

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Offaly Local Authorities



JOINT ADDRESS BY THE CATHAOIRLEACH AND COUNTY MANAGER



Cllr. Danny Owens — Cathaoirleach

We are very pleased to present the 2011 Annual Report of Offaly Local Authorities. The report sets out the work of Offaly County Council and the Town Councils of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore. It looks at the projects undertaken during the year, presents information on the authorities' ongoing commitments, and details associated expenditure.

2011 was another challenging year. The Council has had to adapt again to having less human and financial resources. However, we hope that we have demonstrated within these pages that we have not dwelt on the difficulties or constraints under which we work. Rather, we have sought to get on with the job, mindful of the considerable importance attached to the role of the local authorities in the everyday lives of citizens. Yes, we have had challenges



Pat Gallagher— Bainisteoir Chontae

and there have been many difficult decisions. But we have acted at all times with the overall interests of the people of Offaly placed firmly at the centre of our decision making processes.

The commitment of both elected members and staff over these past few years deserves to be highlighted. Our primary objective continues to be the provision of quality services and our whole organisation is determined to ensure that our standards do not falter, and that our customers' needs remain to the fore in everything we do.

Some of the more noteworthy achievements evident in the report include:

- Successful visit of the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama and the First Lady Michelle Obama to the President's ancestral home of Moneygall;

- The contribution of all the staff who worked to make the Presidential visit to Moneygall such a success;
- Prolonged salting of roads during the coldest winters experienced for many decades;
- Unaccounted for water restored to 2010 levels, following the major impact the severe cold weather had on our water network;
- The attendance of over 600 potential entrepreneurs, existing businesses and industry experts at the unique one day *Start and Grow Enterprise Expo* in Tullamore in November 2011;
- The publication of the '*Doing Business in Offaly*' guide;
- Redevelopment of Shannon Harbour completed in 2011;
- The first Pop Up Shop in Tullamore opened;
- Progress on the Tullamore/Kilbeggan Link road and Banagher Link Road Phase 2;
- Completion of Consultation phase on *Transportation Study for Tullamore Town* in November 2011 (final report is pending);
- Emergency response by the Civil Defence during the severe weather and the support of over 50 events in the community;
- €150,000 in funding secured from the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport to develop/upgrade Multi Use Games Areas in 4 locations throughout the county;
- Grants to Tullamore and Birr Swimming Pools received from the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport to enhance disabled access and improve energy efficiencies;
- 132 housing grants approved under the following schemes: HAGS - 45; HAOP - 79; and MAGS - 8;
- 154 units delivered under the Part V process, 75 of which are Affordable units;
- 377 Student Grants approved for the 2011/2012 academic year;
- Review of the Midland's Waste Management Plan completed;
- The upgrade to the Tullamore Wastewater Treatment Plant progressed in 2011;

- Refurbishment of Tullamore Library commenced;
- An overall increased demand for library services with visits, issues, internet use and membership showing increases;
- DEHLG findings in relation to the National Housing Development Survey showed that, like every other authority in the country Offaly has issues with Unfinished Housing Developments. The report found that Offaly has one of the lowest number of unfinished houses nationally;
- 426 groups affiliated to Offaly Community Forum;
- Offaly Comhairle na nÓg held successful youth conference entitled '*Say it out Loud*';
- The hosting of a civic reception to acknowledge the achievement of our special Olympic athletes and the commitment and dedication of the athletes, families, volunteers and clubs involved with Special Olympics in Offaly;
- Submission of quarterly reports on our financial performance to IMF/EU;
- Consolidation of the implementation of national HR, Payroll and Superannuation project.

The challenges facing the Council are many. Our job is to meet these challenges in a spirit of dedication to excellence in service provision, to greater organisational efficiencies, to increasing flexibility, and a commitment to the people of Offaly that we will use all the resources we can call on to enhance the economic, social and cultural development of the County. So as we look back at a year characterised by significant achievement, we can also look forward, confident that Offaly County Council will continue to meet the challenges and realities of modern Ireland.

SPC Chair: Molly Buckley MCC

Members:

Cllr. Paddy Rowland
Cllr. Sinead Moylan-Ryan
Cllr. John Carroll
Cllr. Nicola Hogan
Cllr. Finian O'Neill

Sectoral:

Ms. Susan Ryan
Ms. Tessy Doyle
Mr. Joe O'Brien

Director Of Services: Seán Murray

Senior Executive Officer: Dermot Mahon, Housing

Senior Executive Engineer: Martin Quinn, Housing

Administrative Officer: Caroline Dempsey & Brian Pey

County Librarian: Mary Stuart

Arts Officer: Sinead O'Reilly

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Achievements and Constraints

There was a further increase in the number of approved applicants for social housing supports in 2011 due to the ongoing economic downturn. 277 completed applications were received in 2011 of which 263 were approved following assessment. The Housing list reached 703 at year end representing a 20% year on year increase. Increasing demand for social housing together with capital budget restrictions made it increasingly difficult for the Council to fully respond to the housing needs in the County.

Significant achievements during 2011 were the allocation of 108 tenancies at locations throughout the County. Progress was also achieved in recoupment of

final accounts on outstanding capital schemes.

Progress has been made in securing additional units under the leasing scheme and significant remedial works scheme at Churchview Heights, Edenderry was completed together with 14 DPG schemes.

The number of RAS transfers achieved was 26. In addition, the waiting time for housing assessments was kept to a minimum due to the ongoing commitment of staff in providing quality customer services. 35 long-term and casual voids were brought back into stock. Significant progress was also made on the Grove St Action Plan with all vacant houses bought back into stock though significant investment under the Energy

Efficiency Programme and commencement of the community centre project. 2 Part V social units were acquired completing all outstanding Part V obligations.

Meeting customer demands for housing adaptation, housing aid for older persons and mobility grants continued to be a challenge. 132 grants were issued to the value of €1.75m.



Greenwood Park Remedial Works scheme in progress July 2011

Continued suspension of Estate Management grants made it more difficult to engage with residents groups or to plan additional estate improvement works. Despite this, considerable progress was made in dealing with anti-social behaviour complaints and estate management issues in a number of locations. Plans for the provision of emergency homeless facilities in

Tullamore were further progressed with Department approval received for a 6 unit facility managed by Midlands Simon to be established in early 2012.

Funding was secured under the Sustainable Communities Fund for remedial schemes at Mooney Terrace, Kilcormac and St. Oliver's Estate, Geashill with works to be completed in early 2012. Funding was also secured for the development of Multi-Use Games Areas at four locations with works to complete in early 2012.

Social and Voluntary Housing Output

The housing stock stood at 1,092 at year end with an average occupancy rate of 98.7%. 108 tenancies were allocated in 2011, comprising:

- 17 under housing acquisitions (2010 programme)
- 2 under Part V units acquired,
- 43 under re-let of existing stock,
- 41 under the Social Leasing and RAS schemes,
- 2 allocated Demountable Dwellings,
- 2 allocated Halting Site units,
- 1 nomination to voluntary bodies.

The overall Offaly Local Authorities housing capital budget for 2011 was €2.25m compared to €13m in 2010. The 2011 allocation enabled resolution of a number of significant final accounts. In 2010, 49 houses were constructed or acquired in comparison to 133 completions in 2009. In 2011, due to capital budget restrictions no houses were constructed and no houses were under construction during the year. 2 Part

V Social houses were acquired completing the current Part V programme. One social unit was acquired from the 2011 capital budget. No voluntary units were completed. The social housing construction programme for the Council has now been completed with no new schemes at planning stage and no schemes to be completed in 2012.

Following a review of the voluntary and co-operative sector in late 2009, funding under the CLSS scheme was wound down. Consequently no new approvals for CLSS projects will be granted. A total of 271 CLSS units of accommodation were provided in Offaly under the scheme. Approvals were granted in 2010 for a new build 6 unit development for the intellectually disabled in Tullamore and for a 1 unit extension to an existing development for the intellectually disabled in Portarlington. The unit in Portarlington has been completed. It is expected that work on the Tullamore project will be completed in 2012. A total of 117 units of accommodation have been provided in County Offaly under the CAS scheme.

Cluid Housing Association received provisional approval to lease 8 two bedroom units in Edenderry to be funded under the Leasing Scheme. These units will be allocated to applicants from Offaly County Council's social housing list in 2012.

A Shared Services agreement was drafted for the amalgamation of capital programmes on a county-wide basis on behalf of the Town Councils in 2009. This process continued to facilitate increased efficiencies and

savings.

Housing Maintenance and Pre-Let Repairs

Despite budget reductions, over 1,000 maintenance repairs were completed in 2011 while significant progress was achieved in restoring homes that were void for considerable periods. A panel of small works contractors was set up in 2008 and houses in need of major refurbishment continue to be contracted out to speed up turnaround time. This panel will be reviewed in 2012 to reflect shared service agreement with the Town Councils. Funding in the region of €450,000 was expended on pre-let repairs / energy efficiency upgrading to 35 houses that in some cases required considerable renovation prior to re-let.

A revised Housing Maintenance Policy was drafted for SPC consideration in 2012 and a review of Clerk of Works duties undertaken which considered best use of resources, allocation of duties, boundary amalgamation and outsourcing. It is anticipated that the recommendations from the review will be implemented in 2012.

Regeneration and Remedial Works Programmes

Phase 1 of the Remedial Works Scheme at Greenwood Park and Churchview Heights estates in Edenderry to include back lanes improvement works, public lighting, lane surfacing, surface water disposal and security measures was completed in 2011. Phase 2 covering environmental works to the large open space in Greenwood Park was also completed to include

extensive landscaping and planting works along with car parking works, traffic calming and signage, drainage and public lighting. €300,000 towards the cost of works was funded from the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government with the balance of €60,000 from own resources. Phase 3 to include environmental works to a smaller open space will be tendered in 2012, subject to an allocation of funding from the Department.

A small remedial works programme in Ballyvora Grove, Ferbane was completed to include development of open space for residents. Fencing contracts to secure land holdings and complete boundary remedial works in a number of local authority estates were completed during the year.

Remedial works schemes costing €90,000 were also commenced at Mooney Terrace, Kilcormac and St. Oliver's Estate Geashill with €70,000 secured under the Department's Sustainable Communities Fund and the balance from own resources. Works included enhanced car parking facilities, landscaping, boundary walls, back lane and footpath restoration, new signage and drainage works. Each scheme was commenced following consultation with local residents.



Remedial Works scheme in progress at Edenderry

DPG's / Demountable Dwellings / Improvement Works Scheme

No IWS schemes completed in 2011 while the Council provided funding for two demountable dwellings. There has been considerable progress in reducing the DPG list in 2011 with 14 Disabled Persons Grants projects completed at various locations to the value of c.€300,000. In addition, 2 DPG applicants were rehoused in alternative accommodation. Funding for projects under these schemes will be limited in 2012 with a maximum of five DPG's to be completed, subject to allocation of resources by the Department.

Energy Efficiency Programme / Radon Testing

32 housing units benefited from energy efficiency upgrades at pre-let stage. This programme of work was managed by the Council on behalf of the Town Councils. Total expenditure under the scheme in 2011 was €400,000 with €40,000 coming from own resources. Subject to funding, it is anticipated that a further 30 units that become vacant will be retro-fitted in 2012 in order to enhance overall energy efficiency levels and improve existing Building Energy Ratings.

Affordable Housing and Part V

By the end of 2011 a total of 154 units have been delivered under the Part V process, 75 of which are Affordable units. 20 of these units remain unsold and have been transferred to RAS in partnership with Helm Housing Association. 2 social Part V's were acquired during the year completing the Part V acquisition programme. It is anticipated that funding for the acquisition of social units under Part V will not be available in 2012 and alternative options will have to be considered. Revised Guidelines on Implementation of Part V were considered by the SPC in December 2009 to reflect changing circumstances.

A Value for Money Audit on Part V was completed by the DoECLG indicating substantial compliance with Part V policies and procedures.

Technical Support Services

Housing unit continued to provide technical services for Tullamore Library renovation project, Aras maintenance

and services contracts together with energy efficiency contracting for swimming pools.

Land Management

Short-term land lettings were agreed at fifteen locations for grazing purposes generating a modest income during the year. 2.88 ha of lands at Shinrone were transferred to the Housing and Sustainable Communities agency under the Land Aggregation Scheme and application for transfer of 1.56 ha at Kilcormac was submitted for consideration in 2012. Members agreed to the disposal of 0.2ha at Kyleboher Kilcormac and 3.24 ha at Killane Edenderry. Proceeds from land sales are principally used to offset against other land debit balances.

Housing Assessment and Allocations

108 tenancy allocations were made across the range of social housing options. The Housing waiting list stood at 703 at year end with the greatest demand from the Edenderry area. The increase in the number of applications received from homeowners who had their family home repossessed was particularly significant. It is expected that this trend will continue and possibly accelerate in 2012. A housing needs assessment update was completed and revisions and amendments to the Scheme of Letting Priorities were adopted by SPC and Council in June and October 2011. Amendments introduced measures necessary to deal with the ever changing landscape of social housing applications and allocation.

Tenant Purchase

Tenant Purchase Scheme sales peaked in 2006 with almost 40 houses sold during the year. There were no sales completed in 2011. The reduced level of activity under TPS continued to have severe implications for the level of funding available to deliver programmes across a range of areas and the level of internal capital reserves available in 2011 was severely limited. A new Tenant Purchase Scheme for long-standing tenants was adopted by members in March 2011. Provided an application was received by 31st December 2011 sales must be completed by 31st December 2012. The maximum discount on market value is 45% - at a rate of 3% per year of tenancy up to 15 years maximum.

Under the 2011 scheme, 380 tenants were deemed eligible and were contacted with details of how to apply for the scheme. 54 applications were received from tenants with 39 valuations completed by year end and tenants advised of valuations, discounts and balances remaining to complete the sales. Progress to complete a limited number of sales under this scheme will be progressed in 2012.

Housing Rents

A housing rents management software system was introduced resulting in more efficient monitoring of rent arrears and better use of staff resources in rents management. Housing staff continued to effectively liaise with Revenue Collectors and tenants to ensure arrears were appropriately dealt with in line with Housing Rent Arrears Policy 2010. Notice to Quit for

failing to address arrears were issued when appropriate and relevant.

Housing Loans

Revised housing loan criteria were introduced in 2009 including the adoption of a Credit Policy. A Loan Arrears Policy was adopted in 2010 reflecting the increase in the levels of arrears being experienced by customers with local authority loans. Shared Ownership loans are no longer a housing option since June 2011. Four annuity loan applications were received in 2011 with one given provisional approval. 2 shared ownership loan borrowers voluntarily agreed to possession orders for non payment of mortgages and these properties were repossessed by the local authority in October 2011.

Adaptation, Mobility and Older Persons Grants

€1,750,000 was approved by the Council in respect of Housing Grants for 2011 with 132 grants approved under the following schemes; HAGS: 45 HAOP: 79, MAGS: 8. 962 grants have been processed under previous DPG / ERG scheme from 2005 to 2008 and from 2009 to 2011 under the HAG / MAG and HAOP schemes. Total expenditure on all schemes since 2005 is €11,380,000 of which OCC provided funding of €3,107,000. 330 applications were pending approval at the end of 2011 with the highest demand for the Housing Aid for Older People scheme. It is anticipated that 80 grants will be approved in 2012 due to reduced funding available.

Private Sites

FOR SALE

7 Private Sites at Elderberry Drive Moneygall Co. Offaly

Offaly County Council
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE ULIDH FHEALD
ESTO FIDELIS

For Further Details Contact

Offaly Co. Council Housing Dept;
Aras an Chontae,
Charleville Rd,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Phone (0506) 46874
Fax (0506) 46868
Email: houseoff@offalycoco.ie
Web www.offaly.ie

There was moderate activity in the sale of private sites in 2011 and a considerable debit balance remains on lands acquired and developed over the last number of years for this purpose. Revised criteria for the sale of private sites was adopted by Council in 2010 and sites made available for sale on the open market without restriction. 4 sites were sale agreed during the year leaving a balance of 49 sites available in 5 locations. Remediation works to site locations were completed in 2011 including fencing, lighting, kerb replacement and general remedial works.

Rental Accommodation Scheme / Leasing Scheme

Almost 225 customers have transferred to RAS since inception of the scheme with 26 transfers completed in 2011. Tullamore continued to be the priority area in 2011 as it represents the area of greatest need. While Tullamore will continue to be the focus for 2012 other eligible applicants will be supported in their area of

choice as demand for participation in the scheme is actively identified. Efforts will continue in 2012 to identify and secure good quality rented accommodation. A review of landlord contracts and rental agreements was completed during the year which resulted in considerable rental savings.

