of policing issues. Revised Guidelines governing the operation of Joint Policing Committees were issued in August, 2014.

In accordance with the Guidelines, the Joint Policing Committee consists of 25 members, i.e. 13 elected members of the Council, 5 Oireachtas members, 2 Local Authority Officials, 2 nominees of the Garda Commissioner, and 6 Community nominees. The Committee met 4 times in 2017. The JPC has adopted a Strategic Plan 2017-2022 setting out the strategic priorities to be addressed during the life of the Plan. An Annual Action Plan was adopted which outlines actions for delivery on the strategic priorities.

### **Human Resources**

The Human Resources Department looks after all staffing related matters in Sligo County Council, e.g. recruitment, training, maintenance of personnel records, industrial relations, payroll, superannuation, time and attendance etc. It is also responsible for implementing statutory and non-statutory staff welfare policies and procedures and maintains stable industrial relations within the Organisation.

The HR Department works to create an equitable, consultative and supportive working environment within Sligo County Council.

### **Staff Recruitment**

2017 saw a significant number of posts being filled via internal and external competition with the regularisation of acting positions resulting in significant promotional opportunities for staff. Vacancies for open posts were advertised in the local and/or national press and also on the Sligo County Council and Local Government Jobs websites. In total, 52 recruitment competitions were held during the year and 139 posts were filled, 64 of which were filled by open competition.

### **Retirements**

During 2017, a total of 13 staff retired from the service of Sligo County Council.

### **Training and Development**

Sligo County Council is dedicated to providing relevant Training to all staff within its resources. Training activity in 2017 particularly focused on Health & Safety. Funding for training was also made available to the Council under the headings of Non-National Roads Grant, Water Services Grant and Environmental Grant and these were expended on relevant courses for staff working in those areas.

### **Industrial Relations**

It is the policy of the Human Resources Department to foster a good industrial relations climate and, in this regard, regular meetings take place between the HR Department and Union representatives/officials. The Council is committed to resolving IR issues as soon as possible once an issue arises in an open and co-operative manner.

### **Workforce Planning**

The Financial Plan for the period 2016 – 2019 sets out the various measures required to generate a surplus of €12.6m over the lifetime of the plan. Achievement of the required savings originally was largely predicated on reducing staff numbers to the end of 2019. A Draft Workforce Plan reflecting the requirements of the Financial Plan was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and to Trade Unions on 25th May, 2016.

Following intensive discussions with Unions, it became clear that this position was not sustainable, and in an attempt to achieve a more realistic and sustainable Plan, numerous discussions took place with Department Officials. Following these discussions, the Council submitted a Draft Workforce Plan to Unions which proposes maintaining staffing levels as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 by filling all permanent posts as they become vacant. This document has yet to be agreed with Unions, following agreement with Unions it will be submitted to the Department for their consideration.

### **Staff Welfare**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for formulating and implementing a range of policies and support mechanisms to help staff manage their work-life balance. The HR Department manages the Sick Leave Scheme and provides employee assistance when required, with the services of a full-time Staff Welfare Officer available to all staff. The Council has entered into an agreement with Health Assured to deliver Employee Assistance to all staff as required.

Details of all family friendly policies are available on the Council's intranet and many staff avail of these policies, which include Shorter Working Year Scheme, Parental Leave Scheme, Work Sharing Scheme, Career Breaks, Force Majeure Scheme, Bereavement Leave and Maternity and Paternity Leave.

### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

Sligo County Council also promotes the Cycle to Work Scheme and, in 2017; the Council assisted 12 employees to purchase bicycles under this Scheme.

## **Payroll**

The Human Resources Department is now responsible for the administration of Payroll in conjunction with MyPay. 3 No. Paygroups are paid on a fortnightly basis, Wages and Wages Pensions, Salary and Salary Pension and Monthly Fire Fighters.

## **Civil Defence**

Civil Defence under the leadership of the Civil Defence officer has 70 active volunteer members and 6 training centres throughout the county and train on an ongoing basis in skills specific to being in a position to provide assistance to the local 3 PRA's in an emergency situation.

Civil Defence also provided very valuable service to the community in providing first aid cover and safety boat assistance at events. During 2017, Civil Defence volunteers attended 142 events which included safety boat cover for 10 swims. The budget for Civil Defence was €124,000 which is grant aided by the Department of Defence. The Department of Defence allotted a grant of €9000 towards the refurbishment of the Civil Defence training centre located underneath the Government buildings in Cranmore which was completed in December 2017. Sligo Civil Defence also hope to source a vehicle suitable to have converted into a communications vehicle and Civil Defence branch will provide some costing towards this project.

## **Health & Safety**

Sligo County Council will continue to implement the provisions of the local authorities Safety Management Systems. This will be carried out by ongoing review of the current systems and implementation of the rigorous annual H&S Inspection programme. Communication and consultation with employees will be carried out and H&S training of employees will be facilitated as required. Employees will be supported to implement safe systems of work. Liaison with the HSA and other stakeholders will continue as appropriate.

# Planning, Community and Economic Development Directorate

## Development Planning Unit (DPU)

The Development Planning Unit is responsible for drafting planning and development policy for Sligo County and City, in consultation with the public, members, officials, prescribed bodies and other stakeholders. The Development Planning team also carries out research, advises on development proposals, facilitates plan implementation and participates in a range of initiatives, at both local and regional level.

## Achievements in 2017

The Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP), prepared under Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015, was adopted on 31 July 2017 and came into operation on 28 August 2017.

## National Planning Framework

During 2017, the DPU participated in consultation and prepared a pre-draft submission on the National Planning Framework, as well as a submission relating to the Draft NPF, published in September 2017.

### *Work planned for 2018*

The new CDP 2017-2023 includes general policies and objectives for the area of the former Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP), now incorporated as an appendix to the CDP. In accordance with forthcoming legislation, an Urban Area Plan will be prepared for Sligo Town and its Environs. Preliminary survey work and desktop research are already underway and an extensive period of pre-draft consultation is envisaged in early 2018.

## Development Management

The Planning section continues to manage development in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated Regulations.

For the first nine months of 2017 the number of planning applications received (389) is consistent with the same period for 2016. Pre-planning consultation interest has remained strong and it would be expected that 2018 will see a continuing increase in the number of planning applications received.

As part of government housing policy, and in compliance with requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, the process of establishing a vacant sites register commenced in 2017. Ongoing survey and monitoring work will continue throughout 2018 with a view to commencing the collection of vacant sites levies in 2020.

## Enforcement of Planning Control

The Enforcement Section's role in this area involves investigating all complaints from the public with regard to unauthorised development, random inspections of developments in progress, and dealing with prior to commencement conditions or conditions which have not been complied with. The Section conducts site visits and issues Warning Letters, serves Enforcement Notices and institutes legal proceeding, as appropriate.

Hereunder are some relevant details of activity for the period January 2017 – September 2017.

- 62 New Complaints Lodged
- 57 Warning Letters
- 17 Enforcement Notices
- 3 Prosecutions initiated
- 146 Complaints resolved through negotiation (These include complaints received prior to January 2017)
- 22 Complaints dismissed.

### **Collection of Development Contributions**

The Enforcement Section is responsible for the collection of development contributions. Staff resources continue to be allocated to ensure that contributions are paid in a timely manner and to follow up defaulters. The position in relation to the collection of arrears has improved significantly in the last year with this figure reduced to €1.3 million as at 30/06/17, down from €2.0 million as at 30/08/16. Most of the outstanding money is in respect of unsold new build property, mainly dwelling houses and will be paid in due course on the sale of the properties.

### **Unfinished Housing Developments**

Sligo County Council facilitated the building of a significant number of housing developments since 2000. A number of these developments were left unfinished. The Council has relied on its own existing Enforcement Section staff to address the issue. The satisfactory completion of these developments represents a significant challenge for the Section. Working with developers, Financial Institutions, Receivers and Residents is very time consuming but a lot of progress has been made over the last couple of years particularly with regard to the implementation of the Special Resolution Fund (SRF).

### **Taking Estates in Charge**

The expenditure sum provided under this heading relates to the costs to the Council in arranging for the carrying out of C.C.T.V. surveys of all main runs of foul and storm sewers in housing estates, as part of the taking in charge process. These Surveys are required in order to ensure satisfactory standards of construction. In the current year, the Council has been aided in its work by a significant allocation of funding through the National Taking in Charge Initiative (NTICI) from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for twelve developments.

## Heritage and Conservation Services

### *County Sligo Heritage Plan 2016-2020*

During 2017, Sligo Heritage Forum, in association with Sligo County Council and the Heritage Council, continued to oversee the implementation of the County Sligo Heritage Plan (2016-2020). The Heritage Plan seeks to protect, conserve, manage and promote the value of Sligo's heritage in recognition of its significant contribution to the quality of life of communities and the socio-economic development of the county.

An indicative budget of €850,000 is envisaged for the implementation of the third Heritage Plan for Sligo over a five year period, realising an annual programming budget of €170,000/annum (excluding staff costs). To date, a significant proportion of the funding for implementation of heritage plan actions has been provided by The Heritage Council through its County Heritage Plan Fund, with match funding being provided by Sligo County Council. Every opportunity will be taken to explore external and alternative funding streams for heritage projects, particularly under the Rural Development Programme, EU Structural Funds and new Peace IV Programme. In light of the above, the delivery of the third County Sligo Heritage Plan 2016-2020 will be subject to adequate resources being available to implement the strategic actions proposed.

The County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2015 which is a subset of the current Heritage Plan was not implemented during 2017 owing to budgetary restrictions. In light of the above, the delivery of the County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan in 2018 will be subject to resources being allocated to implement the actions proposed.

The following achievements were delivered through the Sligo Heritage Plan in 2017:

- *Heritage Week*
- *Ongoing conservation work to medieval churches in Local Authority care*
- *2 day visit of the Heritage Council board and staff to Sligo in June 2017*
- *Preparation of the Green Fort Conservation Plan*
- *Publication and launch of Archaeology Ireland Heritage Guides for the Cuil Irra Peninsula and the Spanish Armada Wrecks at Streedagh in partnership with OPW and the National Monuments Service*
- *Ongoing review of the Sligo Museum Project*
- *Ongoing involvement in the Sligo Creative Ireland programme as part of the Cultural Team and, the emerging Tourism Strategy as part of the Sligo Tourism Team.*
- *Co-ordination and provision of support to the County Sligo Placenames Committee.*

### **Green Fort Conservation Plan**

A budget allocation of €10,000 was provided in the 2017 estimates for the preparation a Conservation Plan for the Green Fort, Sligo. During 2017, it is intended that a budget of €20,000 will be made available to begin implementation of the policies and recommendations within the Conservation Plan.



It is recognised that in addition, external funding opportunities and resources will need to be sourced and allocated to implement the actions proposed in the plan.

### **Drumcliffe Conservation Plan**

The monastic site of Drumcliffe and the burial place of WB Yeats is perhaps, the most visited heritage site within County Sligo, with certainly over 100k visitors per annum. Over many years there have been discussions about how the site can be protected, how the rich story of Drumcliffe can be told and how better visitor management can be delivered across the site. It is a complex heritage site, with a number of interested parties. The County Sligo Heritage Plan [Action 16] and the recently adopted Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 contain objectives for the preparation of a conservation plan for the monastic site of Drumcliffe.

### **Conservation Services**

In 2017, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht allocated a total of €143,000 to Sligo County Council under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (€83,000 allocated across 16 projects) and the Structures at Risk Fund (€60,000 allocated across 3 projects). In 2017, the allocation of building conservation grants for protected structures will be subject to future funding announcements by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)

The concept of the Rural Economic Development Zones evolved to encourage a more tailored approach to economic planning at local level and to increase the level of local input in relation to the planning and delivery of agreed economic development initiatives. In 2016 Sligo Co. Co. was successful with applications for funding under the Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) and was approved an allocation of €800,000 from the Department of Arts, Heritage Regional Rural, Gaeltacht Affairs (now Dept. Rural and Community Development - DCRD) for the development of

<b>Flagship Project:</b>	IWAK, Airport Knock €400,000 (7 x Co Co's Partnership)
<b>Medium Project:</b>	National Mountain Biking Centre, Coolaney €200,000
<b>Local Project:</b>	Ballisodare-Collooney Recreational cycle linkage €100,000
<b>Local Project:</b>	Tobercurry: Enterprise Supports €100,000.

## Matching Funds

Funding has been provided under Matching Contributions for 2018 to allow the Council to benefit from opportunities that might arise to drawdown and match fund a number of grant schemes and programmes during the year. These include initiatives under tourism and recreational development, economic development, social inclusion, rural / community development etc.

## Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017 managed by DCRD, was created to support the revitalisation of towns and villages in order to improve the living and working environment of their communities and increase their potential to support increased economic activity into the future.

Sligo County Council has been successfully approved under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017 from DCRD in respect of 14 no. locations, as follows:

1. Achonry/ Lavagh
2. Ballisodare
3. Ballygawley
4. Ballymote
5. Banada
6. Bunnanadden
7. Carney
8. Carraroe
9. Coolaney
10. Easkey
11. Gurteen
12. Ransboro/Strandhill
13. Rosses Point
14. Tubbercurry

with an allocated sum of €1,063,000. Match funding in the sum of €67,000 has been allocated towards this scheme from Sligo County Council, with a further €67,000 contribution from successful local communities.

## Sports, Recreation and Play

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership are key to the delivery of the play and recreation strategy within the community. During the year, they supported a community sports programme which included:

*soccer, GAA programmes, youth cycling, after School activities etc. In particular projects were developed with partners such as Cranmore Regeneration and Healthy Ireland programme to maximise the opportunity to reach out to marginalised groups.*



Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership also focused on capacity building to develop local sustainable groups including the Sligo City Boxing Club involving 20 members, Sligo East City Walking Group involving 20 members, and most notably Sligo Lawn Bowls Club growing in members.

Sligo County Council, as part of the Local Authorities Play & Recreation Network participates in national initiatives such as National Play Day and National Recreation Week which receive funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Activities in Sligo as part of the National Play Day initiative cater for children up to 12 years. and is organised through the partnership of Sligo County Council, Sligo County Childcare Committee and Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership. Sligo County Council again in association with local agencies and organisations holds a week of recreation events for 12-18 year olds, in the summer, as part of the National Recreation Week initiative.

The Council assists with the management and maintenance of 4 community playgrounds at Ballymote, Riverstown, Ballinacarrow and Dromore West and secured funding in 2017 for upgrade works.

## Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme is part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development and will provide funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland.

Successful applications were secured under;

**Measure 1** – maintenance/promotion for 15 no. locations for €130,000

**Measure 3** – Large scale projects for 1 no. location for €840,000 National Mountain Biking Centre Coolaney on Coillte lands

**Measure 2** – not yet announced

Further funding opportunities will arise in 2018 under this funding stream which will be considered in collaboration with community groups and interested parties.

## The Beara Breifne Way Route

Also secured through the ORIS fund, the Beara-Breifne Way walking and cycling route is a walking

and cycling trail and, though it is as yet incomplete, it is the longest in Ireland. The application managed by the Heritage Council successfully secured funding to complete the route through Co. Sligo. Sligo County Council Infrastructure Dept. secured an award of €286,000 through the allocation of 20% own Roads Maintenance match funding, with BBW works to commence in 2018.

**Slish Wood Fire Damaged Boardwalk Repair**

Sligo County Council secured emergency funding of €54,000 from DRCD for the repair of the Sligo Way at Slish Wood to Killery (Lake Isle of Innisfree) following forest/gorse fires in May 2017. The works were completed in advance of the annual Sligo Camino walking festival on 1 July. Further works will continue into 2018 to further enhance this recreational amenity.



**Sligo County Council C. & E./L.E.O. Economic Development Unit**

is involved in a number of E.U. project proposals at present. Specifically, it has secured Interreg V Atlantic Area programme to develop a transnational cycle route – EuroVelo Route 1. The name of the project is “Atlantic on Bike (AoB)”.

The Eurovelo Route 1 is a transatlantic signed cycling route extending from Norway on through Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal. A provisional route has been identified. The Interreg V project proposes to develop the route with associated marketing, on line web and social media presence, audit of allied resources and capacity building. Sligo County Council will support development of route identification, signage and assist with audit of services research, marketing and digital resources.

Donegal and Mayo County Council are also committed to participate as project partners; therefore Sligo’s engagement on what will deliver a substantial linear element of the overall EuroVelo Route1 route forms a key component. Further emerging EU projects will be considered in 2018.



## Community & Economic Development

The Community & Economic Development section supports inter-agency strategic collaborative work with other organisations on a local and regional level in promoting and encouraging community and economic development within the County. It supports community organisations, encourages volunteerism and active citizenship, promotes Social inclusion including the youth and aged and provides a range of supports and grant aid to a community based and non-profit organisations.

### Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Sligo LCDC was established in 2014 under the Local Government Reform 2014 Act for the purposes of developing, co-ordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The committee is made up of representatives from the local government and local development sectors, public bodies and representatives of social, economic, environmental and community interests.

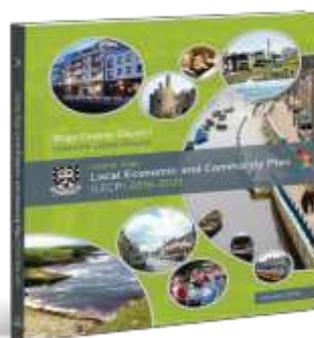


During 2017 and in 2018 the focus of the LCDC, together with its sub committees, will be to continue its overview of community and development activity in Sligo and in particular to review and monitor the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021. The committee's interagency structure and its oversight and monitoring role places it in a key position to collaborate with programmes such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, the Public Participation Network, Healthy Ireland, Communities facilities grants, Rapid Grants, and EU programmes such as the Peace IV Programme. Its function as the Local Action Group for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in Sligo will ensure it has a key role in the oversight of the delivery of the LEADER programme.

Some key actions in the LECP have been met with collaboration at a county level, in particular ensuring the set up of an Economic Forum and development of a Tourism Strategy for County Sligo.

### Local Economic Community Plan

The LECP provides a roadmap for collective action in relation to local economic and community development in County Sligo. The main features of the LECP are priority and high level goals and objectives, each of which are to be achieved through the implementation of specific, time bound and measurable Actions. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the LECPs' objectives and actions is critical in determining the success of the LECP.



The Lead Agency with responsibility for delivery on specific actions, have been submitting quarterly progress reports in relation to the implementation on this. The LECP is also subject to a midterm review wherein each individual action will be reviewed not just to monitor progress, but also to assess continued relevance and need for additions and amendments if necessary.

## Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a national programme which aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

The LCDC manages SICAP at a local level with support from Pobal and funding from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The SICAP Programme commenced in 2014 with SICAP 2014-2017 concluding and will continue into 2018 with the new iteration of the SICAP programme 2018-2022. Sligo LEADER Partnership Company has been delivering the programme on behalf of Sligo LCDC to date and the awarding of the new programme is currently under procurement.

The SICAP programme itself involves the provision of supports to marginalized individuals and groups and disadvantaged communities. Sligo County Council staff on behalf of the LCDC are responsible for administration of the contract and the preparation of monitoring and oversight reports. The proposed budget under the new programme for 2018 is similar to 2017 at €585,514.

## Rural Development Programme - LEADER



The Sligo LCDC is the Local Action Group (LAG) with the responsibility for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme (RDP/LEADER) working in partnership with Sligo County Council as Financial Partner and Sligo LEADER Partnership Company as Implementing Partner. The overall budget assigned to Sligo to implement its Local Development Strategy (2014-2020) is €7.6m.

The County Sligo Local Development Strategy outlines three main themes that were identified as overarching needs for the county and out of that fall nine sub-themes as follows:

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
<b>Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation</b>	<b>Social Inclusion</b>	<b>Rural Environment</b>
<b>Sub Themes</b>	<b>Sub Themes</b>	<b>Sub Themes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Services targeted at hard to reach communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection and sustainable use of water resources</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise Development</li> <li>• Rural Towns</li> <li>• Broadband</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Biodiversity</li> <li>• Renewable energy</li> </ul>
<b>€2.8m</b>	<b>€2m</b>	<b>€858,000</b>

In addition there is a sum of **€1.9m** provided in the LDS to cover the Administration, Support and Checking needed to deliver the strategy successfully.

Sligo is well advanced with the implementation of the programme with the first National completed project in Sligo i.e. the Ballinalack Community Park with a new Walking Track with a total grant amount of €124,386.52. This project was funded under the Social Inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation theme in the Basic Services for hard to reach communities sub theme.