A new Leasing Scheme was introduced in 2009 providing the opportunity to acquire long or short term leases on suitable accommodation in order to house persons on the local authority's waiting list. Lease agreements were concluded for 18 units at year end with a requirement for at least 40 units under this scheme in 2012. There remains an increasing priority to progress the Leasing Scheme as a viable social housing option in 2012. Tenants accommodated in leased units to date have reported a high level of satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided.

Private Rented Accommodation – Enforcement of Standards

Offaly County Council oversees this function on a countywide basis and is closely linked to the Rental Accommodation and Leasing Schemes as the property inspections required are similar. Revised Standards and a revised system of Enforcement were introduced in 2009 requiring a more detailed level of assessment, inspection and compliance. Offaly County Council conducted 85 inspections in 2011 which also included some properties which were the subject of complaints.

Traveller Accommodation and Supports

Good progress has been made to date under the 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2009-2013. The Programme sought to provide 78 units of accommodation over its lifetime, with 27 units being provided by 2011. A mid-term review of the TAP was completed in 2011 and any amendments to the Programme must be formally adopted by July 2012. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee continued to meet quarterly to co-ordinate delivery of the Programme. Proposals for accommodation provision in the Tullamore area were progressed and proposals to provide a group housing scheme in the Birr area were further considered.

The following table gives a breakdown of progress made in the three year period 2009 - 2011 under the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2009-2013:

Families Accommodated	Tullamore Town Council	Birr Town Council	Offaly County Council	Total
Standard Housing	5	4	4	13
Voluntary Housing	4	0	0	4
Permanent Caravan Site	6	1	3	9
Total	15	5	7	27
Target for period				35

Anti-Social Behaviour

A new Anti Social Behaviour Strategy was adopted in

October 2010 in accordance with the provisions of the 2009 Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. Pre-tenancy supports continued together with support for residents associations. Good working relationships have been established with the Community Gardaí and with the Joint Policing Committees.

Homeless

Homeless services are now being co-ordinated on a regional basis in accordance with the provisions of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. Westmeath County Council is the lead authority on the joint Regional Homeless Forum for the Midland region. Following on from the national Homeless Strategy 'The Way Home' (2009) and the relevant provisions of the 2009 Housing Act, a 3 year Framework Regional Homeless Action Plan for the 4 midland counties was adopted by the Council in June 2010. A more detailed Action Plan for each county in the Midlands region must be adopted in early 2012.

Approval was received in November 2011 for a 6 unit emergency facility for the homeless to be provided in Tullamore. The facility will be provided by Tullamore Housing Association, in conjunction with Midlands Simon Community, the Offaly Local Authorities and the HSE. The availability of this facility promises to provide a significant element of the solution to addressing the problem of homelessness in Offaly.

Estate Management

An Inter-agency Steering Group was established in Grove Street, Crinkle in 2010 to address social and environmental issues on the estate. The Group met every 2 months during 2011. An agreed Action Plan was developed and progress has been made in a number of areas. Significant achievements in 2011 include; upgrade and allocation of all long term voids in the estate (12 in total), upgrade to existing multi-use games area and development of new playground facilities, commencement of works on the development of a community centre using one of the vacant houses for completion in Q2 2012, Percent for Art project completed involving the development of a web based TV station for the estate.



Grove St Play area developed in 2011

The community cabin in Churchview Heights provided by the Council is managed by an active Management

Group and continues to be used by local residents and state and voluntary agencies. A successful percent for art projects was also completed at Killane Edenderry based on local community participation.



Tree planting at Killane Edenderry under % for art scheme

Efficiency and Customer Service Initiatives

The Housing Programme Management System (HPMS) continues to facilitate more efficient capital approvals and financial claims with the Department and enhance project management capabilities. A revised Housing Appeals procedure and form came into use to streamline the appeals process in 2010. The Council continued to review and update the maintenance contracts for Aras an Chontae and identified a number of savings and efficiencies including energy savings and accessibility.

Playgrounds / Multi-Use Games Areas

Funding was successfully secured for the development / upgrade of Multi-Use Games Areas from the

Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport under the Sports Capital Programme in the following locations;

- €15,745 for upgrade of Grove St., Crinkle MUGA
- €48,450 for development of new MUGA at Churchview Heights Edenderry and Joseph's Terrace, Portarlinton
- €39, 812 for development of new MUGA at College View, Rahan.

All projects were substantially complete by year end and costs were supplemented by an additional €40,000 from own resources as match funding requirement. The Council also progressed proposals under the Joint Playground Policy with Offaly Local Development Company and assisted with insurance cover for Edenderry Playground and site assessment and suitability at other locations including Clara and Rhode.



Grove St MUGA redeveloped in 2011

Housing, Social & Cultural S.P.C.

The SPC met 4 times during 2011 and the following issues were agreed and recommended to Council for adoption:

SPC Policies, Programmes and Initiatives adopted

- 2011 Fixed Term Tenant Purchase Scheme
- Scheme of Letting Priorities 2011 (Amendments and Additions)
- Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 - 2013

Other Items considered and discussed by SPC

- Homeless Forum and Homeless services
- Housing Maintenance Review
- Update on Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Update on Rental Accommodation Scheme/Leasing Scheme
- Update on Library Development Plan
- Report on Statutory Housing Needs Assessment
- Tullamore Library and Arts Facility
- Offaly Film Commission
- Public Arts Protocol
- Arts Initiatives 2012

LIBRARY SERVICE

Throughout 2011 the Library service continued to work within the framework set out in the **Library Development Plan 2010-2014: Planning for the future –connecting with the community**. The plan sets out a vision for the library service to provide a socially inclusive library service open and accessible to all underpinned by quality customer service.

6 key priorities were identified that will guide the future development of the library service.

- *Improve infrastructure: building, technology and stock*
- *Quality service*
- *Children's and school service*
- *Culture, heritage, information and learning*
- *Linkages and cooperation*
- *Marketing and promotion*

The delivery of the plan will continue to be challenging in terms of budgetary cutbacks and customer demand for library services. Overall there is an increased demand for library services with visits, issues, internet use and membership showing increases. Reduced funding and staffing will make it increasingly difficult to maintain existing opening hours and provision of stock and media to 8 branch libraries.

Performance 2011

- 189,049 visits
- 12,045 members
- 21,207 loans
- 44,216 internet sessions with significant increase in wifi
- 317% increase in wifi users - 2400
- 15% increase in loans –193,4000
- 42% increase in website hits – 43,814
- *Wide variety of events –Hullabaloo Festival, Bealtaine, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Heritage Week, Environmental talks, Author visits, Art exhibitions & much more*

(See appendix 1 for library events and photos)

Infrastructure: buildings technology and stock

Construction commenced to refurbish **Tullamore Central Library and Headquarters** in September in 2011. An expected completion date is set for May/June 2012. Meanwhile full services are provided from a temporary library in O' Connor Square.

The new refurbished central library will include:

- *Multi-functional community space*
- *Dedicated ICT training area*
- *Multi-purpose meeting rooms*
- *Teenage / Local History / Children's / Study area etc.*
- *Exhibition area*
- *Self-service*
- *Study facilities*
- *Internet and wifi*

An energy audit was completed on Edenderry, Daingean, Kilcormac, Ferbane and Banagher library. Application for SEAI grants funding was unsuccessful. Priority Health and Safety and accessibility works were completed. Additional works are necessary for 2012 if funding is made available.

Book and Media Resources

The reductions in funding allocated to books and media is impacting on the quality, range and depth of material available in libraries. Notwithstanding the funding challenges, the policy of acquiring all locally published material continues to be maintained. A new emphasis on improving literacy particularly amongst teenagers was promoted by providing teen zones in all libraries.

The provision of e books and e audio books and access to digital material was progressed with funding provided by Disability grants and Department funding.

Quality Service and Technology

The objective of providing a 24 hour library on the web is progressing with an upgrade to the library catalogue and website. A 42% increase in website hits was recorded in 2011. All libraries now have dedicated e government pcs. Online learning in conjunction with FAS is provided in the four full time libraries. Social media is now used widely to promote events, provide information and receive feedback. There were 43,814 website hits during 2010.

Children and Schools Services

The libraries continued to promote services to children and young people with the following initiatives:

- Encouraging local schools to visit libraries
- Teacher membership
- Hullabaloo Festival – Clara & Birr
- Creative writing course – teenagers Birr (partnership with Arts Officer)
- Book clubs –Edenderry, Kilcormac, Ferbane, Clara & Birr
- Children's book festival, Author visits, reader development, art workshops, storytelling etc
- Family Fun days
- Poetry for pleasure – collaboration with Westmeath and Longford libraries.
- 3 Rivers storytelling festival
- Summer reading challenge

Linkages and Cooperation

The libraries continued to develop linkages with Heritage, Arts, HSE, Local Development Company, VEC and Offaly Historical and Archaeological society. Initiatives include

- Science week, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Bealtainne, Heritage week
- Working with OHAS and Heritage officer - digitisation of newspapers project
- Enfopoint – Clara
- Helpful books at the library
- FAS e learning in the library

- Working with School Liaison officers to improve literacy e.g. Clara
- Poetry night in Tullamore, Clara & Edenderry
- Culture night in Edenderry
- Music & Dance in the library
- Knitting@ the library

Marketing and Promotion

Raising the profile of the library service, through the website, press releases and local radio continued to be a priority in 2010.

- Book clubs were facilitated by the libraries in Birr, Clara, Edenderry, Kilcormac and Banagher.
- The library website was updated on a daily basis to raise awareness of all activities in the library.

Priorities for 2012

1. Completion of Tullamore Central library and Headquarters refurbishment project including financial management, stock selection, security tagging & fit out.
2. Progress capital funding application to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for mobile library service in 2012.
3. Progress capital funding application to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for refurbishment/new library in Edenderry for capital funding programme 2014-2016.

4. Review of library services to included opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services based on budgetary cuts and non filling of staff vacancies.
5. Application for funding to SEAI for energy funding to assist in reducing energy costs in 5 libraries.
6. Continue with Health and Safety works – funding dependent.
7. Continue to focus on literacy and provide quality book and media materials to library users.
8. Improve e audio and e book material.
9. Provide online learning in four full time libraries.
10. Provision of a user friendly 24 hour web library.
11. Promote services to children and young people.
12. Continue to develop linkages and collaborative approaches to providing services.

Service Indicators 2011

		Service Indicators (Population figure used is 70,868)			
		2008	2009	2010	2011
L1	Library Public Opening Hours				
	A. Average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	34	36	34.2	35
	B. Average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	14	15	13	13
	C. Percentage (%) of full-time libraries that have lunchtime openings.	33%	100%	100%	100%
	D. Percentage (%) of full-time libraries that have evening openings.	100%	100%	100%	100%
	E. Percentage (%) of full-time libraries that have Saturday openings.	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Number of full-time libraries that have lunchtime openings.	1	3	4	4
	Number of full-time libraries that have evening openings.	3	3	4	4
	Number of full-time libraries that have Saturday openings.	3	3	4	4
L2	Number of visits to full-time libraries per 1,000 population	1,387	1,961	2466	2277
	Total number of visits to full time libraries	98300	138929	174717	161400
L3	Library Stock				
	A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)	3.42	1.71	1.9	1.8
	Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for:				
	B. Books	3.1	2.42	2.9	2.81
	C. Other items	0.16	0.38	0.31	0.28
	Annual expenditure on stock	€242,448	€121,059	135,000	126,000
	Total number of books issued	219117	172197	208416	198966
	Total number of other items issued	11213	27234	22509	19941
L4	Internet Access through Libraries				
	Number of internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	162.9	544.22	540.95	623.92
	Total number of Internet sessions provided	11547	38567	38336	44216

Appendix 1 Events and Photos



Summer Reading Challenge – reading tree in Clara Library

During the Summer children in all libraries were encouraged to take up the Summer Reading Challenge. Participants were given a log book and the aim of reading 8 books during the summer. A stamp was entered in the log book for every book read. Children with completed log

books were invited back to the library during the Children's Book Festival to receive certificates. Some libraries had reading trees like this one from Clara, where children added a leaf with their name on it to the tree, to show they had taken up the reading challenge.

Certificates in Daingean Library





Textile Art Project – Tullamore Library

Knitting and Crochet at your Local Library

Knitting is in and your local library is the place to do it! Birr library has a community scarf, now over 25 feet long! Clara, Daingean, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore libraries also have regular knitting groups with new members always welcome. A colourful and vibrant community project is currently underway at Tullamore Library under the expert guidance of textile designer Kate O'Brien. It involves local volunteers, knitting segments of a "Pilgrim Coat" inspired by the speaker in W.B. Yeats' poem "Aedh wishes for the cloths of heaven."



Children's Book Festival Specials Board

In 2011 The theme for the Children's Book Festival was "Eat Books" and Offaly Libraries served up a mouth-watering menu of events and activities throughout the county. With Book-in-a-bag, colouring, author visits, and Hullabaloo on the menu, several branches reflected the "Eat Books" theme with the café style "Daily Specials Board" which featured a different theme every day accompanied by a book display based around that theme.



Crime Month Book Display – Birr Library

November was crime month in Offaly Libraries. Library users were given guides to the most popular crime authors and displays such as this were set up in libraries around the county to encourage people to try books by crime writers they may not have read before.



Temporary Library Opens in Tullamore

Tullamore Library moved across O'Connor Square to a temporary premises to facilitate renovation works. Opening hours and services remained the same.



Heritage Week 2011, saw 11 different events in Offaly Libraries. These included talks by local historians, film screenings, art workshops and in Edenderry library people were provided with an opportunity to discover more about *Spinning*, a traditional craft that involves changing fleece (sheep's wool) into yarn.

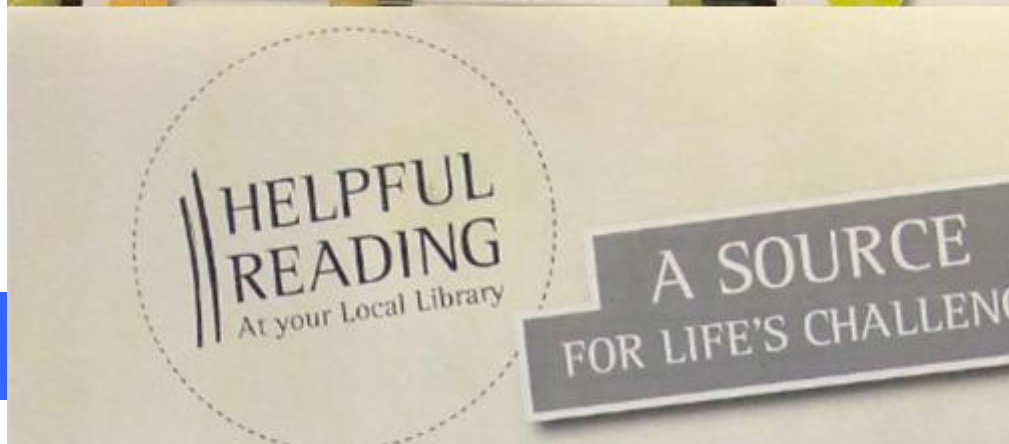


Ceol sa Leabharlann le *Gille Gailinne* i Leabharlann Féar Bán

Bhí clár d'imeachtaí leagtha amach ar fud an chontae chun Seachtain na Gaeilge a cheiliúradh. Bhí ceol agus scannáin sa leabharlann agus taispeantas leabhair, CD agus DVD as Gaeilge ón leabharlann i gach leabharlann.



Partnership initiative with HSE and Local Development Company providing access to quality self help books and online resources for people coping with life's challenges.



ARTS SERVICE

The Arts Service of Offaly County Council aims to be a facilitator and catalyst for the development of a vibrant arts environment in the county.

Offaly County Arts Plan, 2012 to 2016 recognises that the Council can "... **provide leadership in quality inclusive and innovative experiences of the arts for all and to demonstrate through best practice and partnership the benefits of increased access to and involvement in the arts for all our citizens.** "

Main Achievements in 2011:

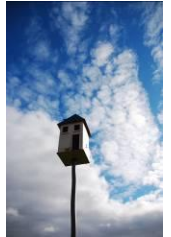
Public Art

In 2011, 3 public art projects were completed:

The Kilcormac Cantata by Vincent Kennedy was a community music project involving schools, community groups, choirs and individual musicians. A radio documentary on the project was featured on RTE Radio 1 on Christmas Day.