#### **Communities Facilities Fund**

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a new €2m Communities Facilities Fund in March 2017 to enhance communities, address disadvantage and improve social cohesion at local level. Sligo LCDC was given €64,500 to help community groups. 132 Groups applied for funding under the scheme, with 82 groups successful. It is expected that this fund will be available in 2018.

#### **Support for the Community & Voluntary Sector**

The Community & Voluntary Grant Scheme covers a broad range of community activity in the county including support for community led local development. This Scheme supports community groups such as Tidy Towns Committees, Burial Ground Committees, Festival Committees and Organizers of International / National and Local Events in promoting their area and the county in general. The grant scheme creates a great opportunity for communities to benefit from an income source to allow them implement programmes, carry out projects and activities at a local level that otherwise would not be possible. The combination of this fund along with a strong volunteering ethos provides for a “bottom- up” approach to local development and participation. A budget of €100,000 was provided in 2017.

## Public Participation Network (PPN)

Sligo Public Participation Network has had a successful and active year through its Secretariat, Colleges and Linkage groups putting in place supports and structures to strengthen the capacity of the community and voluntary sector in Sligo to make a real contribution in decision and policy making.



*Members of Sligo PPN Secretariat and Staff of Sligo County Council with Minister of State, Sean Kyne, T.D. October 2017*



*Delegates in attendance at the PPN Conference – October 2017 in Sligo*

There are 486 groups registered with Sligo PPN. Of these 310 are from the Sligo MD and 176 from the Ballymote /Tubbercurry MD. 419 are registered with the Community & Voluntary College, 50 with the Social Inclusion College and 17 with the Environmental College.

Sligo PPN, supported by Sligo County Council staff, hosted the first National PPN Conference in the Clayton Hotel on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 with over 200 delegates in attendance representing PPNs, Local Authorities and a variety of groups from around the country. The Conference was officially opened by Sean Kyne, T.D., Minister of State for Community Development, Natural Resources and Digital Development. The Conference also highlighted Sligo's designation as EVC 2017.

Current activity include Elections to renew membership on a number of committees, development of an induction and support programme for Reps and Linkage groups and a new website

## The Sligo Economic Forum

2017 saw the putting in place of the Sligo Economic Forum (SEF) which convened on 5 occasions in 2017. Current membership consists of representation from senior Sligo County Council officials, Cathaoirleach of SCC and Chair of SPC3, LEO, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Chamber of Commerce, IT Sligo, Fáilte Ireland, St. Angela's College, NWRA, and representatives from private Business and Farming sectors. The Chair of the SEF is Aaron Forde, CE Aurivo Co-Op Society Ltd. The agenda to be considered covers such areas as role, function, National Planning Framework, 10 pt Action Plan and Branding of Sligo.

## Tourism Development and the County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

2017 saw the development of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy which was developed collaboratively by Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council. It aims to be an inclusive and strategic roadmap that will guide the development and direction of the industry in the county. The development of the plan commenced in mid 2017 and involved research and engagement with key stakeholders via themed focus groups and submissions from the wider public. As a result of the process, the Strategy will go for approval in 2018.

Sligo County Council's ongoing collaboration with Sligo Tourism Ltd. and the broad range of stakeholders engaged in the promotion and development of County Sligo as a premier tourism visitor destination continued in 2017. This targeted and collaborative approach will harness

public and private resources to support Sligo's aim to develop as a key tourism destination situated on the Wild Atlantic Way.

The continuing investment in tourism infrastructure and the growth in visitor numbers acts as an economic driver to the region, while also reinforcing important social and cultural benefits locally.

The Council recognises the value of the Wild Atlantic Way's branding and success which can attract improved visitor numbers continues to the area, as a result. Sligo has seven Discovery Points along the route; Enniscrone, Easkey, Aughris, Strandhill, Rosses Point, Streedagh and Mullaghmore. Mullaghmore has 'Signature Discovery Point' status, allied to its spectacular seascape backdrop, 'Big Wave' surfing phenomenon, Classibawn Castle and Ben Bulbin mountain backdrop. Improvements will continue at these locations to ensure the visitor experience is consistent with other WAW locations. A Visitor Destination Management Plan will be pursued in consultation with Fáilte Ireland at our Signature Discovery Point in 2018.

A successful application was submitted to Fáilte Ireland's Large Tourism Projects Capital Scheme for Stage 1 (Development Stage) for €60,000 to investigate the development of a Cultural Plaza/Civic Space in Stephen St. Car Park including the Lady Ann Walk in 2018.

### **Festivals & Events**

Many festival events that took place during the year delivered significant additional numbers of visitors to the county and region. Following the success of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann over 2014 and 2015 Sligo Festivals continue to attract large numbers with Sligo County Council, in co-operation with Fáilte Ireland, is to the fore in supporting organisations in their efforts. Among the many successful events supported are Sligo Live, Tubbercurry Old Fair Day, the Yeats Tread Softly festival in combination with the International Yeats Summer School, Heritage Week, International Choral Festival, Strandhill Warrior's Run, and Enniscrone Black Pig Festival, to mention but a few. Events are proven to attract visitors to the region and many will continue and grow into 2018.

### **Adventure Tourism**

Adventure products continue to grow in popularity and Sligo County Council support many exciting opportunities throughout the year including, Maritime Centre redevelopment at Strandhill, Off-road national Mountain Biking Centre on the Ox mountains near Coolaney in conjunction with Coillte and the pursuit of two cycleway Greenways:

- recreational walking/cycle trail along the SLNCR (Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway) from Sligo to Enniskillen in Co. Fermanagh. Work is on-going in preparation of a funding application involving, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan Councils for the SLNCR,
- recreational walking/ cycle trail along the Western Greenway from Collooney to Bellaghy, along the closed Western Railway Corridor in Co. Sligo. A technical feasibility study will be undertaken on the Western Greenway in conjunction with Sligo Greenway Co-op. Additional opportunities will be investigated including expansion of recreational access to Lough Gill for water based activities.

A successful application to Dept. of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, now Dept. Rural and Community Development secured €130,000 towards continued ongoing trail

developments works at various locations throughout Co. Sligo.

### **County Diaspora Strategy 2018-2022**

It is widely recognised that Diaspora engagement is a critical component in local economic, social and community development in Ireland as outlined in “*Global Irish – Irelands Diaspora’s Policy*”. As well as reaching out to the Diaspora on a national level there is potential for local communities and counties in Ireland to reach out to their own Diaspora and build new relationships, to benefit local and regional development.

It is an action in the Sligo Local Economic Community Plan 2016-2021 to develop ways of linking with our Diaspora to build mutually beneficial linkages through networks and involvement of other agencies. (Action 1.6.1 – 1.6.5)

Sligo County Council is in the process of developing a strategy for the county which will set out a detailed road map for Diaspora engagement at local level. In the context of the Strategy, Diaspora is defined as individuals who have their origins/roots in Sligo.

The elements around which the Diaspora Engagement Strategy will be developed are:

(i) Economic Development and Job Creation; (ii) Arts, Heritage and Culture; (iii) Tourism and Genealogy; (iv) Sports and Community. It is intended that the strategy will be completed in Quarter 3 of 2018.

### **Pride of Place**

Local communities throughout the county are encouraged to showcase their achievements and have participated in the IPB Pride of Place competition held in association with Co-operation Ireland since its inception in 2004. Entries are accepted in either population categories or single issue categories and Sligo County Council supports entrants in their preparation for and during judging day. The competition fosters community participation and highlights the importance of communities working together to create civic pride in their area. In 2017 Tubbercurry and Enniscrone represented the county in the competition.

### **Healthy Ireland**

‘Healthy Ireland’, a Framework for improved Health & Wellbeing 2013-2025’ is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of Ireland over the coming generation. In 2017 the Government approved the creation of a Healthy Ireland Fund with an initial allocation of €5 million to support the implementation of its objectives in a practical way such as through alignment with specific objectives contained in Local Economic & Community Plans LECP’s. Up to €100,000 is available to each LCDC for ‘funding to commence, progress and/or strengthen relevant actions in their Local Economic & Community Plans, LECP’s’. With SCC as co-ordinator Lead Agencies responsible for delivering on such actions were approved in 2017 to proceed with 10 projects, to the value of €96,500.



### **Recast Rapid Scheme**

In November 2017, Minister Michael Ring, T.D, announced the launch of the recast RAPID scheme with an allocation of €64,500 in Capital funding per Local Authority. The scheme focuses on supporting capital projects that would improve the quality of life for residents in disadvantaged urban and town areas. Unlike the previous RAPID programme(s), this new programme is not restricted to specific areas of designated

towns and cities, but rather is directed to all urban communities and towns in a Local Authority area. A total of 15 applications were approved and funded under the scheme in 2017. Following consideration by the MDs and LCDC.

**PEACE IV**

County Sligo is to benefit from a funding award of €860,505 from the PEACE IV Programme which is administered by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



The PEACE IV Programme is being implemented by Sligo County Council through the LCDC. To facilitate the development and implementation of the PEACE IV Programme, the LCDC established the PEACE IV Sub Committee. Projects and initiatives for delivery will fit under three specific themes, namely:

- Children and Young People;
- Shared Spaces & Services; and
- Building Positive Relations.

The PEACE IV Programme will be implemented during 2018 and 2019, building on the success of previous PEACE programmes. The Small Grants Fund will provide funding support for community led peace building initiatives throughout the County. The Peace IV Programme Team, consisting of Programme Manager and Administrator, is in place to manage the implementation and administration of the Programme.



Above - Members of Sligo Peace IV Sub Committee of the LCDC with officials of Sligo County Council pictured at Official Launch of PEACE Programme, with Linda Ervine, Turas Project East Belfast Mission, guest Speaker, and Brenda Hegarty, Special EU

## Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is first-stop-shop for those entrepreneurs starting a small business or expanding an existing one. It provides an integrated support service centred on the needs of small businesses from the Council's offices in City Hall (from which many of its training supports are delivered directly to clients). Supports provided include training, mentoring, financial assistance, advice, counselling and promotion of an enterprise culture (including through programmes run in schools). It provides a key role in signposting clients to the Council's other business-related services and to business-related services operated by other agencies.



The LEO also assists broader economic development through for example the advancement of tourism, workspace, city centre development activities and membership of relevant local development bodies such as Sligo Business Improvement District (of which Councillor O'Grady and the Head of Enterprise are both directors), the Sligo Local Community Development Committee and the Economic Forum. At a cross border and international level its current activities in this regard include sourcing/partnering for external funding e.g. "Target" – a manufacturing programme involving the LEO and various organisations in other EU Member States and Co-Innovate across border programme with Inter Trade Ireland as lead partner geared towards promoting business efficiency and cross-border trade.