At Home in the World by Ceara Conway was a collaborative sculpture project with the residents of Killane Drive in Edenderry to create a focal point for community gatherings and introduce more nature to the estate. The project was featured on TG4's *Imeall*



Grove Street TV by Michael Fortune was an online community TV station created by the young people of Grove Street in Crinkill. It began Ireland's only online community TV station.

Engage with Architecture

This collaborative project between the Arts, Heritage and Architecture Services of Offaly County Council aimed to encourage the public to actively engage with architecture. A temporary pop-up architecture centre was created in Tullamore for the month of May with exhibits, workshops and talks. The programme followed



successive themes of the process of protecting, the process of making and the process of using. In total 1,000 school children attended the centre.

FilmOffaly

Offaly County Council's Film Commission, FilmOffaly, established its third FilmOffaly Award, in partnership with Filmbase. The award winner was *Toy Soldiers* written by Matthew Roche and produced by Rhoda's Chaos. 2011 was the second year of the OFFline Festival and numbers of participants taking part in workshops, screenings and the filmmaking challenge doubled. FilmOffaly and OFFline Film Festival also hosted a film industry event at the Galway Film Fleadh attracting 300 people.



Still from the Short Film Toy Soldiers winner of the FilmOffaly/Filmbase Award 2011

Arts Act Grants

39 Community/Voluntary groups received grants towards arts activities in their community totalling €7,500

Support to Artists Scheme

21 Artists from Offaly across all disciplines were funded in

2011 and two artists were awarded bursaries to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, totalling €9,700

Drama Awards & Community Band Grants

12 Drama/Musical voluntary groups were awarded under the Drama Award Scheme 2011 and three town bands were funded totalling €9,250.

Youth Arts Scheme

Eight programmes providing quality experiences in a range of art disciplines were awarded funding and undertaken by youth groups under the training of professional artist. Funding totalled €4,000.

Festival Support

The Arts Service facilitated with funding, advice and promotional assistance to:

- The Shannonbridge Midsummer Music Festival
- Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival
- Slieve Bloom Storytelling Festival
- Tullamore International Summer Organ Festival
- IFONLY Dance Festival
- OFFline Film Festival
- Shakefest

Bealtaine, Festival of Arts for Older People

A county wide programme of events was coordinated and developed by the Arts Office in collaboration with the Library Service for the Bealtaine Festival. There were 30 events across the county, including visits by Michael D

Higgins and actress Mary McEvoy. A book entitled *Tales from the Kitchen Table, an anthology of Remedies and Recipes* by the over 55's in Offaly was published as part of the festival.



Offaly Youth Dance hosted a You(th) Share Festival that invited youth dance companies from throughout Ireland to Birr, for workshops and performances.

Young Novelists

Novelist Caroline Barry worked with a youth creative writing group (14 to 18 years) in Birr for a full year teaching them the skills of composition, character and plot development. The participants worked on individual projects and held an open mike session in Birr Library.

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre

We continued in partnership to deliver the Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival and support Legitimate Bodies Dance Company to deliver community and youth dance programmes.



Birr Theatre and Arts Centre

Youth Dance

A grant to Legitimate Bodies Dance Company enabled primary schools to avail of workshops at a reduced rate.

The dance company also facilitates a series of community dance classes in Birr Theatre and Arts Centre including the Offaly Youth Dance Company, Yummy Dance, First Footing and Adult Ballet.

Tullamore Community Arts Centre

The design competition for the arts centre was organised by the RIAI. 119 entries were shortlisted to 4 and the winning architectural team is A2 Architects, a young Irish firm, who already have a notable list of successful buildings. Over 600 people attended a public launch of the winning design.

The site for the centre, Kilbride Park, was donated by Tullamore Town Council. A Community Fundraising Campaign for the Arts Centre was launched by the introduction of a fundraising draw. The fundraising team aim to meet €200,000 of the capital costs.



A2 Architects winning design for the Tullamore Community Arts Centre

Midlands Collaborative Projects (The Arts Offices of Offaly, Westmeath, Laois and Longford)

- There were 2 publications of the Midlands Arts and Culture Magazine. This free, 32 page magazine, highlighted the diversity and quality of arts projects across the four counties and aims to create a greater cultural identity in the Midlands.
- Kindermusic continues to develop in 9 centres as a music education programme for toddlers and parents. It is run in conjunction with the VEC.
- Midland Master Classes were delivered as professional development opportunities for artists in the Midlands

Belmont Mill Artists Studios

Nationally renowned for its idyllic setting, the Mill continues to attract visiting artists and tourists into Offaly as well as providing a facility for community activity. Their exhibition, workshop and lecture series are well attended.

Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival

In 2011, Hullabaloo took place simultaneously in both Birr and Clara during the October midterm break. A dedicated local committee, with the assistance of the Arts Office, co-ordinated and administered the festival. Over 35 events were organised with an attendance of 80%.



Launch of Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival at Birr Theatre & Arts Centre 2011

Support and Information Service to Professional, Amateur, Voluntary and Community Groups and Individuals

The Arts Office is a resource for artists and organisations that require advice, direction and information on developing and promoting their arts practice. This element of the service is based on best practice principles in all forms of arts development and is intended to give rise to increased confidence in quality methods and professional approaches.

ENVIRONMENT & WATER SERVICES

SPC Chair: Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick

Members:

Cllr. Percy Clendennen
Cllr. Thomas McKeigue
Cllr. John Foley
Cllr. Nichola Hogan
Cllr. Brendan Killeavy

Sectoral:

Ms. Anne Fahey
Mr. Joe Gaffey
Ms. Teresa Ryan-Feehan

Director of Services: Seán Murray

Senior Engineer, Environment: David Hogan

Senior Executive Engineer, Environment: John Connelly

Senior Engineer, Water Services: Tom Shanahan

Administrative Officer, Water Services: Catriona Hillard

Senior Executive Engineer, Water Services: Ann Healy-Smyth

A/Senior Executive Engineer, Water Services: Jean Ryan

A/Senior Executive Engineer, Water Services: Vivian O'Brien

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Derryclure Landfill

Given the uncertainty in the waste market and the legal requirement to divert waste away from landfill, the Council decided not to extend the life of the current waste cells at the landfill. As a result, landfilling of waste at Derryclure ceased in October 2011.

The Council continues to operate a waste acceptance facility at the site, where waste from domestic

customers and local businesses is accepted and transported off site for reprocessing.

Recycling Facilities

They are currently 45 bring banks in the County for glass, aluminium & steel cans recycling on both private and public sites. We are continuing to expand our textile bank infrastructure in order to provide additional services to the people of Offaly. The Council upgraded

the existing bring bank network. This initiative is supported with funding from the DEHLG.

We now operate three Civic Amenity Facilities (CAFs) in Birr, Derryclure and Edenderry. These accept a wide range of materials for recycling and compliment our existing bring bank facilities. The Council have entered a long term contract with a single operator to maintain and manage all three CAFs. Mixed domestic and biodegradable waste is now accepted at Derryclure CAF, thus providing a one stop shop for householders.

As there is no mobile collection service for household hazardous waste, both the facilities at Birr and Derryclure make provisions for this type of waste. Charges apply for all waste brought to these facilities, with the exception of electrical items, glass packaging and batteries.

The Council continues to promote home composting through the sale of composting units as well as supporting local Tidy Towns and community initiatives through local grant aid.

Waste Management Plan

During 2011 and in conjunction with our neighbouring counties in the Midland Waste Management Region we completed a review of the current Waste Management Plan.

The review concluded that the current plan can and should be extended for a further period of three years.

The key challenge ahead for the next 3 years is the diversion of biodegradable waste away from landfill and to ensure that all waste collectors operating in the county operate a pricing system that encourages the recycling and waste minimisation.

Waste Enforcement

The Council continued to investigate all illegal waste activities and instigate legal proceedings as appropriate. We inspected and audited the operations of Waste Collector Permit holders and Waste Facility Permit Holders in the functional area including vehicles and premises, based on a risk assessment of the operations undertaken. This approach has ensured an effective use of scarce resources.

Awareness Programme

Offaly County Council has continued to actively promote environmental awareness both in the community sector and schools. Currently we have over 65 schools registered for the Green Flag programme and 36 of these have received their Flag.

We are supporting communities in their efforts to introduce community composting units into their local villages. We also support community projects such as anti-graffiti and hedge-laying initiatives and the Midlands

Gateway initiative. We continue to promote and support litter awareness, especially during national spring clean week.

We have, in conjunction with the County Enterprise Board and the EPA, developed closer links with the Business Sector and we continue to support a pilot programme to promote green business within Offaly. In conjunction with Water Services we hosted two breakfast seminars in Tullamore and Birr to promote water conservation and green business initiatives.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL WATERS

Water Framework Directive:

Offaly is affiliated to three River Basin Districts (RBDs); namely the Shannon International River Basin District, the Eastern River Basin District and the South Eastern River Basin District, and in March we recommended the adoption of River Basin Management Plans for each of the three RBDs. We continue to implement an extensive operational monitoring programme of the rivers and groundwater within the county.

We have identified point and diffuse source pressures within each river basin districts that may be contributing to the quality status of the surface waters. These pressures were the basis of the Programme of Measures

(POMs) set out in each of the River Basin Management Plans. These Programmes of Measures are designed to maintain existing water status and improve where possible.

We continued to investigate activities, such as agriculture, septic tanks, commercial, and industrial discharges to surface waters, within the catchment area of designated rivers with poor status and to identify and implement remediation measures.

Protection of Groundwater:

Staff from the Environment Section implement the revised Code of Practice for the assessment of on site waste water treatment systems for single houses. This code requires a far more comprehensive and onerous site assessment from the previous standard.

We carried out investigations of Zone of Contributions of Public Water Supply boreholes and prepared Aquifer Protection Plans; based on the perceived risk from agricultural, domestic, commercial and industrial activities to the groundwater quality. This reflects a comprehensive approach by the council to protect the raw water quality of our public supplies and by inference the health of the people of Offaly.

BURIAL GROUNDS

We commenced the implementation of the Council's new

policy on the provision of burial ground throughout the county, which gives greater responsibility and ownership of burial grounds to the local community.

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY AWARENESS

Climate Change & Energy awareness continues to be a key area where the Council is required to show leadership in both promoting public awareness and in changing mind sets towards energy management.

Many more energy saving initiatives have been put in place in 2011 including virtualisation of the computer servers, reduction in costs for water treatment & waste water treatment plants through changing electricity suppliers, reduction in printing costs. All have resulted in significant cost savings.

ANIMAL CONTROL & WELFARE

Stray Animal Control Service

Offaly County Council's Veterinary section operates its dog control service in accordance with the Control of Dogs Act, 1986 involving:

- Collecting stray dogs / Taking in surrendered dogs
- Investigating sheep kills.
- Investigating nuisance caused by dangerous dogs or dogs not under proper control.

Under the [Control of Horses Act, 1996](#) , all local

authorities are responsible for the control of horses in their areas including the collection of stray horses on public or private land.

Disposal of Fallen Animals

These are becoming an increasing problem in the county. It is however, the statutory responsibility of Offaly County Council to dispose of animals dumped on public land. Every effort is made to trace the ownership of said fallen stock in order to recover our costs.

FOOD SAFETY

Offaly County Council's Veterinary Department is responsible for carrying out functions in relation to Food Protection and Disease Control. It implements the terms and conditions of a Service Contract between the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and Offaly County Council in relation to the slaughter of food animals and imposes statutory controls on the production of meat, meat products and poultry. Its principal functions in relation to food safety relate to small throughput Slaughtering Premises of which there are currently five operating in the county, to meat product and distribution premises of which there are three operating within the county. Two new meat cutting plants have submitted documentation and are undergoing an approval process. There is also a "seasonal" poultry slaughterhouse within the county.

ENERGY USAGE IN 2011

Overview of Energy Usage in 2011

Offaly County Council's main energy users are Water and Waste Treatment Services, 66% consumption. All other regional services, including administration buildings, account for the balance 34% of consumption. In 2011, Offaly County Council consumed 22.071 MWh of energy, consisting of:

- 17.671MWh of electricity;
- 4.400 MWh of fossil fuels, including (LPG, Heating Oil & Transport fuels)

Actions Undertaken in 2011

In 2011 Offaly County Council undertook a range of initiatives to improve our energy performance, including:

- The installation of a Vehicle Fuel Monitoring System capable of monitoring and alerting of increased fuel usage in various vehicles - the estimated energy saving on this installation is 0.3 MWh;
- Installation of energy conservation projects at Tullamore Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, consisting of Back Wash Water Recycling, Rain Water Harvesting, Occupancy Sensor installation, Additional BMS controls and additional insulation to key areas of the building. It is estimated that 0.9MWh energy will be saved;

- Insulation and Heating Upgrades to 31 units of housing stock which has saved an estimated 5 MWh;
- Water Services Monitoring & Metering upgrades - upgrades to Wastewater Treatment Plants has saved an estimated 0.9MWh;
- Energy Audits have been carried out on the Machinery Yard, Ballydrohid and five library buildings throughout the county. Implementation of identified energy saving elements may save an estimated 1 MWh.

Altogether, these and other energy saving measures are saving Offaly County Council approximately 8.5 MWh annually.

Actions Planned for 2012

In 2012 and beyond Offaly County Council intends to further improve our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Feasibility study on Energy Efficient Public Lighting and discussion on the introduction of energy saving policies relating to new lighting installations;
- Expansion of Energy Audits to the remaining Council installations and buildings in order to identify areas where cost effective measures for energy saving can be implemented;
- Extend the driver CPC course to include energy conservation awareness to vehicle operators;
- Examine the introduction of the use of Bio Fuels in Council vehicles.

WATER SERVICES

Introduction

The delivery of Water services throughout the county continues to be a challenge in terms of funding, regulatory compliance and customer expectation of service delivery. It will be increasingly difficult to fund capital works required to maintain and upgrade our infra-structure to meet the regulatory and service requirements challenge of the next few years.

Notwithstanding resource limitations, drinking water quality in both public and Group Water Schemes in County is excellent, and service disruption is very rare.

The continuing reduction of the Water Services operational budget, make it particularly challenging to maintain and protect the investment in improved infra-structure over the last few years. There is a risk that the cost of repair and service interruption will outweigh the savings achieved through reduced maintenance, in the short to medium term.

Drinking Water

There were no boil water notices or drinking restrictions

served on Public Water Supplies in 2011. Offaly is one of only 8 Water Services Authorities without any Water Supply scheme on the EPA Remedial Action list.

Operational sampling increased at all WTP's in 2011 to facilitate implementing tighter process control, which has further improved water quality and helped reduce chemical and power consumption.

Telemetry has been rolled out to all Water Supply Schemes which facilitates alarming of, and response to, water quality problems as required by the EPA. However, the Council cannot maintain a continuous out of hours response service to these alarms.

Network Management

Stages 1 & 2 Of the National Water Conservation Project was completed in Offaly in 2010. All schemes are now audited continuously and water leakage and wastage can be detected and located at an early stage.

While the cold spells in 2010 and 2011, had a major impact on Unaccounted for Water (UFW), the figure was eventually restored to 46%; still short of the 44% level

achieved in early 2010.

A lot of resources have been deployed in resolving billing issues with Non-Domestic Customers, which has again resulted in reduced consumption for those customers.

Wastewater

Under S.I. 684 of 2007- Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, Offaly Co. Council have applied for authorisation by licence (14) or certificate (15) as appropriate, for all (29) discharges from Public Wastewater Schemes in the County.

Licences were granted for Birr in 2009 and for Tullamore and Edenderry in 2010. All 15 certificates were granted in 2011, but we still await the remaining 11 licences.

The monitoring, process improvements and capital works required to ensure Compliance with each licence will require further financial and human resources. Compliance for some of the smaller discharges will now be more difficult because planned upgrades of these schemes were removed from the WSIP and capital funding generally is greatly reduced.

Health & Safety

The 2005 Health & Safety Act and 2006 Construction Regulations have placed further requirements and in particular responsibilities, on the Local Authority with regard to Health & Safety in the workplace. Implementation of rigorous Health & Safety procedures to all aspects of work and providing adequate and regular training is adding to the cost of providing services and constructing works.

Water Services Capital Schemes

The Capital Schemes Programme consists of new or substantial upgrades to existing Water Supply and Wastewater schemes in the County. Schemes are generally funded through the following programmes:

- (i) Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP)
- (ii) Rural Water Small Schemes Programme (SS)
- (iii) Special Development Contribution Schemes (SDC).
- (iv) Serviced Land Initiative (SLI)

Watermain rehabilitation works under Stage 3 of the National Water Conservation Programme are 90% funded under the WSIP and therefore require less matching funds from the Councils own resources than most other Capital Schemes. They also provide immediate return in terms of reduced water production and network repair costs.

Works under this programme are approved for Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry, Daingean & Kilcormac initially.

The following Schemes were under construction in 2011:

Scheme	Cost	Source of Funding
Tullamore Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade (In Progress)	€20m	WSIP
Ballinagar Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade; Completed.	€750k	SDC
Watermains Rehabilitation in Birr	€500k	WSIP
Moneygal Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	€250k	SS
Geashill WSS- New Source development.	€50k	SS
Clonygown STP upgrade- Constructed wetland. **	€50k	SS

** Funding of €90k was provided for Integrated Constructed Wetlands for new initiatives under the Rural Water Programme.



Ballinagar Wastewater Treatment Works

Rural Water Programme

Rural Water Programme Allocation for 2011 was:

Interim Works on ECJ Schemes:	€ 50,000
Connect to Public Main:	€ 0
Take Over by Local Authority:	€ 35,000
Upgrade:	€ 550,000
New and Extensions:	€ 100,000
Small Public Schemes:	€ 441,000
	€ 1,176,000

The full allocation was expended in 2011.

The Council processed approximately €450k in subsidies to Group Water Schemes in 2011, and it is expected that a similar figure will be paid in 2012. A total of over €23K will be paid in well grants in 2011.

All payments in respect of well grants and subsidy payments are recouped from the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government on a quarterly basis.

Priorities For 2012

1. Maintain Current Water Quality Standards in both Public & Group Water Schemes. Further Develop remote monitoring of plants & Networks to achieve operational efficiencies and early response to quality and mechanical/electrical problems
2. Further Reduce Unaccounted for Water through increased monitoring of customer side leakage and network upgrades.
3. Achieve Compliance with Wastewater Discharge Licenses.
4. Progress Watermain Rehabilitation Contracts under WSIP.
5. Progress Clara Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade.
6. Progress Improvements to Tullamore WSS.
7. Complete Tullamore Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.
8. Optimise Small Schemes Allocation under RWP.

PLANNING, ECONOMIC & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

SPC Chair: Cllr. Eamon Dooley

Members:

Cllr. Dervill Dolan,
Cllr. Peter Ormond,
Cllr. Liam Quinn,
Cllr. Sinead Dooley,
Cllr. Johnny Butterfield,
Cllr. Michael Loughnane

Sectoral:

Mr. Ray Kennedy
Mr. Dominic Doheny
Mr. Tom Finnerty
Mr. Dominic Carroll

Director Of Services: Declan Kirrane

Senior Executive Planner: Andrew Murray

Administrative Officer: Phylis Hughes, Planning

Architect: Rachel McKenna

Heritage Officer: Amanda Pedlow

Administrative Officer: Jackie Finney, Economic Development

Administrative Officer: David Minton, Community & Enterprise

Sports Partnership Co-ordinator: Eamon Henry

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department is responsible for land use policy, control of development including the protection of the natural built heritage and amenity of the County.

Land use policy is implemented by means of the County Development Plan (incl. Town Development Plans), Local Area Plans, Village and Sraid Plans. Planning Control involves the processing of planning applications and the taking of appropriate enforcement action where necessary.

County Development Plan 2009 – 2015

The Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015 was formally made on the 19th January 2009 and came into effect 4 weeks later on the 16th February 2009. The County Manager is required to prepare a report two years after the making of the Development Plan on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan.

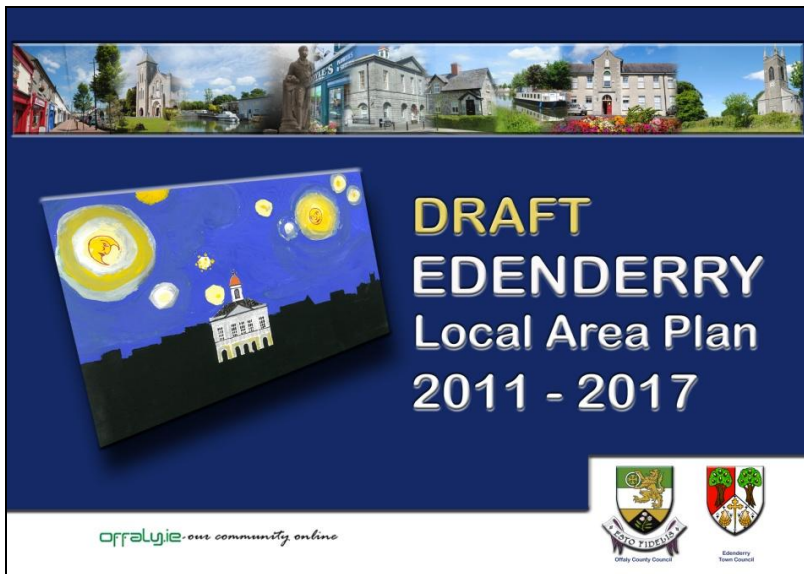
This report was prepared at the end of 2010 and was presented to the members in January 2011 and concluded that a variation to the County Development Plan is required

to be undertaken in order to comply with the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. This involved the inclusion of a 'Core Strategy' See Variation No 1 below.

Variation No 1 County Development Plan 2009 – 2015

Variation No 1 comprised two elements, namely (a) the inclusion of a Core Strategy into the County Development Plan and (b) the removal of Portarlington Town Plan from Volume 2 of the County Development Plan. The proposed Variation went on public display from 7th December 2011.

Edenderry Local Area Plan 2011 – 2017



In December 2010, the Draft Local Area Plan for Edenderry 2011-2017 went on public display. The display period was preceded by community and public consultation over a 4 week period in September 2010. In total 15 written submissions were received and responded to in the Manager's Report, which was circulated to the Members in February 2011. Material alterations to the Draft LAP were recommended at the March monthly meeting and these were put on display from 7th April 2011 to 6th May 2011. 9 written submissions were received and responded to in the Manager's Report, which was circulated to the members in May 2011. At the June monthly meeting, members adopted the Edenderry LAP, which formally came into effect on the 18th July 2011.

Variation No 2 – County Development Plan 2009-2015 – Clara Town Plan

Targeted Community consultation was held in the Library in Clara on 20th September 2011. Feedback was given by the committees which provided the platform from which the Draft Clara Town Plan was written. This was forwarded to the Environmental Authorities in December 2011. A submission was received from the EPA in January 2012. It is proposed to undertake a variation of the County Development Plan in 2012, to insert Clara Town Plan.



**Proposed Clara Town Plan
2012**

To be included in Variation No.2
of the Offaly County
Development Plan 2009-2015

March 2012



Portarlington Local Area Plan

Variation no. 1 of the County Development Plan provides for the removal of the Portarlington Town Plan from Volume 2 of the County Development Plan. In January 2011 meetings were initiated with Laois Planning Authority relating to the undertaking of a joint Portarlington Local Area Plan. Laois County Council are the Lead Authority on this project. The issues paper for Portarlington was issued in September 2011 and an LAP workshop was held for members of the public to participate. The LAP is a work in progress.

Strategic Policy Committee Meetings

During 2011, four meetings of the committee were held and the Committee considered the following matters:

- Review of Edenderry Local Area Plan
- Joint Local Area Plan – Portarlington
- Review of Clara Town Plan
- Co. Development Plan – Core Strategy -Regional Planning Guidelines, Housing Strategy
- County Managers 2 year progress report on securing objectives of the County Development Plan 2009-2015 and the Birr Town & Environs Development Plan 2010 - 2016
- Engage with Architecture Project
- Conservation Grants – Structures at Risk Fund 2011
- Unfinished Estates Reports
- Derelict Sites
- Updates on Planning & Development Legislation
- New Policy on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal for Single Dwellings
- Work Programme 2011

Development Management

The following table sets out the trend in the number of planning applications received and decided by the Council over the past number of years:

Yr.	No of Applications	No. Granted	No. Refused	Total Decided
2009	557*	418	69	487
2010	449*	332	54	386
2011	347*	293	27	320

(*This figure includes applications which were invalid)

Planning permission is required for any development of land or property unless the development is exempted development. Development management ensures that these developments comply with the statutory provisions in the County Development Plan, the Planning Acts and the Regulations.

The continued downturn in the economic activity, particularly in the construction sector, has been reflected in the number of planning applications received in 2011. 347 planning applications have been received in 2011 which compares with 449 for 2010.

The downturn in the planning applications has afforded the opportunity to the Planning Department to focus on other areas of activity, such as the compilation of a derelict sites register, preparation of action plans for sraids and villages, the taking in charge of housing estates and a more consistent and concerted effort in relation to enforcement and compliance issues.

Guidance on Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Estates was received during 2011 as was (draft) Guidance on Section 261A, Quarries legislation

Derelict Sites were taken over from the Environment Section in 2009. There were 6 Derelict Sites files opened in 2011 and 17 files closed - There were 24 files opened and 36 files closed in 2010 and consequently at the end of 2011 there were 43 open

files. 9 sites were entered on the Derelict Sites Register in 2011 bringing the total number on the register to 11.

All planning applications have been screened for Appropriate Assessment since January 2010. This is in order to ascertain whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

Strategic Infrastructure

An Bord Pleanala advised that the request for pre-planning application consultations for the proposed Leinster International Airport in the Portarlinton area have been withdrawn.

Conservation Grants

The Conservation Grant Scheme was suspended in 2011 and has been replaced for the present by the Structures at Risk Fund. Under this scheme, two applications were invited from each Local Authority for a total nation grant aid of €650,000. Offaly County Council made 3 applications for grant aid to the Department, namely

- Erry Mill, Clara
- Birr Work House
- Mount St. Joseph's, Roscrea

No funding was received for any of the above-mentioned projects.

Engage with Architecture Project

This project consisted of a month-long exhibition taking

place at Main Street, Tullamore, in conjunction with the Architecture, Arts, Heritage and Planning Offices of Offaly County Council, in collaboration with Design Hub, and was funded by the Department of the Environment. Its aim was to encourage the public to actively engage with architecture and to create an awareness of our built environment. Up to 1000 national school children visited the work-shops at the centre. A 'Best Front Forward Exhibition' took place in the Centre on 17/5/2011 and comprised a talk on Irish Shopfronts by renowned architect, Sean Rothery.

Unfinished Housing Estates

The final version of the Guidance Manual on Offaly's Unfinished Estates was issued in August 2011. The findings of the National Housing Development Survey showed that Co. Offaly has one of the lowest numbers of unfinished houses nationally.

Scanning Project

During 2011, the scanning project was launched whereby planning applications can be viewed on the internet. This allows the public to view planning applications at a time and place of their choosing rather than being restricted to office hours.

Compliance/Enforcement

Warning Letters:	121
Enforcement Notices:	43
District/Circuit Court Cases:	18
Prosecutions <u>Initiated</u> :	9

During the year, 84 enforcement files were opened. An enhanced screening process was put in place during 2011 whereby the alleged breach is summarily investigated to avoid unwarranted cases being opened. 121 warning letters and 43 enforcement notices were issued. Regular meetings are held with the Council's legal advisers to ensure that all cases are pursued in a timely manner. Recovery of costs where the Council is successful in prosecution is a serious and real concern presently.

Development Contribution Scheme

Details of amounts received and disbursed as circulated to members, with the Budget as follows:

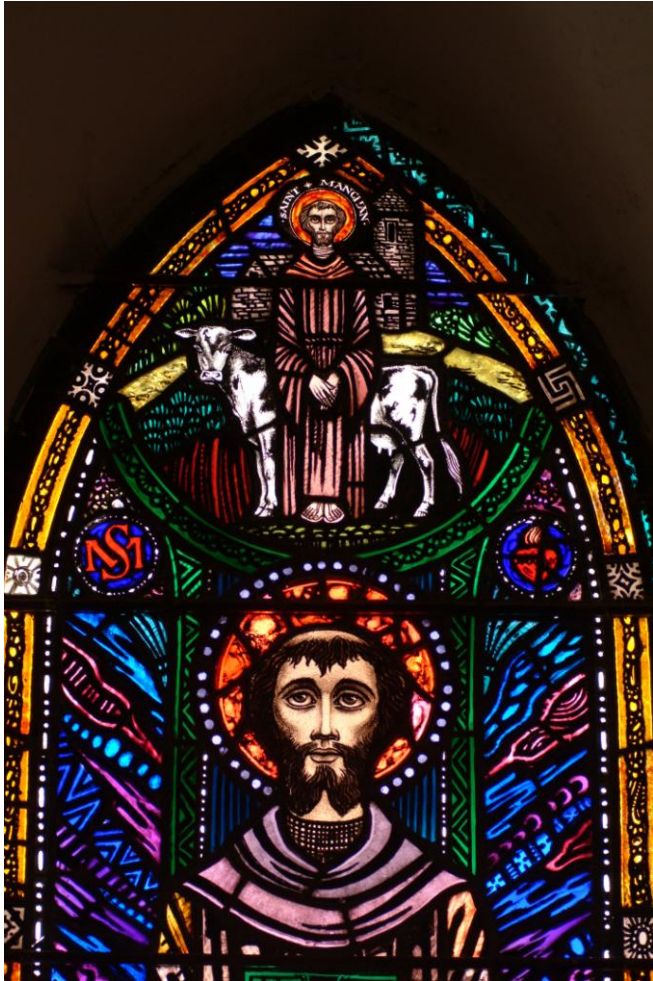
Development Contributions-Receipts and Application of Development Funds for the period from Nov 2010 – Nov 2011.	
Receipts	€000's
Balance Available – November 2010	13,723
Contributions Received Dec 2010 to Nov 2011 (as follows)	
Development Contributions – Customers	467
Water & Sewerage: Dev. Contributions - Town Councils	-
Disbursements Dec 2010 – Nov 2011 (see below)	8754
Balance Available – November 2011	5436

Allocation of Funds – since last report to Council, November 2010	000's
Small Water & Sew Schemes Block Grant	150
Small Water & Sew Schemes Block Grant	180
Tullamore Library Refurbishment	800
Provision for Arts Centre	200
Water Main Rehabilitation	970
Traffic Calming Kilcumber	15
Monasteroris, Edenderry	3
Birr Swimming Pool	280
Clara Swimming Pool	250
Tullamore Swimming Pool	500
Tullamore Waste Water Treatment Works	5200
Cycle Track – Kinnitty Mountains	200

**OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR
DISBURSEMENT AS AT 16th NOVEMBER 2011:**

Job Description	Funds Available €000's
Dev. Cont. Scheme – Amenities	115
Dev. Cont Scheme – Infrastructure	2000
Dev. Cont Scheme – Wastewater	677
Dev. Cont Scheme – Water	1571
Spl. Dev. Cont. 2004 – Edenderry Sewerage Scheme	239
Spl. Dev. Cont. 2004 – Car Parking	414
Spl. Dev. Cont. Scheme '04– Crinkle Booster Pump	16
Spl. Dev. Cont. Scheme '04-Daingean Upgrade Sewerage	15
Spl Dev. Cont. Scheme '04– Portarlinton	5
Spl Dev. Cont. Scheme Rd Improvements & Main, Drumcraw, Mt Lucas	23
Spl Dev Cont –Communication Masts	353
Spl Dev Cont – Road Improvements Tullaroe, Clareen	8
TOTAL	5436

HERITAGE SECTION



Harry Clarke Studio window at Boher Church featuring St Manchan

A key aspect of the work of the Heritage Office in 2011 was the preparation, consultation and publication of the 3rd Heritage Plan for Offaly covering the period 2012-2016. The Council's Heritage Officer works with the Offaly Heritage Forum, made up of state agencies, communities and NGOs, coordinating and liaising on heritage projects. The forum meets four times a year for site meetings and discussion, with working groups meeting when necessary.

There is close contact and support both in terms of expertise and in finance from the Heritage Council. The Heritage budget from the County Council is supplemented by Heritage Council funding. The Heritage Office often draws down additional funding schemes and works in partnership with other groups to maximize outputs.