Furthermore, the LEO is heavily involved in the Ireland West International Trade Centre project with five other western local authorities, the Western Development Commission and Ireland West International Airport. Its objective include assisting selected clients gain a foothold in the American market, tourism development, building connections etc.

The LEO also promotes the European Enterprise Network initiative, under which businesses are facilitated in making international connections.

The Office is also involved in driving a number of Government initiatives locally.

For example, it remains heavily involved with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in the delivery of its ICT vouchers programme and in the delivery of the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur Programme on behalf of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation. It works closely with Micro Finance Ireland on promotion of its loan offering to small businesses. The office has been very successful in attracting REDZ and other funding which has and continues to enable a broad range of projects in the areas of rural recreation, town and village enhancement and improvements to vantage points along the Wild Atlantic Way.

A significant element of the LEO's micro enterprise funding is provided by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and channelled through Enterprise Ireland, which also provides key back up expertise and assistance.

## Sligo Arts Service

### Sligo Arts Service & Programme 2017

In 2017 Sligo Arts Service delivered its core service and programme as outlined below.

#### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

County Sligo Youth Theatre delivered weekly workshops to 100 young people and produced four shows featuring different age groups.

The Primary Colours visual arts programme for Primary schools was delivered to 500 children in 17 schools around the county.

2,600 children took part in the Discovering Music Programme provided by Music Generation Sligo which is supported by its partner, Sligo County Council.

#### ARTS AND HEALTH AND OLDER PEOPLE

The ongoing annual programme of arts and health work was delivered in partnership with the HSE West Services for Older People and Health Promotion, in care settings throughout the county.

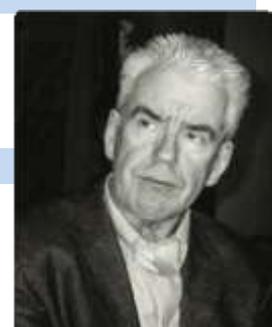
The Bealtaine Festival featured a special commission by Breda Burns, celebrating the contribution of Sligo people to developing the arts in the County since 1970s. The commission was the result of collaboration between Age & Opportunity, Mayo County Council and Sligo County Council.

#### COMMUNITY ARTS AND ARTISTS

Training has been delivered to artists to work in the community and to support themselves through financial and tax advice.

#### MUSIC

A new work by Gerald Barry was commissioned by Sligo County Council and RTE Sligo and premiered at the International Festival of Chamber Music which was recorded by RTE.



#### FILM

A survey of the local professional film sector has been completed and a location Manager's Tour has been organised by Sligo, Mayo and Roscommon County Arts Offices who are collaborating on a joint film development strategy.

#### PUBLIC ART

Twelve ceramic sculptures were installed in Nazareth Care Village, commissioned by Sligo County Council under the title Pathway.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARTS GRANTSSCHEME

Grants were awarded under the scheme – see appended list.

Re f No	Festival or Event	Awarded 2017 (€)
1	Sligo Orpheus Choir, Hazel wood, Sligo.	900
2	Feis Ceoil	7,000

3	Wild Atlantic Shanty Festival	1,000
4	Yeats International Summer School	4,000
5	Western Drama Festival	6,000
6	Feis Shligigh	7,000
7	Coleman Traditional Festival	1,000
8	Con Brio	2,000
9	Baroque Orchestra/IMA	1,100
10	County Fleadh	5,000
11	Tread Softly	2,000
12	Sligo Traditional Singing Circle	2,000
13	Cairde Arts Festival	6,000
14	Ballintogher Traditional Music Festival	1,500
15	Morrison Festival	1,500
16	Sligo Live	10,000
17	Shore Shots	1,000
18	Havin a Laugh	1,000
19	Baroque Festival	1,000
20	Cos Cos	2,000
21	Sligo Intercultural Forum	1,000
		<b>64,000</b>

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Organisation / Venue</b>	<b>Awarded 2017 (€)</b>
1	Michael Coleman Centre	3,000
2	Hyde Bridge Gallery	2,100
3	The Hawk's Well	45,000
4	Sligo Jazz Project	5,000
5	The Model	93,000
6	Blue Raincoat	30,000
7	Concert Band	3,500
8	Branching Out	1,500
9	Pipe Band	3,000
		<b>186,100</b>

## European Volunteering Capital 2017

Sligo has had a wonderful opportunity to showcase its County and its people as part of the year long events associated with this designation. This started with the major Gala Concert and launch held in the Knocknarea Arena in January 2017 hosted by Sligo County Council where it celebrated with music and images the strengths and achievements of Sligo and its volunteers. The year continued with highlights at the St. Patrick's Day Parade, specific events and conferences coming to Sligo, Award ceremonies, Virtual clock capturing volunteer hours, Corporate volunteering, PPN conference, Churches Together celebrating volunteering, to mention but a few.



The EVC designations allowed Sligo recognise and reflect upon the valuable wealth of voluntary activity that exists across all spectrums throughout the county.

The Year closed with a celebratory event at City Hall on 1st December where the Cathaoirleach hosted a reception for attended by guests and dignitaries from the County, Region and Nationally as well as overseas to mark the end of a significant year for Sligo. As well as witnessing the passing of the title of European Volunteering Capital for 2018 to Aarhus, Denmark, the event will announced the winner of the European Volunteering Capital for 2019 as Koisc, Slovakia. Minister Charlie Flanagan T.D., addressed a packed City Hall Chamber as key note speaker and guests were treated to an hour of a specially commissioned compilation of Sligo Music for the occasion directed by Michael Rooney entitled 'As Láimha le Chéile'. To add to the festive occasion a specially commissioned Volunteering and Community themed Light Show was delivered onto City Hall following the ceremony to mark the final close and handover of the designation to Denmark.





## Sligo Library Service and Museum

### *Operation of Library and Archival Service*

In addition to the many literary, educational and cultural heritage services which are carried out as core services for Sligo County Council's Library service the following highlight the additional range and diversity of events and services which were provided by the County Council's Libraries throughout the County in 2017.

### **Creative Ireland 2017**

The Creative Ireland programme is the Government's Legacy programme from Ireland 2016 and commences a five year initiative which places creativity at the centre of public policy.

In 2017, as part of the Creative Ireland brief, Sligo County Council put in place three key deliverables. The first was a public Consultation process which was attended by over 180 people while the second was a Countywide event entitled "Cruinniú na Cásca" which was a series of cultural events which were commissioned, programmed and to be held on Easter Monday and finally Sligo County Council's Culture Team produced a Culture and Creativity Plan for 2017 which planned and delivered over 25 culture and creativity events throughout the year.



### **Oíche Nollag na mBan 2017**

On January 6th led by Mayor of Sligo Cllr. Marie Casserly an evening of musical entertainment, a lecture and an exhibition of artwork by local artist Emma Stroude were held to celebrate Oíche Nollag na mBan in City Hall, Sligo.

### **New Library Management System**

The Sierra Library Management System was introduced on March 1st 2017. There is now one joint library catalogue for the whole of Ireland and the new system manages the issuing and return of all stock, the catalogue/database, internet interface, digitised material, online material, self check kiosks and library membership records. Sligo library members are now enabled to borrow lending items from libraries all over the country from a much larger collection which is facilitated by a distribution service which collects and delivers items to each branch library twice weekly.

### **Literary event - The Readers' Voice**

In April, as part of the 'Six Libraries, Six Authors' series, Anne Enright, current Laureate for Irish Fiction interviewed author Claire Kilroy in Ballymote Community Library. Claire read from her novel 'The Devil I Know' and engaged with a number of Bookclub members from around the county. The event was hugely popular and was streamed live on YouTube.



### **Right to Read Programme**

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DoHPCLG), in conjunction with Libraries Development in the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), has activated a *Right to Read* Programme for each local authority. The *Right to Read* Programme is an initiative under 'Opportunities for All, A Strategy for Public Libraries' to deliver more systematic literacy support at local level, identifying

a standard service offer and bringing together the knowledge and experience of skilled staff in local authority services and local agencies. The programme seeks to support literacy development for children, parents and adults by bringing together local authorities and those local bodies involved in supporting literacy and reading development as part of a locally coordinated, sustainable and standard approach to these services in the community.



### **Summer Stars**

Over 1,200 children registered for the Summer Stars Reading Programme in County Sligo. The programme, which supports reading development included a range of events and activities over the Summer months including themed storytelling events, Art & Craft weekly Workshops, Book Doctor Clinics, Coding Workshops, Board Games, Puppet Theatres, Music events and comic book-making workshops.



### **Bibliotherapy**

Sligo Library Service continued its collaborative working relationship with the HSE Psychology Services Department in Sligo on a Bibliotherapy/Social Prescribing Project. The project started out as an attempt to provide alternative sources of help, particularly in the field of mental health, other than from mental health professionals. Over 200 books of the best evidence-based titles held by the library were reviewed (this included both adult and children's titles), these books were graded by the Psychology Team, Recommended reading lists were compiled and information leaflets regarding the project were created. Both were uploaded to Sligo Library website and HSE website and were circulated to psychologists, GPs, primary care clinics, mental health professionals, teachers and social workers.

### **Europe Direct**

Sligo EDIC: A number of exhibitions were held throughout the year. Tubbercurry Community Library welcomed the 'Art Deco Expo'- the third exhibition to come to Ireland from the Paul Hankar Institute of Brussels under the auspices of the Irish in Europe Association Cultural Exchange programme. Sligo was selected as a partner region in recognition of its achievement in being awarded the status of 2017 EVC. The 'Art Deco Expo' which is part of a Paul Hankar Institute student project at Tubbercurry sets out the origins, influences and principles of Art Deco in the early 1900's and its evolution as major form of architecture with stunning supporting visuals and motifs. This exhibition was launched on Friday 12th May at 7pm in Tubbercurry Community Library by Cathaoirleach Cllr Dara Mulvey. Mr Denis Buckley 'Irish in Europe' gave a small talk/lecture on developing business and tourism links between Belgium & Ireland.

### **An exhibition entitled 'Ever Closer Union'**

The legacy of the Treaties of Rome for today's Europe (1957-2017)' was displayed in Ballymote

Community Library. This exhibition was launched by Mr. Tim Hayes, head of Communications and Information for the EU Commission in Ireland. 3rd year Students from Colaiste Mhuire in Ballymote were in attendance.