The projects delivered with Heritage Council financial support in 2011 were; the scanning of the important collection of medieval grave markers at Gallen and Lemanaghan early Monastic Sites; the publication of the book on *Croghan* by John Feehan and heritage awareness projects which involved the co-ordination and delivery of the Offaly Naturalists' Field Club programme, Heritage Week and the Annual Seminar. The Offaly Naturalist's Field Club is a huge asset to the county with 15 different events. All day trips are free and leaders are

predominantly Offaly experts working on a voluntary basis. Heritage Week in August continues to grow with a number of events to choose from each of the nine days, the majority organized by community groups. A unique aspect to the 2011 Heritage Week was the day trip to the Harry Clarke windows of County Offaly which was featured in a full page article by the Irish Times. The Annual Heritage Seminar was held on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November with the Edenderry Historical Society hosting the Friday night and the OHAS, the Saturday. Field trips to Gallen monastic site and to the new Clara Bog Visitor centre were on offer on the Saturday morning.

The Engage with Architecture programme in 2011 involved activities and events during the month of May. This was a joint project between the Arts, Conservation and Heritage sections of the Council. It was a new and very productive departure involving exhibitions, talks, schools workshops, trails and bus tours all centered on a shop unit in Main Street, Tullamore.

Work continues with the National Monuments Service on recording and researching the castles of Offaly for a forthcoming publication.

The Heritage officer works with many sections in the Council. The delivery of the Birr Public Realm Plan with Birr Town Council involves a considerable body of work. The Community & Enterprise has set up a mentoring

programme for Tidy Towns groups and the Heritage Section is involved in mentoring a number of groups and providing advice to all groups on aspects of the built and natural heritage. Work continues to control and eradicate the invasive Japanese Knotweed. An unanticipated and unusual aspect of work in 2011 was the investigation of a mine shaft which opened up in Blundell Park in Edenderry in the autumn.



John Feehan at the launch of the Croghan book

A unique project for 2011 was the involvement in the planning and arrangements for the visit to Moneygall by the President of the United States in May.

A considerable amount of the time in the heritage office

is spent assisting communities and individuals to plan and deliver heritage projects. This aspect of work will continue to grow as funding available to groups is channeled through OLDC. An example of this is working with the Trustees of Daingean Courthouse to carry out major conservation works.

Information is constantly posted to the www.offaly.ie/heritage and the Offaly Heritage facebook site was started in 2011.

Outlook for 2012

The budget for 2012 from Offaly County Council has been reduced to just €2,700. Funding secured for the Engage with Architecture Project and from the Heritage Council will still facilitate a certain amount of activity. The Heritage Sector is fortunate with the number of volunteers that carry out work in the county from placename recording to leading Offaly Naturalists' Field Club events to hosting Heritage Week events.



Broughall National School who presented their field names project at the Annual Seminar 2011

COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

Community and Enterprise support Offaly Local Authorities goals and strategies as follows:

Providing Civic Leadership for Offaly and all its People, whatever their circumstances or backgrounds

Supporting Offaly County Development Board and its sub-structures including: Offaly Sports Partnership; Offaly Social Inclusion Measures Group (SIM); the Traveller Interagency Group; the Tourism Interagency Group; and the Economic Interagency Group.

Offaly County Development Board (CDB) is nearing the end of the implementation of the 2002-2012 Strategy.

The CDB is currently concentrating on the 4 priority areas as identified in the CDB Action Plan 2009-2012

- Education and Skills (Lifelong learning).
- Creation and retention of employment and enterprise.
- Sustainable development.
- Social Inclusion-Implementation of the Local Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Community and Enterprise Department supports each Interagency Group in the implementation of

their individual action plans.

Other projects undertaken by the Community & Enterprise Department in 2011 include: The CDB STEM Scholarship Programme; the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme; Bike Week 2011; and Offaly Play Day.

The Community and Enterprise Department works closely with Offaly Local Development Company and also provides a link between the County Development Board/Offaly County Council and the Offaly County Childcare Committee, the Midland Regional Drugs Task Force, Edenderry School Completion Programme and the Rural Transport Programme among others.

Offaly SIM Group

The Community & Enterprise Section continues to support the Offaly SIM Group which meets bi-monthly and brings together all agencies and organisations in the County that have a remit around combating poverty and exclusion.

In 2011 the SIM Group completed the Mid-Term Review of the Local Anti-Poverty Strategy. The SIM Group continued its networking and co-ordination role throughout 2011. One of the interagency actions undertaken by the member agencies of SIM was support for 4 Long Term Unemployed Men's Groups at various locations in the County.

Offaly Comhairle Na nÓg

The Community & Enterprise Department continues to support Offaly Comhairle na nÓg. The purpose of Comhairle is to link young people to adult decision making bodies and ensure that young people can influence policy. The Comhairle Executive meets on a monthly basis and works on projects that have been identified by young people. The group is representative of young people aged 13-17 from a wide geographical area within the County. Offaly Comhairle engages with the HSE, Gardai and Councillors on their issues and is supported by the collaborative working of Youth workers in Offaly.

In 2011 Offaly Comhairle held its first Youth Conference **"Say It Out Loud"**. The Conference brought together almost 200 young people and addressed issues that included eating disorders, sexuality, suicide, teenage pregnancy, addictions & family issues. The Comhairle Group realised that there are many issues facing young people and there is a need to talk about these issues.

The Conference, organised by the Offaly Comhairle Committee, was the largest event Comhairle has organised to date and received National Coverage on RTE.



The Comhairle identified two main issues to address in 2011 - teen suicide and mental health focusing on bullying and pressures on young people. A key outcome of the Conference was an application to Headstrong for a Jigsaw Project for Offaly.

Offaly Jigsaw Project

In 2011 Offaly County Development Board submitted an application to Headstrong to become a site for a Jigsaw Project. Offaly Comhairle na nÓg was instrumental to the project. The application was successful and Offaly was selected as a new Jigsaw site after Headstrong received Government endorsement on January 24th to provide €3 m for innovative projects in mental health and to support the

expansion of Jigsaw to 5 new communities. €250,000.00 has been allocated to Offaly Jigsaw to provide staff and mental health support service to young people. The Jigsaw Project works to engage young people, service providers and all other relevant organizations as equal partners to develop an effective response to the mental health and well being needs of young people aged 15-25.

Offaly Sports Partnership

Offaly Sports Partnership is a sub group of Offaly County Development Board. It is hosted by the Community & Enterprise Section of Offaly County Council and receives core funding from the Irish Sports Council. In 2011 three staff were attached to the work of the Sports Partnership. In 2011, Councillor Danny Owens, Cathoirleach Offaly County Council and a Board member of the Sports Partnership, was appointed to the Board of the Irish Sports Council. Offaly Sports Partnership welcomes this appointment and wishes Councillor Owens the very best for his term with the Sports Council.

Below is an outline of some of the Partnership's undertakings in 2011.

Launch of the New Strategic Plan

In 2011, Offaly Sports Partnership launched a new five year plan. Entitled "Everyone's Participation Counts", this plan sets out priorities to increase

participation in sport and physical activity in the county. A copy of this plan can be downloaded from the Sports Partnership's website or can be requested from any member of staff.

Operation Transformation

The Sports Partnership linked into the work of the Operation Transformation TV programme by organising a local walk in Tullamore in early 2011 and a regional sports event in Athlone in conjunction with other Sports Partnerships in the Midlands. As people become more health conscious there is a corresponding increase in recreational sports and physical activity and the Sports Partnership will continue to support this area of work.

Sport for People with a Disability

Funding was secured to continue to engage a dedicated Sports Inclusion Disability Officer in 2011 and a range of programmes targeting people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities continued to be delivered. Over 400 people have benefited from this intervention to date

Promoting Inclusion through our Local Sports Heroes

The Sports Partnership continued to support opportunities for participation and retention in sport through engaging some of Offaly's Sports heroes in its work.

In 2011, the Sports Partnership continued to work with the FAST Kids project of former Olympian James Nolan to promote Sportshall Athletics in schools across the county.

Such has been the success of this programme that it was adopted in six other counties in 2011 and the first ever nation inter county event for primary schools was staged. Schools from Offaly took honours in all four categories in the national finals (Ballinagar National School in 3rd & 4th class girls, Edenderry Boys National School in 3rd & 4th class boys, St. Philomena's National School, Tullamore in 5th & 6th class girls and Scoil Bhride, Tullamore in 5th & 6th class boys).

The Pauline Curley Marathon Relay for secondary school girls remained a feature of the work programme of the Sports Partnership with six schools and 240 girls declaring for the third running of this event.

The Sports Partnership in conjunction with An Garda Siochana, a number of Youth Projects in the County, Golf Clubs and the VEC Youth Officer staged the inaugural Shane Lowry golf tournament. This project is a coming together of youth projects and golf clubs to afford disadvantaged young people who might never be afforded the opportunity to play golf a chance to do so.

Meet and Train Groups

A meet and train project was established in Cloghan for a 10 week training programme. Following the programme, St. Rynagh's GAA staged the first running of its 10KM road run in which 125 people

participated. The group supported in Portarlington in 2010 in conjunction with our colleagues in Laois, continued to host a road run with over 300 participants.

Sports Integration Project

With support from the office for the integration of migrant communities, the Sports Partnership is delivering a unique project to support immigrant children achieve their sporting potential. It is anticipated that in the coming two years the results of this intervention will be noticeable

Supporting the Community Forum to Participate In Policy Development

Offaly Community Forum has increased its membership to 432 member groups.

The Forum has been active in a range of areas including networking, information sharing, training, and policy development. Projects for 2011 that the Forum engaged in include:

- Supporting Offaly Volunteer Centre in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company
- Establishing a County Tidy Towns Network
- Establishing a Community Alert Network
- Organisation of Offaly Mental Health Talk Week in collaboration with the HSE and Design Hub during which over 1500 people attended 30 events around the County to endeavour to reduce the taboo in relation to mental health and suicide and to raise

awareness of the supports that exist in the local Community.

- Linked with John Feehan UCD and local landowners in relation to a research project on the Brosna Callows
- Linked with OCC Roads Department re the Winter Roads Programme.
- Community Input to Offaly County Council Heritage Plan 2012-2016
- Community Input to Offaly County Arts Plan 2012-2016



Integrated Athletic Academy- Relay Competition

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Offaly is a vibrant business location, which offers a unique quality of life in the centre of the Irish Midlands. It is a positive enterprise led community and the ideal place to establish and grow a business. Economic Development transcends all our functions as we assist local communities:

- To do business in a clean environment,
- Assist export led companies with modern road infrastructure
- Provision of essential water services to hi-tec and pharmaceutical companies employing large numbers of local people
- Adopting positive business led objectives in our Development Plans

One of our more fundamental roles is building relationships and working on an interagency basis to generate sustainable employment with agencies like the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Offaly County Enterprise Board, Shannon Development and FAS. We work within the framework of the County Development Plan to ensure balanced development across the County. Through the National Spatial Strategy we also work in a collaborative way with our colleagues in Westmeath (ATM) and the

wider Midlands area. For this reason the Economic Development Office was established. The role of this office is to promote economic development in Offaly and liaise with commercial and industrial companies looking to locate their business in Offaly. The Economic Development Office also adopts a role in Tourism Development and works jointly with the Offaly Tourism Interagency Group to promote Offaly as a visitor destination and develop projects that will encourage Offaly to be a successful tourist location.

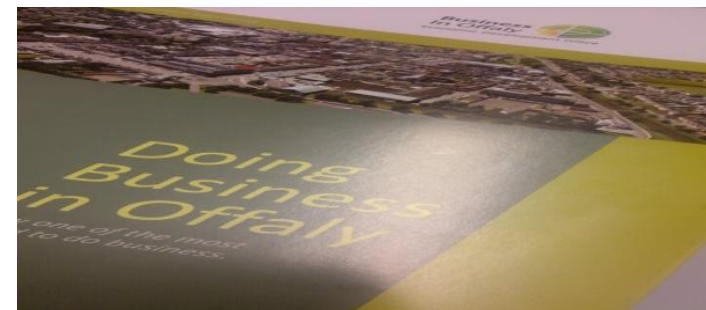
Review of 2011

Some of the initiatives delivered during the year include:

- Over 600 potential entrepreneurs, existing businesses and industry experts attended the unique one day **Start and Grow Enterprise** Expo in Tullamore on the 18 November 2011



- Offaly County Council published its '**Doing Business in Offaly**' Guide. The purpose of the guide is to provide an overview of infrastructure and services available in the County.
- The **Innovation Centre** continues to develop with three full time people and three part time staff working from the centre. Designhub have continued with their early success and scooped the Business Initiative Award for 2011 from Tullamore.
- A first for Offaly, the Craft-Pop-Up-Shop gave a unique opportunity for local crafts' people to sell their products in the County town. The Shop has provided an invaluable opportunity to food and craft makers and is a model that will be replicated again.
- www.offaly.ie/businessinoffaly.ie and www.tullamore.ie are now live. These websites emphasise the business and social advantages of living and working in Offaly. We have also updated our '**Visit Offaly**' page on www.offaly.ie with a number of activities and services available in the County.



- The Offaly Tourism Interagency Group has had a busy year with the publication of two guides:
 - Offaly: Your guide to staying in Offaly
 - Offaly: at your leisure – promotional guide to tourist attractions in Offaly,
- Offaly was fortunate to receive a visit from the President of the United States Barack Obama in 2011 to his ancestral home of Moneygall. Offaly County Council has been working with its tourism partners to utilise the President's visit to promote the County and attract increasing visitors.

Outlook for 2012

In the current economic climate it is extremely important that we explore all avenues of opportunity and become creative at leveraging funding and generating positive options for the County of Offaly. Some of our intentions for 2012 include:

- Continue to aggressively pursue business and employment opportunities available for locating in Offaly.
- Work in partnership through a strengthened Economic Sub Committee of the County Development Board in order to promote Offaly as a destination to do business.
- Offaly County Council will conduct detailed statistical analysis of business / employment in Offaly for 2012 with the release of CSO data.
- The Tourism Interagency Group will concentrate on developing the following projects
 - Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking project
 - Durrow Demesne
 - Lough Boora Parklands
 - Banagher Marina

ROADS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

SPC Chair: Tony McLoughlin MCC

Members:

Cllr. Noel Bourke
Cllr. Connie Hanniffy
Cllr. Ger Plunkett
Cllr. Danny Owens
Cllr. Paddy Rowland

Sectoral:

Mr. Hugh Farrell
Mr. Brian Kenny
Mr. Michael Kenny

Director of Services: Frank Heslin

Senior Engineer: Charles McCarthy, Roads

Senior Executive Engineer: Joe Coleman, Roads

Administrative Officer: Mary Flynn Kenny

Chief Fire Officer: Eoin O’Ceilleachair

Health & Safety Officer: Dennis Gibbons

ROADS DEPARTMENT

- **Tullamore Bypass** (€150,000 – 2011) – Opened to traffic in 2009. Estimated Cost €100m including land acquisition. Allocation in 2011 covered residual network, traffic surveys, supervision and settlement of outstanding land acquisition.
- **Tullamore/Kilbeggan Link** (€550,000 – 2011) - This scheme was progressed by Westmeath County Council NRDO in 2010 and 2011. To date the following items have been addressed: -
 1. Preliminary Design completed
 2. Ground Investigation completed
 3. Initial Archaeological Assessment completed
 4. EIS completed
 5. CPO ready for publication

Approval of the NRA is required to proceed to the next stage and this involves the publication of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and the holding of an Oral Hearing. The NRA confirmed in February 2012 that they would not be granting approval to proceed to CPO/Oral Hearing stage due to the unavailability of funding.

- **Banagher Link Road Phase 2** (€200,000 – 2011 additional funding) – Offaly County Council began construction of this section of road in 2010. The section of new road involved is 330 metres in length and links the Lusmagh Road with the Crank Road. Additional funding of €200,000 was sought and received from the DOT in 2011 to complete this improvement scheme which also includes sections of the existing Crank Road and

Lusmagh Road. The works will include drainage, footpaths, surfacing, signage, road markings and public lighting. It is planned to have this scheme completed by the end of 2011/early 2012.

- **Transportation Study for Tullamore Town** – Consultants Malachyi Walsh and Partners commenced the study in 2010. Work completed by the consultants to date include; Initial Public Consultation; Existing Situations Report; Macro Simulation Model for the Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link; Final Draft Report; Strategic Recommendations Report; Consultation with Town and Area Councillors; Final Public Consultation ended on 25/11/2011. The final report is expected to be circulated to the elected members in April 2012.
- **National Roads Bridge Rehabilitation Project (Offaly County Council were the lead authority for bridges in Offaly, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny and Meath – Allocation €1,300,000)** – The bridges in all 5 Counties were tendered under one contract. The successful Tender was submitted by Wills Bros Mayo. The County Offaly bridges included in the tender involved the total removal and replacement of Cox’s Bridge on the Clara Road Tullamore (N80) and minor improvement works were also carried out on Charlestown Bridge Clara (N80).
- **National Roads Pavement Improvement Schemes 2011** – The initial allocation under this heading from the NRA in 2011 was €2,580,000. Additional funding of €846,226 was sought and received from the NRA during 2011 bringing the total allocation for 2011 to €3,426,226. The planning, design and preparation of tender documents for each of these schemes was carried out by the road design section of Offaly County Council. Due to delays

in the procurement and tendering procedures, the majority of these overlay schemes did not commence on the ground until the end of October 2011. Structural overlay improvements on the national secondary road network with a total length of 12.70 kms were carried out at the following locations before the end of 2011 with the exception of the N62 (Galros) and N62 (Cloghan to Ferbane) schemes which were carried out in early 2012: -

1. N52 – Ballywilliam, Derrydolney and Ballaghaderry Kilcormac
 2. N52 – Woodlands and Kennedy’s Cross Birr
 3. N62 – Cloghan to Ferbane
 4. N80 – Clara to Tullamore – Ashfield
 5. N80 - Clara to Moate – Raheen
 6. N80 – Tullamore to Killeigh – Derrybeg and Graigue
 7. N80 – Killeigh Village
 8. N62 – Birr to Ferbane – Galros (early 2012)
- **Specific Improvement Grants 2011 (Initial Allocation €600,000; Final Allocation €810,000)** - Schemes undertaken and completed under this heading are as follows: -
 1. Road/Footpath/Drainage Improvements at Adams Villas Tullamore
 2. Road/Footpath/Drainage at Moorepark Street Birr
 3. Road Improvements at Clonearl Daingean
 4. Road Improvements at Mountrath Road Kinnity
 5. Banagher Relief Road – Additional Funding of 200,000
 6. Bridge improvements at 14 locations (10 locations in 2010) as follows: - Cappancur, Ballinagar, Daingean & Portarlinton in the **Edenderry Area**; Annaharvey, Coolnahiley, Cloncon & Raheenduff in the **Tullamore**

Area: Rock Lane & Mountrath Road Kinnity in the **Birr Area**; Rahan, Wooden Bridge & Belmont in the **Ferbane Area**.

- **Safety Schemes on National Roads (2011 Initial Allocation €110,000; Final Allocation €838,503)**

Safety Schemes carried out at the following locations in 2011: -

1. N52 Durrow Cross Roads Tullamore
2. N52 Ballybought Junction Tullamore
3. N62 Military Road Birr

Planning, archaeological assessment, ground investigation, land acquisition, detailed design and tendering for most of the following Safety Schemes was carried out in 2011 and further consultation/construction is to be commenced in 2012: -

1. N52 Riverstown Wall Birr
2. N62 Birr to Cloghan at Derrinlough
3. N62 Doon Cross to Ballinahown
4. N62 Cloghan Roundabout
5. N62 Birr to Roscrea

- **Safety Schemes on Non-National Roads (2011 Allocation €196,000)**

Projects commenced/completed at the following locations in 2011: -

1. Traffic calming on the Daingean Road in Ballinagar
2. Road markings and Warning Signs on the Ballycommon to Derrygrogan Road
3. Provision of pedestrian crossing at Convent Road Tullamore
4. Provision of Traffic Calming on the Tullamore Road approach to Daingean

5. Provision of Traffic Lights and Pedestrian Crossings at Geashill Cross Roads
6. Provision of a one-way system at Kilcumber Bridge Edenderry
7. Provision of traffic Calming at Gracefield Portarlinton
8. Provision of Traffic Lights at Rhode Bridge.

- **Regional Signposting (2011 Allocation €300,000)**

Poles and New Signs were erected in early 2012 on the following Regional Roads as part of the 2011 grant of €300,000: -

1. R402 Tullamore to Edenderry
2. R420 Tullamore to Portarlinton
3. R423 Portarlinton to Mountmellick
4. R419 Portarlinton to Rathdangan
5. R357 Tullamore to Shannon Bridge
6. R436 Ferbane to Clara to Kilbeggan
7. R439 Birr to Banagher
8. R438 Anglers Rest to Cloghan
9. R356 Banagher to Cloghan

- **Multi Annual Road Restoration Programme (Initial Allocation €3,579,230; Final Allocation)**

Under the 3 year (2011 – 2013) Restoration Programme Offaly County Councils allocation is 4,076,950 per annum. In 2011 this would have allowed Offaly Council complete 40 restoration improvement schemes. The initial allocation of 3,579,230 allowed for the completion of 36 schemes, whereas the final allocation of €5,003,530 allowed for the completion of 66 schemes.

- **Own Resources Allocation to County Roads**

The actual allocation to all the Area Engineers in 2011 for County Road Maintenance was €1,291,700 (inclusive of a charge of €325,979 for Machinery Yard and Stores). Therefore, effectively, the funds available to the Area Engineers in 2011 for County Road Maintenance were €965,721. In 2010 this allocation was €1,291,000 and in 2009 was €1,303,740. The 2009 and 2010 allocations did not include a charge for Machinery Yard and Stores. Therefore, the actual funds available to the Area Engineers in 2011, was 26% less than in 2009 and 2010. The effect of this is the level of service is greatly reduced. Less maintenance including patching is carried out resulting in a deteriorated County Road network. This in turn can lead to an increase in public liability claims. The grant allocations from the NRA and DOT are used to supplement the County Roads allocations by carrying out as much as possible of the grant works by direct labour. However the 2010 Memorandum on Non-National Road grants limits the eligibility of certain expenditure against state grants. This means that we are more dependant on our own resources to pay wages, allowances, travel & subsistence etc. During 2011 it was a struggle to maintain an acceptable level of service based on the allocation provided from our own resources. Any further reductions in this allocation would result in a dramatic fall off in the maintenance/condition of the County Road network.

- **Public Lighting (2011: NRA Allocation €81,146 ; Own Resources Allocation €467,000)**

This allocation is divided approximately 60% energy and 40% maintenance. The energy costs increased by approximately 15% in 2011 due to the introduction of a DUOS (Distribution Unit of Service) charge by the ESB with a further increase of 11.5% expected in 2012. The long term objective of Offaly County

Council is to replace the existing inefficient lamps (orange/yellow) on the public lighting network over a 5 year period at a cost of €800,000.

Some savings were achieved in 2011 on the maintenance element of Public Lighting.

The public lighting network consists of network (light on pole where you also have overhead electrical wires) and non network (light only with no overhead wires) poles. It is a requirement of the ESB that shared assets are de-bundled i.e. separate light from ESB apparatus. It is an objective of Offaly County Council to carry out this de-bundling on a phased basis. The estimate to carry out this work for the County is approximately €500,000. Any savings made in the maintenance budget at present are re-invested in the asset de-bundling.

- **Smarter Travel**

Additional funding of €410,000 was received from the DOT under the smarter travel initiative for the following projects in 2011: -

1. Cycle routes in Tullamore Town €240,000
2. Cycle route “Carneys Route” Moneygall €30,000
3. Riverside Walk Camcor Birr €50,000
4. Bicycle Parking in Tullamore Town €30,000
5. Pedestrian Crossing Edenderry Town €30,000
6. Public Lighting along walkway on Camcor river €30,000

- **Local Improvement Schemes (2011 Allocation 70,000)**

This allowed for the completion of 3 schemes in 2011

- **Winter Maintenance (2011 NRA Allocation €295,000; 2011 DOT Allocation €217,150)**

Due to the severe weather experienced in early 2011 an over expenditure occurred in the NRA allocation of € 97,062. We have requested additional funding from the NRA to cover this over expenditure. The 2011/2012 season to date has been mild with a limited requirement to salt any roads. In 2011 a review of the salting routes was carried out with the objective that no driver was out longer than approximately 3 hours salting at any one time. This new system will operate for the 2011/2012 season.

The objective is to have all depots substantially full with salt at the beginning of the winter maintenance in Mid October, giving a total capacity of 1400 tonnes.

- **Winter Maintenance Equipment (Funded by the NRA)**

Progress was made on the following issues in 2011: -

1. Completed Part 8 Planning and tendered a new 1000 tonne salt storage barn for Birr. It is planned to construct this in 2012.
2. Purchased a new 9.0 cu. metre salt spreader to be put into operation in the Edenderry Area in the 2011/2012 winter maintenance period.
3. Completed a new 600 tonne capacity covered salt barn and winter maintenance equipment storage area at the County Council complex at Ballydrohid in Tullamore.

- **Speed Limit Review and the Adoption of Speed Limit By-Laws for County Offaly**

The elected members of Offaly County Council adopted the “Road Traffic (Speed Limits) (County of Offaly) Bye Laws 2011” at its monthly meeting held on the 17th October 2011.

The new Bye Laws propose special speed limits at 72 locations in the County. A special feature of the new Bye Laws is the introduction of 50kph periodic speed limits at 11 rural school locations. It is planned to bring the New Bye Laws into force from the beginning of February 2012.

- **Health and Safety**

Offaly County Council has raised its health and safety standard again throughout the year. Much progress has been achieved in providing an online health and safety system that can be accessed by staff. This system is now online on the Offaly County Council intranet home page and continues to be improved. Again health and safety training has been to the forefront with staff reaching a high level of competency in all aspects of health and safety. There were 20 accidents/incidents in 2011 with 10 of these reportable to the Health and Safety Authority. The Corporate Safety Statement has been reviewed and all departments are currently updating their local safety statements. The Health and Safety Authority have increased the number of inspections they carry out. Inspections have been carried out in all areas during the year. Overall the HSA inspectors are satisfied with the approach adopted by Offaly County Council. Nationally a health and safety management system is being developed by the Local Authority Health and Safety Officers. A number of guidance documents are due out in the 1st quarter of 2012 which will help each Local Authority in starting the process of achieving OHAS 18001 standard. Internal inspections are continually being carried out with staff and contractors to ensure that health and safety standards remain high.

- **Efficiencies & Targets achieved in 2010/2011**

1. Review of winter maintenance routes and procedures
2. Purchased a new 9.0cu.metre salt spreader.
3. Completed Part 8 Planning and tendered a 1000 tonne capacity salt barn for Birr.
4. Completed a new 600 tonne capacity covered salt barn and winter maintenance equipment storage area at the County Council complex at Ballydrohid in Tullamore
5. Achieved savings in Public Lighting Maintenance
6. Designed and tendered Regional Signposting in-house.
7. Design/tendering/supervision of National Road Minor Improvement Schemes in -house.
8. Appointed/supervised consultants from the NRA framework to design/tender safety schemes on the National Road network
9. Adoption of revised Speed Limit By-Laws for County Offaly



Drumbaun, Birr
Before



Drumbaun, Birr
After

FIRE SERVICE

The aim of the Offaly County Council Fire Authority is to protect the public from fire and to preserve life and property. The Fire Service is an organisation established and maintained in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 of the Fire Services Act, 1981. Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service provides a total fire service to the community 24 hours a day every day of the year. The Fire Authority provides a number of services ranging from the emergency response to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents, chemical incidents, etc. to ensuring the fire safety of the community and built environment through certification, inspection, enforcement and education. The Authority also provides information and training on fire safety management and fire fighting.

Operations

In 2011 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 688 incidents, made up of 567 fire calls, 72 road traffic accidents, 35 other rescues and ambulance assists and 14 false alarms. The response to these calls came from 5 stations located throughout the county.

Section 26 Plan

The Council adopted the Section 26 Fire and Emergency presented to the members. The full

implementation of this plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2011. The 2011 budget of €3.2 million maintained the operation of the fire service in line with the Section 26 plan. In relation to the cost of the closure of the three fire stations, this caused an exceptional charge of €876,761. It was intended to spread the cost over 5 years , however in discussion with the LG Auditor it was agreed to write the full amount off in 2011.

Training

There is a very strict training regime in the Fire Brigade as is necessitated by the sometimes difficult and dangerous environment in which Firefighters work.

Significant resources have been made available for training within the Fire Service with a spend of €170,000 for training alone in 2011, a large proportion of which represented the implementation training on the national Standard Operational Guidance program. In addition the Councils commitment to training for fire fighters, and research into the latest equipment and technology ensures that our fire crews are best equipped to respond quickly, safely and effectively to the full range of emergency incidents that we attend.

The training centre in Tullamore was utilised for training internally and by other Local Authorities. Accreditation, for the Sub-Officer course which was run, was received from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. Income of €60,000 was generated in 2011.

Fire Prevention & Building Control

Offaly County Council Fire Service assessed over 70 Fire Safety Certificate, Dangerous Substances, and Disabled Access Certificate applications. The fire authority also gave advice on planning referrals, and dealt with 114 licence applications. A total 372 fire safety inspections of public premises took place. Offaly Fire service also advised community groups on fire safety and prevention and also delivered the Fire Safety Schools program to all primary schools in the county.

The Building Control function of Offaly County Council is integrated into the fire service. This relates to the processing and reception of commencement notices and maintaining the register of same as per the building control regulations. This also includes the inspection and monitoring of new works to monitor for compliance with all the requirements of the Building Regulations, 1997. In total there were 120 inspections of 40 buildings carried out, which represent 30% of new buildings notified to the local authority.

Major Emergency Management

Both the Local and the Regional Major Emergency Plan were maintained, reviewed and revised by the Major Emergency Development Committee, the Regional Working Group and the Regional Steering Group. Offaly County Council participated in a regional major emergency exercise in Mullingar & Kilbeggan.

Civil Defence

Civil Defence provided emergency response capability, in particular during the severe weather in 2011, and supported the community and events throughout 2010. Over 50 Civil Defence duties were carried out during 2011, providing Ambulance/First Aid cover and logistical support to various events such as: 10k walks; Cycling races; Football matches; Charity events; Community activities; St. Patrick's day parades; Equestrian events; and the Tullamore Phoenix festival. The largest duties in terms of manpower and resources, were the Tullamore Livestock show and the response to the severe weather. Civil Defence worked in conjunction with other agencies such as the HSE Ambulance service, Gardai, Irish Red Cross, Order of Malta and Offaly Fire & Rescue Service. This interaction proved very beneficial to our members from an operational view point.

Quite an amount of new training was undertaken in terms of the Casualty service, rope rescue and water awareness. New members joining the service were also trained in A.E.D. (Defibrillators) and C.P.R. Occupational First Aid courses

were delivered during our training year also. These new guidelines will figure in all future Casualty courses.

In 2011 new members were recruited to the service, and this will increase our numbers as people retire in the future, and this will enable us to maintain a good corps group, trained in the various disciplines.

People wishing to join our Unit may contact the Civil Defence Officer at Tullamore Central Fire Station, by phone at 057 93 27429

SERVICE INDICATORS 2010

SERVICE INDICATORS 2010		
F.1	Fire Service Mobilisation	
	A Average time, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full time stations in respect of fire	<i>n/a</i>
	B Average time, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in part time stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	5.55
	C Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other emergency incidents	<i>n/a</i>
	D Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other emergency incidents	5.50
F.2	Percentage of Attendances at Scene	
	A Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	56.34%
	B Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	33.77%
	C Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	9.89%
	D Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	38.98%
	E Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	47.46%
	F Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	13.56%
F.3	Fire Prevention	
	A Total number of fire safety certificate applications received	31
	B Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)	33
	C Total number of applications deemed invalid	0

INTERNAL SERVICES (incl. CORPORATE SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE, INFORMATION SYSTEMS)

CORPORATE SERVICES

Director of Services: Seán Murray

Senior Executive Officer: Monica Cleary

Partnership Facilitator/Administrative Officer: Gerry Bruton

HUMAN RESOURCES

Director of Services: Declan Kirrane

Senior Executive Officer: Ann Dillon

Administrative Officer: Paula Donovan

FINANCE

Head of Finance: Declan Conlon

Financial Management Accountant: Thomas Mawe

Administrative Officer: Mary Gaughren

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Director of Services: Frank Heslin

Head of I.S.: Hugh O'Donoghue

I.S. Project Leader: Ray Bell

I.S. Project Leader: Eileen Jackson

CORPORATE SERVICES

Functions

The main functions of the Corporate Services section include:

- To provide an efficient and professional secretariat to the Council and their committees.
- To make information available to the members in a timely, convenient and flexible manner to allow for informed decision making.
- To maintain and update the register of electors.
- To implement the Student Grant Scheme in a fair and efficient manner.