### **EDIC Sligo**

In June, EDIC Sligo welcomed visitors from EDIC's in Estonia & Lithuania organising events for their stay in Sligo and arranging a reception in City Hall by Cathaoirleach Cllr Hubert Keaney.



### **Tubbercurry Community Library**

Tubbercurry Community Library was the venue for an exhibition provided by the German Embassy entitled 'Drawing Freely'. The exhibition, which ran for a week at the beginning of March was enhanced by a talk on the subject of democracy which was given by a representative from the German Embassy to a number of students from local schools.

### **Presentation – '60 years since the Treaty of Rome - 60 years of Europe'**

In March 2017, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of The Treaty of Rome, Mr. Ingo Espenschied, a Political Scientist and Lecturer gave a multimedia presentation entitled '60 years since the Treaty of Rome - 60 years of Europe' which outlined the convoluted history of Europe's last six decades and looking ahead to the future.

### **Libraries celebrate European Volunteering Capital**

To celebrate Sligo as the 2017 European Volunteering Capital, Sligo Library Service EDIC organised a schools debate between a team from Sligo Grammar School and Mercy College Sligo. It was held in Sligo Council's Chamber with Cathaoirleach Cllr Hubert Keaney opening the event. The motion for debate was 'This House Believes that Volunteering Does Make a Difference'. The judging panel consisted of Mayor Marie Casserly, Mr Ronnie Gillanders (Inishfree Toastmasters) and Ms Kathya Rouse (SVC). Whilst the judges conferred MEP Matt Carthy who was in attendance spoke to the assembled audience about the importance of volunteering and his role as an MEP. The event also marked the launch of the new EVC library membership card which commemorates Sligo's role as the EVC 2017. These special edition library cards were made available to all new members throughout the Sligo Library branch network immediately after the event.

### **ESC (European Solidarity Corp) – Coffee Morning**

In May 2017, EDIC Sligo hosted a coffee morning in association with the Sligo Volunteer Centre (SVC). The aim of the coffee morning was (i) to promote the ESC (European Solidarity Corp) an initiative which creates opportunities for young people (18 - 30 yrs old) to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe & (ii) to promote the Sligo Volunteer Centre and the works its undertaking in conjunction with Sligo being designated the European Volunteer Capital for 2017.

### **Archives**

Ongoing work was carried out on the Archives of Sligo County Council both in the Architect's section along with training of Sligo County Council staff in the Roads section.

### **County Museum**

The visitor figures for Sligo County Museum continued to show an increase both in terms of

visitor numbers and also the range of nationalities with increases in both Canadian and German visitors in 2017.

In 2017, the County Museum held two special exhibitions. The first exhibition commemorated the 100th anniversary of the death of W G Wood-Martin the renowned Sligo local historian and archaeologist who died in November 1917. The second exhibition was sourced from Clare County Libraries and narrated and highlighted the historical importance of the East Clare by election of 1917. Both exhibitions were well received and were attended by visitors to Sligo along with local second level students.

## Infrastructure, Environment and Fire Services Directorate Roads, Transportation and Safety

### Non National Roads

#### *Restoration Improvement Grant:*

An allocation of €4,015,676 was provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the restoration improvement of Regional and Local Roads. Some 43km of roads at 58 locations throughout the County were programmed to be improved under this grant heading.

The types of work carried out included:

- Laying bitumen macadam surfacing to shape and strengthen the roads followed by surface dressing.
- Laying crushed stone to shape and strengthen the road and double surface dressing the stone to seal the road surface and provide skid resistance.
- Recycling – this was done where there were adequate stone already in the road structure but the road had disintegrated (typically used in bog road locations).
- Replacement of road markings.



### Restoration Maintenance Grant

A grant of €1,130,327 was provided in 2017 for surface dressing to Regional and Local roads. This programme included the surface dressing of approximately 55km of roads at 52 locations throughout County Sligo.



### Discretionary Grant

A discretionary grant of €2,799,496 was allocated in 2017 for improvement and maintenance works on Regional and Local Roads in County Sligo. These funds were in general used for regional road maintenance, road repairs, winter maintenance and bridge maintenance.

### Strategic Regional and Local Roads

A grant of €300,000 was allocated for the Eastern Garavogue River Bridge Project and a grant of €100,000 was allocated for the Western Distributor Road in 2017

### Safety Improvement Works

A grant of €150,000 for schemes was obtained in 2017 at the following locations:

- R284-Geevagh,
- L5805-0 Ballinafad,
- R297-Enniscrone,
- R293-Ballymote,
- R294-Dubaile-Cloonloo,
- L1502-0 Clonlurg,
- R294-Tubbercurry,
- R292-Strandhill Road and
- R296-Ballymote.

## Bridge Rehabilitation

The Department Of Transport continued to provide support for bridge works and the grant was increased in 2017 to €293,000, for 8 bridges. The grant was carefully spent to provide a high standard of repairs, some to conservation standard maximising resources, with zero consultant fees as all the analysis, design, management, and supervision is carried out in-house. Additionally it was necessary to replace a small bridge at Glendarragh.

Substantial bridge repairs were carried out at:

- Shooting Lodge Bridge – Lough Easkey
- Knockroe Bridge – Geevagh
- Knocknageeha Bridge – Bunnanaden
- Cloondrahara West Bridge – Cloonacool
- Rathmadder(Lisbaleely) Bridge – Gurteen
- Crawhill Bridge – Foyoges
- Gortygara Bridge – west of Gurteen R294

A number of other bridges were also repaired around the county, using discretionary funds including Annagh Bridge, Donaghintrainne Bridge, Gaddan Bridge and Cloonmull culvert.



**Shooting Lodge Bridge – Lough Easkey Road  
(Repaired and strengthened)**



**Traditional bridge repairs at Knockroe, near  
Geevagh**



**Repairs work underway to Lisdaleely (Rathmadder) Bridge, near Gurteen.**



*Donaghintraine Bridge, spanning the Dunneill River near Dromore West on the Wild Atlantic Way. The highest bridge in the county and on a lovely nature trail, running along the river bank; the 200 years old structure was re-pointed and repaired to conservation standards earlier in 2017.*

#### **Other works**

In addition to the above, Roads department personnel oversee the following works:

- Public lighting management and maintenance
- Weed Control inc. treatment of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed etc.
- Traffic management including traffic signal management & maintenance
- Assist tidy towns/clean coast and other voluntary/ community groups
- Road Openings
- Planning control/inspections & pre-planning meetings
- Beach maintenance inc. lifebuoy provision & inspections
- Dangerous structures
- Cemetery Maintenance
- Town and village cleaning & upkeep/waste management.

## National Road Major Road Schemes

### Sligo National Roads Project Office

The Sligo National Roads Project Office (Sligo PO) is responsible for the delivery of all Major and Minor National Road improvement and realignment Schemes in County Sligo.

The following are the Schemes currently being developed by the Sligo PO and the progress on the Schemes to the end of 2017.

#### N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Road Development Scheme

Following An Bord Pleanála's confirmation of the EIS and CPO for this Scheme in July 2014, the Sligo PO has continued to progress the development of the Scheme. The Sligo PO Team are Project Managing the Scheme and were also the Lead Road Designers and (Project Supervisor Design Phase) PSDP for the Scheme up to and including the Statutory Process and completion of the Advance Works.

Following the issuing of the Notices to Treat and Notices to Enter to affected landowners in 2015, the Advance Works progressed, and all site works were completed by the end of 2017. These included significant Archaeological Testing, Ground Investigation (G.I), Service Diversions (ESB and Telecoms), including the tower construction for a 220kv power line, Permanent Fencing, Topographical Survey and Building Demolition.

Significant progress was made with land purchase in 2017, with agreement reached on 110 of the total number of 135 Land Acquisition cases, by the end of the year. 105 Accommodation Works Agreements were signed by the end of 2017.

Following completion of a Tender process, Consultants CH2M Barry were appointed in May 2017 to prepare the Specimen Design and Contract documents for the procurement of the Construction Works Contractor. The Form of Contract is Design/Build (D/B). The Tender process commenced at the end of 2017 and will continue into 2018 with a view to Sligo County Council being in a position to award the Construction Contract in Q4 2018.

The Scheme is included as a 'key investment priority' project in the Government's published Capital Investment Programme 2016-2022. The estimated overall scheme cost is €100m and when developed will be the biggest infrastructural project to be undertaken in Sligo in modern times.



*Fencing along the Collooney to Castlebaldwin Scheme*



*Archaeological Trenches along the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Scheme  
Footprint*

### **N16 Lugatobber**

In 2017, the Sligo PO progressed the Route Selection process for the N16 and a Preferred Route was selected in June 2017 from the Abbvie Roundabout to the County Boundary with Leitrim. This enabled the commencement of the development of a Minor Scheme on the N16 at

Lugatobber. The Sligo PO are Project Managing this Scheme and are also the Lead Road Designers and PSDP for the Scheme. The Preliminary Design and Statutory Document preparation for this 2.5km Scheme were advanced in 2017. This involves procuring and managing a number of Environmental and Engineering Specialists to feed into Environment Reports and the Scheme Design, all of which are prepared by the Sligo PO Design Team. Landowner Liaison will play a large part in this body of work. The Topographical Survey was completed in 2017 and the G.I. Contractor was procured. It is planned to publish the Statutory Documents in 2018.

### **N4/N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme**

Following on from the N4 Hughes Bridge Widening Scheme, the N4/N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme is the next section being developed by the Sligo PO. This Section commences at the northern end of the Hughes Bridge Widening Scheme and finishes north of the Rosses Point junction.

The Sligo PO are Project Managing this Scheme and have engaged Jacobs Engineering to carry out the detail design and prepare the Statutory Process documents required. The Scheme will include upgrading the National Primary Road from the northern end of Hughes Bridge to north of the Rosses Point junction, along with the upgrade of the Rosses Point, Duct Street and Markievicz Road Junctions. The Copper River Bridge will be upgraded as part of the works also. A new Traffic Management System will be designed and upgraded to an Urban Traffic Control System.

The Preliminary Design and Statutory Documents, including Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) were published in July 2017. An Oral Hearing was held in November 2017. The Detailed Design and Contract Document preparation commenced at the end of 2017, and subject to Planning consent and TII approval, Sligo County Council expect to be in a position to Tender for Scheme Construction in 2018.

### ***N59 Corhownagh to Lugnadeffa Road Improvement Scheme***

Feasibility and Constraint Studies commenced in 2017 for the development of a Realignment Scheme on the N59, between Corhownagh and Lugnadeffa. The Sligo PO are Project Managing this Scheme and are also the Lead Road Designers and PSDP for the Scheme.



### **N17 to Sligo**

### ***N17 Tubbercurry Bypass/N17 Collooney–Tubbercurry***

Both these Schemes were suspended a number of years ago when at Stage 4 of the 7 Stages in the T.I.I. Project Management Guidelines.

It would be expected that the N17 Scheme(s) - N17Collooney to Tobercurry (13.4km), N17 Tobercurry By-Pass (11.2 km) as well as the N17 Tobercurry By-Pass to Knock By-Pass should be resurrected in light of their importance on the Atlantic Economic Corridor and following the opening of the Gort to Tuam Motorway and Tuam By-Pass.

The Sligo Project Office would be very well placed with the expertise and successful track record in developing a similar Scheme (N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin), to develop these Schemes in-house. We are continuing to keep these schemes under discussion in our regular meetings with the TII.

### ***Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species***

Invasive alien species (IAS) are species that are initially imported through human activities outside of their natural range across ecological barriers, and then survive, reproduce and spread, and have negative impacts on the ecology of their new location as well as serious economic and social consequences.

In 2016, the Sligo PO managed the procurement process for the appointment of a contractor to treat and eradicate Japanese and other Knotweed species and Gunnera Tinctoria (Giant Rhubarb) along the National Roads in County Sligo. This Contract is for a three year period, with treatment taking place in September/October each year. The Contract, which is being managed by the Sligo NRPO, will conclude at the end of 2018, following three years of treatment. The second year's treatment took place in September 2017.

## **Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution**

To manage water and waste water services from 2014, Irish Water developed service level agreements (SLAs) with all Local Authorities. All costs associated with Irish Water activity are recouped in full and the related income figures are also reflected in the Draft Budget Figures. The Council continues to bear the costs of operation of public conveniences and administration costs associated with group water scheme operations.

### **Catchment Management**

The principal piece of legislation relating to protection of surface water, groundwater, tidal and coastal water quality in Ireland is the E.U. Water Framework Directive. The first cycle of implementation of the Water Framework Directive is now complete and implementation of the second cycle has commenced. Under the second cycle of implementation of the Water Framework Directive, one national river basin district management plan has been prepared for the Republic of Ireland. The plan was adopted by the Minister in April 2018. The national plan includes a Programme of Measures aimed at achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. The second cycle of implementation of the Water Framework Directive includes a focus on improving water quality within specific priority catchments, a number of which are located within the functional area of Sligo County Council. The four key priority objectives in the national river basin district management plan are protection of existing high status waters, prevention of deterioration of status, compliance with the objectives for protected areas and compliance with the wide range of existing water quality protection legislation already in place in the Republic of Ireland.

The current focus on implementation of the national plan may potentially place increased demands on the Environment Section resources. Nationally, the emphasis is on integrated catchment management and relates primarily to the following specific areas of work, which will continue to be prioritised during 2018.

- Licensing and enforcement of trade and domestic effluent discharges to waters under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 as amended.
- Assessing planning proposals for domestic, commercial, agricultural and forestry developments in terms of environmental impact, with particular reference to protection of water quality.
- Implementation of the National Inspection Plan for domestic wastewater treatment systems as published by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Implementation of Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters.
- Implementation of the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017 (S.I. no. 605 of 2017, as amended).
- Complaint and query response relating to general environmental, water quality and planning related issues.

### **Drinking Water**

The quality of drinking water in Ireland is governed by the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014. All public water supplies and regulated Group Water Schemes will be monitored in 2018, in accordance with statutory requirements and those set by Irish Water where relevant. Legislation defines what parameters are tested, and the monitoring frequency. Sligo County Council will continue to act as the supervisory authority in relation to the provision of drinking water by Group Water Schemes and private water suppliers.

### **Bathing Water**

In 2018, Sligo County Council formally identified five beaches under the 2008 Bathing Water Regulations; these were Rosses Point, Enniscrone, Mullaghmore, Streedagh and Mullaghmore. Monitoring of the 5 bathing water beaches and Strandhill beach will continue in 2018. Results of this monitoring will be displayed locally at each of the bathing water beaches and on the

council's website throughout the 2018 bathing season. Applications have been made to An Taisce for the Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards.

### ***Water Safety***

Sligo County Council will be providing lifeguard cover for the 2018 bathing season at Rosses Point, Enniscrone, Streedagh and Dunmoran along with Beach Warden cover for Strandhill.

### ***Rivers and lakes***

All rivers and lakes listed in the National Monitoring Programme will be monitored in 2018.

### ***Air and Noise Pollution***

#### **Noise Control**

The Section will provide advice and information on residential and commercial noise under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992.

### ***Air Pollution & Ban on Smokey Fuels***

Environment will continue to enforce the 2 Air Pollution Licences and provide advice and information on odours and air pollution complaints.

### ***Ban on Smokey Fuels***

In 2012 the Department introduced new Regulations extending the restricted area with regard to the marketing, sale & distribution of smoky fuels (bituminous coal). They also made the use of this fuel type, within the restricted area, an offence. Sligo County Council is responsible for the enforcement of these Regulations. Due to the changes introduced, this will be challenging and will require a change in habits for inhabitants of Sligo Town and Environs regarding the type of fuel they use to heat their homes. However it should ensure that the increase in air quality, observed since the original Regulations were introduced in 2003, are maintained and improved upon.

### ***Casual Trading***

The Casual Trading Act 1955 covers open air trading of goods at designated bays throughout Sligo. The Environment Section enforces Casual Trading Bye Laws in order to regulate casual trading on public property. 2018 will see a review of the Casual Trading Bye Laws for Sligo. Regular inspections will continue to be carried out by the Council's appointed Casual Trading Officers to ensure that the trading bays are being operated in accordance with the Bye Laws.

### ***Climate Change & Energy Efficiency***

Sligo County Council reports its energy usage to SEAI, and this allows us to measure our energy performance, with a view to working towards our energy usage reduction target (reduction of 33% of our 2009 usage by 2020). While some progress has been made, further efforts and resources will need to be identified to ensure that these targets are met.

Sligo County Council also participates in the Sligo Sustainable Energy Community (SEC), along with other major energy users including IT Sligo, the HSE, Abbots, Abbvie, Aurivo and others. This allows Sligo County Council to engage with other Organisations and to apply for funding available from the SEAI, as well as avail of expertise and information which may not otherwise be readily available.

In order to avail of these funding opportunities, adequate budgetary allocations will have to be made to ensure that resources are available to meet the match funding requirements.

Sligo County Council will work with, and support the efforts of the recently launched Regional Climate Action Offices in order to ensure that an adequate Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, as required by the Climate Action & Low Carbon Development Act 2015 is drawn up and implemented.

## **Environmental Services**

### **Recovery and Recycling Facilities Operations**

The following facilities will continue to be made available to the public:

- Bring Banks
- Textile Banks
- Recycling Centre Tubbercurry
- Ballisodare Composting Facility

### **Litter Management**

In 2018, activity will continue on the enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 – 2003 as amended.

### **Environmental Awareness**

Sligo County Council supports a number of environmental awareness initiatives including National Spring Clean, Anti-Litter & Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme, LA21 Environmental Partnership Fund Grant Scheme and the Green Schools Programme.

### **Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement**

Waste Management continues to be to the fore of EU and Governmental priorities. It receives recognition through increased amounts of legislation and funding. Waste enforcement activities continue to be fully recoupable from Governmental funding. This funding originates from initiatives such as the plastic bag levy and landfill levy. The legislation introduced by Government has encompassed producer responsibility which also generates additional monies.

There are ever increasing demands placed on organisations and families but the need for proper waste management continues to be of importance for economic, legislative and environmental reasons.

There is a continuing need to avoid the production of waste at source and try and divert as much as possible from landfill. This diversion of waste is achieved through the provision of facilities and services followed by education and enforcement. The Bring Bank Network, Civic Amenity Sites, Composting Site, Kerbside Recycling, Home Composting and the introduction of a separate organic collection all help divert waste from landfill.

Another element of waste management is trying to ensure that people manage their waste in a manner that avoids the creation of environmental pollution. Ongoing waste enforcement activities will endeavour to reduce this to a minimum.

Waste Management and Enforcement priorities will continue to involve bringing unauthorised sites into environmental compliance, increasing the recycling and recovery rates and to try and ensure that works undertaken by Sligo Local Authorities are carried out

in compliance with Environmental Legislation.

#### **Waste Management Planning**

For the purposes of Waste Management Planning the country is divided into 3 waste regions. Sligo is in the Connacht Ulster Region. A 6 year plan was agreed in 2015 which sets out a road map for achieving commitments, and is the framework for the prevention and management of waste. The plan is a statutory document and Sligo County Council has obligations to fund initiatives in the plan as well as the regional office based in Mayo County Council. Sligo is represented on the Regional Waste Steering Group.

#### **Waste Management Enforcement**

The new Regional Waste Enforcement Office is in operation since January 2016 with the intention of ensuring the effective implementation of Waste Enforcement policy in the Connaught Ulster Region. A key objective is the delivery of an integrated approach to waste enforcement which will drive consistent enforcement of legislation.

## Parks and Open Spaces - Maintenance & Landscaping

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of the adequate provision of conveniently located open space throughout the city. People are attracted to live, work, visit and invest in areas which have good quality developed green recreational infrastructure.

Sligo County Council continues to progress and invest in the development of parkland and recreational infrastructure for Sligo. The provision of funding for Parks infrastructure and maintenance is a challenging issue but the elected members and the executive team remain committed to developing and maintaining high quality green infrastructure. The Parks Service, in consultation and cooperation with the community, will continue to improve the quality and beauty of the local environment.

The Parks Department are responsible for the management and maintenance of an expanding range of facilities including Doorly Park, Cleveragh Regional Park, Forthill Park, Mitchell Curley Park, the Fairgreen, Sea View Park, Sea View Drive Promenade Salmon Point and The Fairgreen. This will continue in 2018. Along with, and incorporated into some of the Parks are 11 playing pitches, 6 playgrounds, 6 MUGAs, outdoor gym equipment, walking/jogging/cycling pathways and trails, amenity areas, a range of landscaped inner urban areas, 33 acres of partially landscaped and developed open space, and 290 acres of undeveloped open space incorporating woodland and pathways and undeveloped agricultural pastureland. The maintenance work conducted by the Parks department in open space areas include such activities as grass cutting, litter collection, maintenance and improvement of landscaped areas, maintenance of fencing, tree management and planting and maintenance of monuments and parks furniture all of which will continue in 2018.