- To develop initiatives to increase cross-departmental awareness and input to the development of corporate policies.
- To improve communications internally and externally on Local Authorities activities.
- To ensure best practice is applied in securing value for money in the management and maintenance of corporate property.

Support Services

There are 21 Councillors on Offaly County Council. The

Corporate Services Department provides a secretariat service for meetings of the County Council. The Council normally meets on the third Monday of each month, excluding August. In addition an Annual Budget Meeting and an Annual Meeting must be held. In all, 18 council meetings were held in 2011.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 20th June 2011, Councillor Danny Owens was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Tommy McKeigue was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Corporate Plan 2010 - 2014

Offaly Local Authorities mission statement and strategic priorities and are implemented in accordance with the core values identified and adopted by the members in *Offaly Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2010-2014*.

Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G.)

The Chairpersons of the Strategic Policy Committees are elected members of the County Council. They, along with the Cathaoirleach of the Council, form a committee called the Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G.), advised by the County Manager. The C.P.G. is essentially the Council's 'Cabinet'. Its main roles are consultation in preparation of budgets, dealing with corporate issues, modernisation and customer service.

The Corporate Policy Group met on 11 occasions during 2011. A review of the operations of the C.P.G. was held in 2011 and it was agreed that the Cathaoirleach would give an update on the issues considered at each meeting to the full Council.



Mr. Michael D. Higgins opens the Anam Beo Exhibition in May 2011

Strategic Policy Committees (S.P.C.s)

S.P.C.s have a key role in advising and informing the Council. Their purpose is to provide a forum for debate on policy issues and for the development of policy recommendations for the Council. They have a broad membership including sectoral and community interests working with elected members and council staff. There are four S.P.C.s in Offaly dealing with the following policy areas:

- Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services
- Planning, Economic and Local Development

- Transportation and Emergency Services
- Environment and Water Services

Register of Electors

The Register of Electors was produced on the 1st February and came into force on 15th February 2012. The total electorate for County Offaly for the 2012/2013 Register of Electors was 56,713 broken down over the local electoral areas as follows:

Birr	10,699
Edenderry	15,570
Ferbane	11,859
Tullamore	18,585
Total on the Register	56,713

Civic Receptions

Civic Welcome

Offaly County Council resolved at its meeting on 16th May 2011 to accord a Civic Welcome to President of the United States of America Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama on the occasion of their visit to the President's ancestral home of Moneygall, Co. Offaly on 23rd May 2011. The Council also agreed to present gifts with Offaly themes to the President and Mrs. Obama to mark the occasion. A parchment scroll of Civic Welcome by well known Irish calligrapher, Tim O'Neill, in the lettering that emulates the Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells was signed by Cllr. Danny Owens, Cathaoirleach and Mr. Pat Gallagher, County Manager. The other gifts included: a model of the Durrow High Cross; a selection of books commissioned by Offaly County Council, i.e., *Stories from a Sacred*

Landscape – from Croghan Hill to Clonmacnoise, by Caimin O'Brien, *Living under Thatch*, by Barry O'Reilly and *Offaly History & Society – Essays on the History of an Irish County*, edited by William Nolan and Timothy P. O'Neill; a CD *Black is the Earth* composed by Adele O'Dwyer; *Andromeda* – a pendant specially commissioned by Offaly County Council, designed by Rachel McKenna, Architect, Offaly County Council and crafted by jeweler Cathal Barber in Birr. The Scroll of Civic Welcome and the presidential Gifts were conveyed to the President and his wife through the offices of the U.S. Embassy in Dublin.



Rachel McKenna, Architect, Cathal Barber, Jeweler, Seán Murray, Director of Services, Monica Cleary, SEO Corporate Services, Cllr. Danny Owens, Cathaoirleach and Pat Gallagher, County Manager



Civic Reception for Special Olympic Athletes and Volunteers

Civic Reception

Offaly County Council honoured the athlete's, volunteers and all involved in the Special Olympics at a Civic Reception held on 1st December 2011. Each athlete, volunteer, mentor, coach and Club member makes a major contribution in their respective fields and the Members agreed that it was appropriate that this contribution and, the sense of pride they have given to the whole county, be recognised.

The reception was attended by the athletes, their parents and representatives from each of the nine Club's in the county. Mr. Matt English, CEO of Special Olympics Ireland and Ms. Claire Grehan, Sports Inclusion Development Officer with the Council, also attended.

The three Special Olympians were presented with specially commissioned silver plate to recognise their achievements in Greece:

- Patrick Moore**, Gold Medal
- Gary McCabe**, Bronze Medal
- John Michael Gannon**, Gold Medal.



Civic Reception for Special Olympic Athletes and Volunteers

Joint Policing Committee

The Joint Policing Committee met on three occasions in 2010. The Offaly County Council Joint Policing Committee progressed a number of the objectives that are included in the *JPC Work Plan 2010 - 2012*.

Presentations were made to the JPC by:

- Mr. John Mitchell, Executive Engineer Roads Department on Road Safety;
- Mr. J. Gunning briefed the meeting on Offaly Mental Health Talk Week (OMHTW); and
- Ms. Niamh Dowler, Community Forum Support Worker briefed the meeting on *Joint Policing Committees Action Plan 2010-2012* that were being progressed by Community and Enterprise Section of Offaly County Council.

Swimming Pools


Corporate Services administer the Council's support grants for swimming pools. During 2011 Tullamore Leisure Centre and Birr Development Company Limited were awarded grants under the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme, in the sum of €167,580 and €8,160, from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for energy upgrades and enhanced disabled access.



Students attend Arts Exhibition in Áras an Chontae

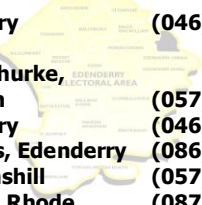
Offaly County Council Members

BIRR ELECTORAL AREA:



Carroll, John	The Ring, Birr	(057)9120976	cllrjohncarroll@eircom.net	Non-Party
Clendennen, Percy	Kinnitty, Birr	(057) 91 37076	percyclendennen@oceanfree.net	Fine Gael
Ormond, Peter	Kyleogue, Shinrone, Birr	(0505) 47079	ossiec@eircom.net	Fianna Fáil
McLoughlin, Tony	Main Street, Birr	(057) 91 21376	cllrtonymcloughlin@eircom.net	Non-Party

EDENDERRY ELECTORAL AREA:



Bourke, Noel (Cathaoirleach)	Killane, Edenderry	(046) 97 31295	noelbourke@hotmail.com	Fianna Fáil
Fitzpatrick, Eddie	Benfield, Cloneyhurke, Portarlington	(057) 86 23261	eddiefitzp@eircom.net	Non-Party
Foley, John	Killane, Edenderry	(046) 97 32332	info@johnfoley.ie	Fianna Fáil
Hogan, Nichola	8 The Sycamores, Edenderry	(086) 3840320	nhogan@lawlibrary.ie	Fine Gael
Plunkett, Ger	Ballycrystal, Geashill	(057) 9343854	gerardplunkett@hotmail.com	Fianna Fáil
Quinn, Liam	Edenderry Road, Rhode	(087) 9163066	liamjq@gmail.com	Fine Gael

FERBANE ELECTORAL AREA:



Dooley, Eamon	Na Tullaig, Aughaboy, Ferbane	(090) 64 54510	eamondooley@eircom.net	Fianna Fáil
Hanniffy, Constance	Doon, Ballinahown	(090) 6430106	connieh@iol.ie	Fine Gael
Leahy, John	Glendine, Kilcormac	(087) 2073226	info@johnleahy.ie	Non-Party
Moylan Ryan, Sinead	Woodbank, Shannonbridge	(057) 9151113	sinead.moylan-ryan@oireachtas.ie	Fianna Fáil

TULLAMORE ELECTORAL AREA:



Buckley, Molly	Moylena, Clara Rd, Tullamore	(057) 93 41357	mollybuckley@eircom.net	Fine Gael
Butterfield, Johnny	Ballincanty, Blueball, Tullamore	(057) 93 54027	butterfield.iad@eircom.net	Non-Party
Dolan, Dervill	10 Cormac Street, Tullamore	(057) 23530	dervilldolan@eircom.net	Non-Party
Dooley, Sinead	Rahan Road, Sragh, Tullamore	(057) 93 51828	sineadtdooley@gmail.net	Fianna Fáil
McKeigue, Thomas	Spollanstown, Tullamore	(057) 93 41519	tommymckeigue@eircom.net	Fine Gael
Owens, Danny	Lugamarla, Mountbolus, Tullamore	(057) 93 54814	dannyowens@eircom.net	Fianna Fáil
Rowland, Paddy	Knockowen Road, Tullamore		Rowland@eircom.net	Fianna Fáil

Payments Made to Members in 2011

Name	Representational Payment €	Monthly Allowance €	SPC Chairperson's Allowance	Conference Expenses incl. Conf. Fees €	Chairperson's Allowance €	Foreign Travel €
Noel Bourke	16,724.00	5,354.28		€3,011.71		
Molly Buckley	16,724.00	4,413.96	6,000.00	€3,265.62		
Johnny Butterfield	16,724.00	4,413.96		€3,035.68		
John Carroll	16,724.00	5,589.36		€2,862.12		
Percy Clendennen	16,724.00	5,040.84		€3,433.93		
Barry Cowen (resigned 27/02/2011)	2,787.34	735.66		€794.99	4,733.34	
Dervil Dolan	16,724.00	4,413.96		€0.00		
Sinead Dooley	16,724.00	4,413.96		€2,825.47		
Eamon Dooley	16,724.00	5,040.84	6,000.00	€3,360.38		
Eddie Fitzpatrick	16,724.00	4,727.40	6,000.00	€2,719.39		
John Foley	16,724.00	5,354.28		€0.00		
Nichola Hogan	16,724.00	5,432.64		€3,690.68		
Connie Hanniffy	16,724.00	5,040.84		€3,035.50		
John Leahy	16,724.00	4,727.40		€3,279.68		
Tommy McKeigue	16,724.00	4,413.96		€1,143.96		
Tony McLoughlin	16,724.00	5,432.64	6,000.00	€0.00		
Ger Plunkett	16,724.00	4,413.96		€3,592.65		
Sinead Moylan Ryan	16,724.00	6,137.88		€696.24		
Peter Ormond	16,724.00	6,372.96		€2,542.61		
Danny Owens	16,724.00	4,413.96		€3,479.76	21,254.19	2,785.80
Liam Quinn	16,724.00	5,197.56		€3,543.51		
Paddy Rowland(co-opted 21/03/2011)	13,037.56	3,440.99		€3,544.38		
TOTAL	€350,304.90	€104,523.29	€24,000.00	€53,858.26	€25,987.53	€2,785.80

Councillors supported and attended the following conferences in 2011	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
Time Management Success; Double your productivity & double your time off.	21 st / 23 rd January	3
Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland	11 th / 12 th February	1
National Tourism Conference: A River Runs Through It	3 rd / 5 th March	1
The Local Government Planning Service	11 th / 13 th March	1
Association of County and City Councils Conference	24 th / 25 th March	6
20 th Annual Kerry Environmental Conference	7 th / 10 th April	2
Regional Seminars for Councillors on Planning & Development	15 th April	3
LAMA Spring Conference	29 th / 30 th April	9
BMW Regional Assembly Annual Conference	6 th May	3
Tipperary Peace Conference	2 nd / 5 th June	1
Sean MacDiarmada Summer School	17 th / 19 th June	2
E.U. Funding and Functions	17 th / 19 th June	1
Byrne/Perry Summer School	24 th / 26 th June	3
The Councillor and the Local Government Environment Service	22 nd / 23 rd July	3
Patrick MacGill Summer School	24 th / 29 th July	3
Local Government Health and Safety	29 th / 31 st July	3
William Carleton Summer School	1 st / 4 th August	3
Legislation for the Reform of Local Government	12 th / 14 th August	2
Parnell Summer School	14 th / 18 th August	2
Local Government Promoting Renewable Energy	19 th / 21 st August	4
Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland 98 th Annual Conference	8 th / 10 th September	4
Domestic Water Metering : Implications for Irish consumers and business	9 th / 11 th September	1
LAMA Autumn Conference	23 rd / 24 th September	8
La Touche Legacy Seminar	30 th September / 2 nd October	2
Getting a Grip 2011: 'Substance Misuse - a Health or Criminal Justice Issue'	6 th / 7 th October	1
Local Government and Planning Seminar	7 th / 9 th October	1
Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011	14 th / 16 th October	3
Douglas Hyde Conference	4 th November	3
Local Government Powers to create / abolish Rights of Way.	4 th / 6 th November	5
Great War Conference	5 th / 6 th November	2
ICT & Public Service Delivery	23 rd November	2
Clare Tourism Conference	25 th / 26 th November	6
Promoting Volunteerism	2 nd / 4 th December	2
Proposed Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy	9 th / 11 th December	3
Local Government (Charges) Act 2009	16 th / 18 th December	1



Áras an Chontae Arts Exhibition

Freedom of Information - Statistics:

In 2011 under the Freedom of Information Act, the total numbers of applications were as follows:

- 9 applications received by Offaly County Council.
- 0 applications received by Birr Town Council.
- 1 application received by Tullamore Town Council.
- 0 applications received by Edenderry Town Council.

The Ombudsman

The Council responded to the Office of the Ombudsman in relation to Offaly County Council issues.

Student Grants

In the 2011/2012 academic year the number of Higher Education Grant new awards was 156 and a further 370 students qualified for grant renewal. €2,836,223.64 was spent on Higher Education Grants during this period. This money is recoupable from the Department of Education & Skills, except for a fixed contribution made by Offaly County Council. The administration of the scheme is a service provided by this Council to students and parents in County Offaly.

From 2012/2013 academic year onwards all new Student Grant applications will be made online to a single awarding authority, Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) through www.studentfinance.ie. Students who are currently in receipt of a student grant and who are progressing to the next year of the same course will continue to be assessed and paid by the existing awarding authorities - i.e. the relevant local authority or

Vocational Educational Committee. If a student is changing their course or progressing to a new course they will need to apply to SUSI.

Internal Audit Function

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function which reviews the internal control system in operation within Offaly County Council. It objectively examines evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal controls as a contribution to the proper, economic, effective and efficient use of resources.

During 2011 the Internal Auditor undertook a number of audits and the findings and recommendations from each audit were reported to management. The Internal Auditor also undertook follow up audits to assess the implementation of the recommendations from the previous audits.

The Audit Committee in Offaly County Council consists of five members: Mr. Peter Scully, Committee Chairman, Cllr. Connie Hanniffy, Mr. Brian Gunning, Mr. Paddy Hughes and Mr. Tom Feighery. The Audit Committee met 4 times in 2011.

Service Indicators

Each section, as appropriate, prepared their National Service Indicators statistics. The statistics were collated by Corporate Services and submitted to the Local Management Services Board.

Presentations to Oireachtas Members

The Management Team met members of the Oireachtas in 12th September 2011 and provided an update with regard to the operations of Offaly Local Authorities.

County Coroners

The total expenditure was €102,972.49 (including salary) in respect of coroners' inquests in 2011.

Exhibitions held in Áras an Chontae

A number of art exhibitions were held in Áras an Chontae during 2011.

Partnership Committee

The Partnership Committee held 7 meetings in 2011.

Following the retirement of Mr. Joe Lambe, Union Joint Chair, from the Partnership Committee in June 2011, the staff side nominated Mr. Joe Coleman, as Union Joint Chair. Mr. Lambe was replaced on the Committee by Mr. John Loughnane, SIPTU Representative.

The Partnership Committee had a busy and fruitful year. The Committee members participated in the national Partnership Review which was conducted during the first quarter of 2011. They finalised and approved the Working Group Report on the Review of the Revised Public Opening Hours. They oversaw the production of the Staff Newsletter **Inside View**, two issues of which circulated during the year. The Committee considered a number of important Human Resources issues during the

year, they reviewed the extension of the Time and Attendance Policy and following a review of the Flexitime Scheme it was agreed to amend the morning core-hours.

At a national level, the Local Authority National Partnership Advisory Group (LANPAG) continued their meetings. Mr Finbarr Maguire, TEEU, was elected to the position of union Joint Chair of LANPAG. In late December 2011, LANPAG produced a Report on the Review of

Partnership and produced a further document "*New Direction for Workplace Partnership in the Local Authority Sector*". LANPAG envisaged that both these publications would afford local authorities with an opportunity to refocus and review their own Partnership activities. Offaly Local Authorities Partnership Committee has commenced a review of both publications with a view to developing a number of activities to re-energise Partnership across the organisation in 2012.