The Parks Department will again assist in 2018 in judging of the best kept estates in Sligo competition, which has been supported and facilitated by Sligo Tidy Towns over the past few years. This initiative further enhances the quality of the green areas and open spaces throughout Sligo and its Environs.

The following is a list of all the Parks and the facilities in each Park, for which the Parks Department manage and maintain and will continue to do in 2018:

Park / Amenity Area	Facilities
<b>Cleveragh Regional Park</b>	1 No. Rugby Pitch
	1 No GAA Pitch
	1 No Tennis Court
	Walking/Jogging/Cycling Trails (Floodlights)
	Seating
<b>Doorly Park</b>	1 No. Soccer Pitch
	MUGA
	Playground
	Walking/Jogging/Cycling Trails (Floodlights)
	Seating
	1 No. soccer Pitch
	1 No. GAA Pitch
	MUGA

<b>Mitchell Curley Park</b>	Boules Court
	Outdoor Gym & Trail
	Playground
	Walking/Jogging Trails
	Seating
<b>Forthill Park</b>	2 No. Soccer Pitches
	1 No. GAA Pitch
	Pitch Dressing Rooms
	MUGA
	2 No. Basketball Courts (Floodlights)
	Walking/Jogging Trail
<b>Sea View Park</b>	1 No Soccer Pitch
	MUGA
	Playground
<b>Sean Fallon Park</b>	1 No. Soccer Pitch
<b>Acorn Play Area</b>	Playground
<b>Hillside Adventure Park</b>	Playground
<b>M.C.R. Community Centre</b>	Playground
<b>Ballytivnan Park</b>	MUGA
<b>Sea View Drive Promenade</b>	Amenity Area
<b>Salmon Point</b>	Amenity Area
<b>Fairgreen</b>	MUGA

### Sports Pitches

The Parks Department will continue to oversee and regulate the management, maintenance, booking and hire of the 11 public playing pitches in Sligo Town. High quality soccer, GAA and rugby pitches are available for hire to clubs, organisations and schools throughout Sligo. Various sports clubs and groups were accommodated with the hire of pitches to the greatest possible extent and the ongoing regime of quality pitch maintenance programmes including regular grass cutting, verti-draining, weed control, fertilising and turfing ensures the quality of the pitches year round.

### Town Centre Enhancement

The Parks Departments continue to prioritise the enhancement of the Town Centre during the Spring and Summer months. In 2017 there was again a huge effort put in by the Parks Department to ensure Sligo Town was looking its best for the busy tourist season. Existing landscaped areas were enhanced and planter boxes were designed and hung from both sides of the pedestrian bridge at Rockwood Parade which gave a new vibrancy to this strategic pedestrian link across the Garvogue River. The Parks Department continue to bring the City Centre alive with colour for all seasons and this will continue into 2018. These initiatives, along with the hanging baskets initiative organised by Blooming Sligo and Sligo Tidy Towns ensure the town centre is awash with colour throughout the spring and summer months. The Parks Department will continue to work closely with Sligo Tidy Towns on appropriate projects throughout 2018 and the hard work and various improvement initiatives undertaken by Sligo Tidy Towns has yet again been rewarded by an increase in points received by Sligo in the tidy towns competition in 2017 and the award of a Bronze medal.

### **Forthill/ O'Boyle Park**

This area in Sligo town has potential to become a major public space for all people living and visiting Sligo. Friday 11th August 2017 saw the renaming of Forthill to O'Boyle park which coincided with the opening of the new outdoor gym in the Park. Roads and drainage were also completed in the area.

### **Other projects progressed during 2017 included:**

- Completion of the entrance to the Fair green

The Parks Department will continue to play their part in ensuring Sligo Town is at its best for the Festival Season and Tidy Towns adjudication in 2018. The Department will also continue to support National Bike Week in 2018.

The Parks Department will continue to work in partnership with Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership to facilitate and optimise the use of these facilities and ensure all demographics have the opportunity to participate in the ongoing activities. The facilities encourage an active healthy lifestyle and supports council's focus on ensuring that more people are more active more often.

## **Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbour**

A budget of €33,000 was made available in 2017 for essential maintenance of eleven piers and harbours along the Sligo coastline. This allocation is spent on items such as replacement railings, pontoon maintenance, navigation light maintenance, minor structural repairs, de-sea-weeding slipways and stairwells, tide gauge maintenance, services maintenance, etc.

This year Mullaghmore Harbour again hosted to the National Geographic Cruiser. Maintenance at Mullaghmore included replacement of the pontoon fixity system and sea weed treatment.

Raghey Harbour the busy, vibrant harbour at the north end of Sligo Bay benefitted from a combined community and council funded capital project to pave the main quay top and a further grant saw the installation of a small crane this year.

Repairs and improvements were also carried out at Enniscrone on the road side harbour wall that was damaged by the storm in February 2015. Much of the parapet to the wall has been replaced and railing added in keeping with the character of the Current and old seaweed baths on the foreshore. The lower retaining wall was also treated to improve its longevity. The scheme has been praised by residents and local business alike.

## **Sligo Harbour**

Sligo is the only working harbour between Galway and Derry. The main cargoes at the harbour are coal, timber and fish meal.

### *Shipping movements in 2017*

The number of ships docking at Sligo Harbour in 2017 were marginally lower than 2016, mainly due to the weather and Greenstar ships no longer operating.

### *Pontoon*

The pontoon on Ballast Quay at Sligo Harbour is available for use by owners and authorised crew of leisure craft, it is owned, managed and operated by Sligo County Council. The pontoon is 60m long and is available to all local and visiting leisure craft for day trips, short term stays or long term berthing.

Leisure craft can berth safely and securely within easy reach of the city enhancing the tourism potential of Sligo. Visiting boats in 2017 were similar to 2016 however duration of stays were reduced. On average 7 boats are berthed at the pontoon all year round, approximately 17 will be on hard standing over the winter months and approximately 20 visiting craft utilised the facility in 2017.

### *Works carried out in the Harbour in 2017*

Ongoing maintenance work is required at the Harbour to ensure the Health and Safety of all those who work, use and visit the Harbour. In 2017 following a Health and Safety inspection a number of items were highlighted to be carried out. This work included erecting signage warning of danger, erecting grab rails, erecting lifebuoys and the installation of a new fender on Deep water Quay. Others work carried out at the Harbour included painting of bollards, ladders and fencing, A tidy up of the entrance to Deep water Quay with the removal of overgrown vegetation and removal of algae along Ballast Quay.

## **Rosses Point Pier & Pontoon**

SCC was offered an allocation of €111,750 for this project in April 2017 under the Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme 2017 (Marine Leisure & Marine Tourism). The Council provided matched funding of 25% of the total project costs.

The Project consists of the provision of a Pontoon and Access ramp at Rosses Point which will provide much needed safe access to and from vessels.

## **Rosses Point swimming pool refurbishment**

In 2017 Sligo County Council in conjunction with Sligo Tourist Development Association Ltd invested in total €55,000 to refurbish Rosses point outdoor swimming pool, which was in very poor condition.

The work comprised of

- the repair/replacement of damaged sections of the swimming pool walls,
- repairs to the concrete steps and platform area surrounding the swimming pool,
- provision of a level platform / viewing area for persons with mobility issues,
- installation of a new 1.8m wide ramped footpath from the public car park to the viewing area,
- erection of appropriate fencing to restrict persons from entering the water on the left hand side (south side) of the swimming pool, and
- erection of a timber post and rail fence along the boundary between the swimming pool lands and the adjacent Yacht Club.

It is the intention to provide stainless steel handrails at various locations in 2018.

## **Navigational aids**

It is the responsibility of Sligo County Council to manage and operate the navigational aids within the remit of Sligo Harbour. They consist of the following;

- 15 Buoys with lights, 13 without lights,
- 2 Buoys at Rosses Point and 2 at Ballincar
- 10 in the River Channel

The Navigational aids have to be in place in the correct GPS location and maintained.

## **Coastal protection**

Much of the coast line of Sligo was affected by the storm event of 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2014 estimated at a one in 200 year event.

Strandhill Effluent Treatment Works coastal protection scheme was damaged but no funding was received under the coastal protection heading until 2016 when the Office of Public Works provided a storm repair grant. Significant repairs and terminal works were carried out in late 2016 and early 2017.

## **Veterinary Service**

### **Food Safety**

Sligo County Council continues to implement all relevant food safety legislation under the Service Contract between Sligo County Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This includes the supervision of two abattoirs and two small meat manufacturing plants.

### **Animal Welfare**

The Council continues to implement the Control of Horses Act and has seen a major reduction in abandoned horses.

The Horse project proposed for Sligo town is due to progress in the second half of 2018. The Dog Warden service will continue in 2018. Re-homing from the shelter is ongoing with considerable help from Dogs Trust who regularly take dogs for rehoming. Inspections of Dog Breeding establishments also takes place with 2 establishments registered.

## **Fire Services**

### **Operation of Fire Service**

Sligo County Council is statutorily designated as the Fire Authority for the County of Sligo under Section 9 of the Fire Services Acts 1981-2003 and provides a range of Fire Safety, Enforcement and Emergency Management Services and is also responsible for managing the delivery of operational emergency fire and rescue services across 4 Fire Brigade Units located in Sligo, Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone.

Sligo Fire Service was active in promoting community fire safety throughout the year, focusing on vulnerable groups in the community and personnel from each fire station facilitated visits to their stations and requests from voluntary groups, such as the elderly and active retirement to provide fire safety talks. A major focus of the fire service in 2017 was fire safety in apartment blocks and a comprehensive inspection programme was implemented in that area. The fire service also conducts schools fire safety programmes every two years in all national schools. It is planned to continue this aspect of the fire service work during 2018.

The Fire Services Department process all applications for Fire Safety Certificates under building control legislation and is also involved in planning referrals for commercial developments, inspecting and reporting on Circuit and District Court applications for Places of Public Entertainment, Registration of Fire Arms and Explosives Stores and Petroleum Regulations Licences.

Sligo Fire Service, in recognition of the potentially hazardous roles performed by its personnel, is required to implement a continuous programme of training, including mandatory refresher training in both core and specialist skills for all fire-fighting personnel. Wages for fire fighters, which fluctuate depending on the number of 999/122 calls received, annual charges to neighbouring counties who provide both fire and rescue response services within the County of Sligo and call-out systems through CAMP West in Castlebar, all represent a major part of the 2018 budget. The 2018 budget also reflects an intensive programme of preventative maintenance and replacement of specialist equipment, plant and facilities.

# Finance

## Income and Expenditure Account

### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT) FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2017

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year.

Note 16 allocates transfers by service division in the same format as Table A of the adopted Local Authority budget.

Expenditure By Division	Note	Gross Expenditure 2017 €	Income 2017 €	Net Expenditure 2017 €	Net Expenditure 2016 €
Housing and Building		11,576,075	10,695,969	880,106	1,007,681
Roads, Transportation & Safety		19,162,696	14,445,274	4,717,422	4,382,827
Water Services		4,784,664	4,744,175	40,489	42,934
Development Management		6,723,752	3,512,796	3,210,956	3,072,521
Environmental Services		6,398,242	1,248,675	5,149,567	4,941,903
Recreation & Amenity		3,899,378	389,228	3,510,150	3,465,035
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare		571,480	423,389	148,091	176,691
Miscellaneous Services		7,550,677	3,583,502	3,967,175	5,006,050
<b>Total Expenditure/Income</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60,666,963</b>	<b>39,043,008</b>		
Net Cost of Division to be funded from Rates and Local Property Tax				21,623,955	22,095,642
Rates				13,211,198	13,202,579
Local Property Tax				11,202,628	9,993,352
Pension Related Deduction				-	839,649
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfer</b>				<b>2,789,870</b>	<b>1,939,938</b>
<b>Transfers from/(to) Reserves</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>(389,440)</b>	<b>171,311</b>
<b>Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>	<b>16</b>			<b>2,400,430</b>	<b>2,111,250</b>
<b>General Reserve at 1st January</b>				<b>(23,831,353)</b>	<b>(25,942,602)</b>
<b>General Reserve at 31st December</b>				<b>(21,430,923)</b>	<b>(23,831,353)</b>

## Balance Sheet

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2017

	Notes	2017	2016
		€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	1		
Operational		438,735,440	435,888,825
Infrastructural		1,186,455,298	1,186,452,081
Community		9,063,942	9,063,942
Non-Operational		19,673,719	19,673,719
		<b>1,653,928,399</b>	<b>1,651,078,567</b>
<b>Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses</b>	2	<b>112,774,592</b>	<b>102,716,470</b>
<b>Long Term Debtors</b>	3	<b>30,314,713</b>	<b>32,560,957</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Stock	4	258,503	250,979
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	5	9,155,574	5,762,206
Bank Investments		2,325,670	2,485,347
Cash at Bank		1,649,241	2,528,756
Cash in Transit		1,625	1,625
		<b>13,390,613</b>	<b>11,028,912</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Creditors & Accruals	6	21,756,414	21,826,281
Finance Leases		-	-
		<b>21,756,414</b>	<b>21,826,281</b>
<b>Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)</b>		<b>(8,365,802)</b>	<b>(10,797,368)</b>
<b>Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)</b>			
Loans Payable	7	97,323,691	100,647,098
Finance Leases		-	-
Refundable Deposits	8	1,005,963	1,205,740
Other		-	-
		<b>98,329,655</b>	<b>101,852,838</b>
<b>Net Assets / (Liabilities)</b>		<b>1,690,322,248</b>	<b>1,673,705,788</b>
<b>Represented By</b>			
Capitalisation	9	1,653,928,394	1,651,078,562
Income WIP	2	112,084,133	101,734,971
Specific Revenue Reserve		32,264	32,264
General Revenue Reserve		(21,430,923)	(23,831,353)
Other Balances	10	(54,291,621)	(55,308,664)
**99999 Error Account To Clear**		-	8
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>1,690,322,247</b>	<b>1,673,705,788</b>

## Motor Taxation

The Motor Taxation Offices in County Sligo are located in County Hall, Riverside, Sligo Tel: 071 9111333 and in Teach Laighne, Humbert Street, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo Tel: 071 9111719, where applications for Motor Tax are processed for owners of vehicles which are ordinarily kept in County Sligo.

During the year 2017, €5,861,686 was paid by the registered owners of vehicles to the Motor Tax Offices in Sligo and Tubbercurry for Motor Tax transactions. This was a decrease from the €7,440,753 recorded for 2016, a 23% drop.

## Declaring a Vehicle Temporarily off the Road

New procedures were introduced in 2013 for declaring a vehicle is temporarily off the road so that customers do not have to pay motor tax for that period. Since 1 October 2013 it is necessary to declare in advance that a vehicle will be off the road and not in use for a period of between 3 and 12 months using Declaration of Non-Use of a Motor Vehicle Form RF150. The declaration of non-use must be made in the same month that the current motor tax disc expires. If arrears in motor tax are due these must be paid in full plus a minimum of 3 months motor tax, before a declaration of non-use can be made.

### Motor Tax Online Motor Tax Online

[www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie) is an online service provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and motor tax customers are encouraged to tax their cars on line to avoid queuing delays.

The Dept of Transport Tourism and Sport statistics show Motor Tax transactions on line for Co. Sligo as follows:

- 31% transactions were carried out online in the Year 2011
- 35% in 2012
- 39% in 2013
- 48% in 2014
- 53% in 2015
- 56% in 2016
- 58% in 2017

## Driving Licences

The Road Safety Authority assumed full responsibility for the driving licence service since 2013. The National Driver Licence Service office in Sligo is located at Ground Floor, Millennium House, Stephen Street, Sligo, opposite the Ulster Bank – Tel: 076 1087880 and is open from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday and from 9am to 2pm on Saturdays. See also [www.ndls.ie](http://www.ndls.ie)

## Procurement

Public bodies must comply with Public Procurement requirements. There is an onus on public bodies to ensure that the Public Procurement function is undertaken honestly, fairly and in a manner that secures best value for money. The overriding procurement objective for Sligo County Council is to get optimum value for money while complying with all EU Directives, National Legislation, Public Procurement Policy, Circulars and Guidelines.

The CCMA has established a Procurement Programme Board to oversee the implementation of the Government's public procurement policy across the local government sector. The Local Government Strategic Procurement Centre under the auspices of the LGMA engages with the Office of Government Procurement on behalf of the sector and participates in their corporate structures whilst promoting best practice and overseeing compliance in every local authority. The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre is a shared service for the sector, being delivered by Kerry Co. Council and it has put in place a number of national frameworks for road making materials, plant hire, road markings, electrical services and plumbing services which are available to all local authorities. Sligo County Council actively uses national procurement arrangements where they are suitable to our needs.

The Procurement Section under the guidance of the Procurement Officer (appointed in 2017) is in place to provide a dedicated in-house resource for the organisation in respect of Public Procurement requirements. Formal responsibility for Procurement Governance is assigned to the Head of Finance.

The role of the Procurement Section is:

- to promote best practice procurement across the organisation in order to minimise procurement risks
- to provide specialist advice and guidance
- to monitor and report on compliance with Procurement obligations
- to monitor and report on procurement activities and performance
- to identify savings initiatives to ensure value for money outcomes
- to develop a category management approach and facilitate aggregation of spend
- to manage the purchase to pay process
- to regulate use and control access to e-procurement systems, e.g. etenders.ie and Supplygov.ie

Details of Sligo County Council Purchase Orders for amounts over €20,000 are now published on a quarterly basis via the Council's website.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Staff Retirements in 2017

#### Retired

Pat McCormack	General Services Supervisor
Thomas Underwood	Handyman
Vincent McLoughlin (RIP)	Ganger
Martin Kelly	Plumber
Dermot McBain	Handyman
Joe Davey	Ganger
Grainne Brett Mahon	Senior Library Assistant
Caroline Morgan	Executive Librarian
Dympna Egan	Branch Librarian
John Owens	Senior Executive Engineer
Ann Melia	Branch Librarian
Ann Johnston	Assistant Staff Officer
Noel Sweeney	Senior Executive Technician

#### Death in Service

Liam Kilgannon (RIP)	General Services Supervisor
Peter Naughton (RIP)	General Operative

## Appendix 2 Conferences and Seminars attended by Councillors in 2017

Conference/Seminar title	Venue	Date(s)
Tackling Japanese Knotweed - Functions of Local Authorities and NRA	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	27th-29th January
AILG Training - Module 1 of 2017	Cavan Waterford Athlone	7th February 11th February 16th February
AILG Annual Training Conference 2017	Ennis, Co. Clare	6th & 7th April
LAMA Spring Training Seminar 2017	Gormanston, Co. Meath	28th & 29th April
Brexit and the Border Corridor	Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh	4th May
AILG Module 2 Training	Westport, Co. Mayo Killaloe, Co. Tipperary	13th May 18th May
Brexit - Regional Planning and E.U. Affairs	Wicklow	26th May
Disability Training	Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim	30th May
AILG Training	Dundalk Bundoran, Co. Donegal	10th June 15th June
Changing trends and approaches to alcohol and drug abuse	Baltimore, Co. Cork	1st-3rd September
Working as one on the Wild Atlantic Way	Listowel, Co. Kerry	6th & 7th Sept.
Desmond Greaves School	Dublin	8th-10th Sept.
AILG Training	Tuam, Co. Galway	19th September
LAMA Autumn Seminar	Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	28th-30th Sept.
AILG Autumn Training Seminar	Sligo	12th & 13th Oct.
The Future of Towns Conference	Sligo	18th October
P.P.N. Conference	Sligo	19th October
AILG Training	Carrick-on-Shannon Kilkenny	21st October 26th October
What does a hard Brexit mean for Ireland?	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	22nd-24th Oct.
AILG Training	Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan	23rd November
GeoparkLIFE: Tourism for Conservation	Ennistymon, Co. Clare	23rd November
Invasive exotic species of wildlife in Irish rivers, canals & lakes	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	24-26th November
Sadaka - 50 years of occupation - Conference on Palestine	Dublin	28th November
Audit Committees in the Local Irish Government System	Carlingford, Co. Louth	1st-3rd December
Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	21st-23rd December

*LAMA: Local Authority Members' Association*

*AILG: Association of Irish Local Government*

*LCDC: Local Community Development Committee*