Áras an Chontae Arts Exhibition

HUMAN RESOURCES

The key functions of the Human Resources Department are the provision of support for Line Managers and staff across the organisation, workforce planning and staff recruitment, training and development, the management and delivery of HR policies and procedures, maintaining stable industrial relations and creating a consultative and supportive working environment.

2011 saw the continued implementation of the Local Action Plan under the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement) and the continuation of the Moratorium on Public Service Numbers. The following is a summary of H.R. developments for the organisation in 2011.

Industrial Relations & the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014

Offaly County Council reported savings of over €2.2 million in savings arising from its first Local Action Plan under the Croke Park Agreement headings including;

- Restructuring
- Shared Services
- Maximising economies of scale in procurement
- Maximising the potential of e-Government
- Redeployment
- Productivity and Performance
- Service delivery options

This excluded even more significant savings achieved in the previous 12 months arising from reductions in staff numbers. It is recognised and acknowledged that staff continue to deliver efficient and effective local government services to the citizens of Offaly in the context of reduced staff resources.

Agreement has been reached on a number of issues raised through the Croke Park agreement which were negotiated nationally including the standardisation of annual leave and the standardisation of firefighters pay.

Every effort is made to respond to staff issues at the earliest possible opportunity with staff representatives. Individual cases are dealt with through industrial relations channels. Workplace Partnership continues to provide a regular forum for consultation and engagement between staff and management.

Training & Staff Development

Corporate level training was provided in response to service and organisational needs in 2011. Training was made available to all staff on new standardised Attendance Management and Sick Leave policies that have been agreed for the sector under the Croke Park agreement and come into effect locally in 2012. General awareness training was also provided on Child Safe

Guarding and Health and Safety issues. Service specific training was provided for Roads, Water and Environment staff. Mandatory Health and Safety training such as Safe Pass and Manual Handling courses were provided as were Expert Witness Training, Personal Safety, Dealing with Difficult Customers, Legislation, Excel, Powerpoint and Advanced Word.

Recruitment

Notwithstanding the Moratorium on public service recruitment, Offaly County Council sought and received sanction to fill the following vacancies which were advertised and/or competitions held in 2011 Temporary Acting Senior Executive Planner Midland Regional Authority, Temporary Clerical Officer, Temporary Health and Safety Officer, Temporary General Services Supervisor, Temporary Programme Delivery Specialist Midland Regional Authority, Temporary Acting Assistant Staff Officer, Retained Fire Fighter (Birr).

Information Systems solutions for HR – the CORE system

Since early 2010, much of the data relating to Human Resource policies, personnel, payroll and superannuation issues has been uploaded and managed via a computerised system called CORE.

Offaly County Council is working with other Local Authorities and the Local Government Management Services Board in the development of reporting systems which will maximise the use of the data available through CORE including the production of regular reports to

management on attendance, performance management and other personnel issues. Further developments of the system continued in 2011 including preparation for the move to fortnightly pay for outdoor staff, recording of performance management materials relating to a new Performance Management and Development System for the local government sector, Health and Safety Training records and Training records generally.



Lough Boora Parklands

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is required to meet organisational needs and provide effective and efficient services. Offaly County Council uses the provisions of its Mobility Policy, redeployment arrangements under its Local Action Plan

(Croke Park Agreement) and a pressure point policy to meet organisational staffing needs and to develop staff potential.

Offaly County Council continues to comply with the moratorium on public service recruitment. There has been a 26% reduction in Whole Time Equivalent staff numbers between June 2008 and December 2011.

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government has committed to addressing divergences in staffing levels and structures across local authorities. Offaly County Council contributed towards significant workforce analysis in consultation with the Department in 2011.



Staff Retirements 2011

Patrick Berry, Foreman
PJ Cleary, Foreman
Peter Grennan, Craftsman
John Grimes, General Operative
Kevin O'Meara, Lorry Driver
Patrick Westman, Craftsman
Michael Walsh, Foreman
Joseph Cahill, Craftsman
James Farrell, Foreman
Thomas Mooney, General Operative
Tarleigh Foley, Assistant Staff Officer
Michael Cusack, Lorry Driver
Noel Marshal, Ganger
Gerard Doyle, Water and Sewerage Caretaker
Eleanor Cregan, Assistant Staff Officer
Brendan Dunne, Foreman
Patrick Gallagher, General Operative
Joe Lambe, Water and Sewerage Caretaker

Staff fundraiser in aid of 'Oran's Wish to Walk'

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In 2011 the Information Systems department continued implementing a series of initiatives designed to lower costs and increase efficiencies in the organisation.

The main projects that were progressed during the year were:-

- Implementation of the CORE HR / Payroll / Superannuation system. Most of the Phase 2 modules have now been implemented (including Training and Recruitment).
- The Edenderry and Birr Broadband MANs were successfully lit during 2011 and are now commercially available.
- Continued development of a Green ICT policy which included:-
 - Commencing Phase 3 of the development of SAN and Virtualisation technologies in the Council's main ICT Server Room and DR facility.
 - Continued implementation of Energy Saving technology on all Council PCs.
 - Continued deployment of Multi Function devices to replace individual printers, scanners and photocopiers.
- These initiatives will result in savings in communications, energy and maintenance costs and a reduction of the organisation's carbon footprint in the medium term
- Completion of tender processes for landline and mobile telephony, resulting in lower communications costs for the organisation
- Completion of tender process for broadband connectivity between the Council's office locations in Tullamore and to Government Networks, again resulting in lower communications costs for the organisation.
- Planning of all ICT requirements regarding the re-development of the County Library Headquarters in Tullamore
- All ICT elements of submission with Environment department regarding the National Waste Collection Permits Office. Offaly County Council were successful in this submission and the Information Systems department will assign significant resources to the project in 2012
- Online publication of planning documentation on www.offaly.ie .

FINANCE

Our Goals

To plan the strategic financial management of Offaly Local Authorities and deliver the services of the finance function in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

Our Strategies

- Develop accounting and management information systems that deliver the best possible basis for future planning, budgeting and decision making in order to maximise financial resources available.
- Promote and direct Value for Money concepts and foster a culture of effective use of resources.
- Prepare an annual financial budget that reflects our corporate objectives.
- Enhance the Financial Management System and in particular, the provision of more meaningful financial management information.
- Ensure prompt payment to suppliers.

Our Services

The Finance Department deals with both the short and long term financing of all the Council's operations, both of a Revenue and Capital nature. This involves:

- Monitoring and controlling income and expenditure.
- Arranging financing requirements.
- Treasury Management

Compliance with all statutory and financial accounting principles, which apply to all monies paid by or to the Council.

The Council's revenue and day-to-day expenditure is funded from sources such as:

- Commercial Rates;
- Local Government Fund;
- Government Grants;
- Housing Rents, Planning Fees, Commercial Water Charges, NPPR and other Fees.

MAIN SECTIONS WITHIN FINANCE:

Financial and Management Accounting

Financial reporting is the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements and other statutory returns and dealing with the Local Government Audit process. Management Accounting is the preparation of monthly management reports to assist with budgetary control and the decision-making process within each directorate. The Annual Budget process is managed in this section, in consultation with all the service divisions. This section provides variance analysis, costing information and other financial information required by internal and external customers.

Central Revenue Collection

The recovery of Commercial Rates, Housing rents, Housing loans, Water billing, - collection and receipt of all monies due to the Council.

Accounts Payable

The processing and payment of suppliers invoices with statutory deductions and the completion of statutory returns. This section ensures compliance with all statutory taxation returns and application of revenue commissioners enforcement procedures.

Payroll

The processing of the wages, salaries, pensions and the completion of statutory returns to Revenue Commissioners and other agencies. The implementation of the Core payroll system in late 2009 has streamlined payment patterns.

Motor Taxation Office

The Council collects vehicle licence duties and issues driving licences within its functional area on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

Fixed Asset Register

The maintenance of the fixed asset master file that records fixed assets acquired (created or purchased) and disposed of throughout the year. Compliance with the accounting policies relating to assets and work-in-progress such as asset categories, capital flags, capital job set-ups etc

Risk Management

Coordination of the Risk Management function within Offaly County Council.

Shares services

The Finance section is involved in a number of cross authority activities, in the area of Accounts payable, Payroll, Financial Accounting and Statutory and DCHLG reporting on behalf of Tullamore and Birr Town councils.

MAIN REPORTS PRODUCED BY FINANCE:

The Annual Budget

The Finance Department prepares the overall Revenue Budget in consultation with the County Manager and the Management Team. The budget is presented to the Corporate Policy Group and to the Elected Members for adoption at the Annual Budget Meeting.

The Annual Financial Statement (AFS)

The AFS is produced annually and analyses the income and expenditure for the financial year for both revenue and capital expenditure. The Balance Sheet shows the assets and liabilities of the County Council at the end of the year. THE AFS is presented to members at Council Meeting and audited by the Local Government Auditor.

Quarterly Management Reports

The quarterly management report provides details of the income and expenditure for the various services provided

by the council. The actual results are compared to Budget and all variances investigated to assist with the monitoring and control of the Budget.

DECLG/IMF Quarterly Reporting

2011 saw the full roll out of quarterly reporting to The DECLG/IMF. These consist of a quarterly Income and Expenditure Report, Capital Account report and Debtors report. In addition various reports are produced for stakeholders in Offaly County Council relating to all aspects of the councils activities.

Motor Taxation Office

This office issues vehicle and driving licences and processes other transactions such as change of ownership for pre-1993 vehicles, certificates of roadworthiness, vehicle registration certificates vehicle licensing arrears. The Section also produces information for Gardai and other Local Authorities, e.g. penalty points, traffic fines, parking fines, etc. The Motor Taxation Office is open to the public from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., including lunchtime, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays. Payment can be made at the counter, electronically and through postal application. In 2011, this office generated €10.3m in revenue, handled 90,859 transactions (58% over the counter, 10% via post and 32 % was processed online)

Revenue Collection Service Indicators

Amount collected as a percentage of the amount due at year end:

Rents	92%
Commercial Rates	92%
Housing Loans	63%
Non Domestic Water Charges	58%



Áras an Chontae Arts Exhibition

DRAFT INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2011

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT
FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2011**

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

Expenditure by Division	Note	Gross	Income	Net	Net
		Expenditure		Expenditure	Expenditure
		2011	2011	2011	2010
		€	€	€	€
Housing and building		7,655,729	6,942,915	712,814	971,649
Road transport & safety		21,045,870	16,689,382	4,356,488	4,164,192
Water services		11,545,011	3,551,817	7,993,194	7,942,313
Development management		3,480,909	318,812	3,162,097	3,119,435
Environmental services		11,461,881	8,769,120	2,692,760	4,842,210
Recreation and amenity		2,972,900	472,725	2,500,175	2,660,683
Agriculture, education, health & welfare		4,805,151	4,526,571	278,581	357,036
Miscellaneous services		6,036,439	4,464,832	1,571,607	2,429,014
Central management charges		(3)	-	(3)	-
Total Expenditure/Income	16-17	69,003,887	45,736,174		
Net Cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates and Local Government Fund				23,267,713	26,486,532
Rates				7,899,171	7,968,100
Pension related deduction				996,054	1,108,975
Local government fund / general purpose grant				13,273,437	14,545,566
County charge				2,083,800	2,078,800
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers				984,750	(785,091)
Transfers from/(to) Reserves				15 (3,170,011)	(629,385)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year				(2,185,261)	(1,414,476)
General Reserve at 1st January				(1,899,144)	(484,668)
General Reserve at 31st December				(4,084,405)	(1,899,144)

Capital Account Summary

Extract from The Draft Annual Financial Statement for the Year ended December 31, 2011

	2011	2010
Balance (Debit)/Credit @ 1st January	14,499,541	12,647,650
Total Expenditure (Including Transfers)	(28,345,902)	(23,602,362)
Total Income (Including Transfers)	<u>24,179,368</u>	<u>25,454,253</u>
Balance (Debit)/Credit @ 31 December	<u>10,333,007</u>	<u>14,499,541</u>

TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL

Director of Services: Declan Kirrane

Town Clerk: Ruth McNally

Senior Executive Engineer: Paul Devaney

Tullamore is the capital town of Offaly with a population of over 10,000. The Council is involved in a broad range of service provision including Housing, Roads and Car Parks, Planning and Recreation, Leisure and Amenity facilities.

Elected Members of Tullamore Town Council

Councillor Sinead Dooley (*Cathaoirleach June 2011*)

Councillor Laurence Byrne

Councillor Molly Buckley

Councillor Declan Harvey

Councillor Brendan Killeavy

Councillor Tony McCormack

Councillor Tommy McKeigue

Councillor Sean O'Brien

Councillor Paddy Rowland

Monthly Meetings

Meetings of the council are held on the second Thursday of the month at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber, Tullamore Town Hall.

Representatives to Various Bodies:

Vocational Educational
Committee:
A.M.A.I.:

Cllr. Brendan Killeavy
Cllr. Laurence Byrne
Cllr. Laurence Byrne
Cllr. Sean O'Brien
Cllr. Tommy McKeigue

Irish Public Bodies Mutual
Insurances Ltd.:

Offaly Strategic Policy
Committees:

Tullamore Leisure Ltd:

Cllr. Paddy Rowland
Cllr. Brendan Killeavy
Cllr. Molly Buckley
Cllr. Paddy Rowland
Cllr. Sean O'Brien
Cllr. Tony McCormack

Offaly County Development
Board:

Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.:
Tullamore/Chandler Sister Cities

Cllr. Tommy McKeigue
Cllr. Buckley
Cllr. McCormack

Tullamore Arts Centre Ltd

Cllr McKeigue
Cllr Harvey
Cllr Killeavy

Environment & Water Services
Strategic Policy Committee
Transportation & Emergency
Services Strategic Policy
Committee

Cllr Rowland

Highlights of 2011:

- Allocation of €20,000 to local projects under the Community Grants Scheme
- Summer arts programme in Kilbrook and Puttaghaun housing estates
- Maintaining the town's 'Clean to European Norms' status in the IBAL Litter League
- Shortlisting of town to final three in 'large town' category of 'Ireland's best kept town competition'
- Winning a bronze medal in the annual Tidy Towns Competition
- Maintaining street cleaning services and opening of Town Park 364 days during the year
- Intensification of efforts to tackle litter offenders and derelict sties
- Handover of the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre to William Grant & Sons Distillers to carry out a major refurbishment and investment programme
- Appointment of project team for the design of Tullamore Arts Centre
- Progression of the Canal Corridor project to tender stage
- Preliminary work a possible boundary extension for the town commenced



Pictured at the awards ceremony for the 'Ireland's Best Kept Towns Competition' in Farmleigh House were from left to right :-

Mr. Graham Seymour, Director of Natural Heritage at the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency, Cllr. Tommy McKeigue, Chairperson, Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee, Roseanne Carroll, Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee, Minister Fergus O'Dowd, T.D., Minister for State at the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, Sr. Xavier, Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee, Ms. Doreen Muskett, MBA, President of the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC), Ms. Ruth McNally, Town Clerk, Tullamore Town Council

EDENDERRY TOWN COUNCIL

Director of Services: Declan Conlon

Town Clerk: Olwen Cooney

Senior Executive Engineer: Damien Grennan

Edenderry is the second largest town in Offaly and has experienced huge growth in the last five years. Edenderry Town Council is involved in a broad range of services.

The Urban District of Edenderry encloses an area of 1,959 acres. The town's proximity to the greater Dublin area and recent improvement in road connections has encouraged people to settle in Edenderry, resulting in a significant growth in the population.

Elected Members of Edenderry Town Council

Cllr. Patricia Brady, Fine Gael

Cllr. Mary Breen, (Leas Cathaoirleach), Fianna Fáil

Cllr. Noel Cribbin, Non-Party

Cllr. John Foley, Fianna Fáil

Cllr. Liam Hogan, Fine Gael

Cllr. Fergus McDonnell Non-Party

Cllr. Jim Murrin (Cathaoirleach), Non-Party

Cllr. Finian O'Neill Fianna Fáil

Cllr. Declan Leddin, Labour

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Councillors are held on the second Wednesday of each month in the Town Hall, Edenderry.

Representatives to Various Bodies

Association of Municipal Councillor Fergus McDonnell
Authorities of Ireland: Councillor Liam Hogan

Barrow Drainage Board: Councillor Finian O'Neill

Issues Developed and Progressed In 2011

During the year the Councillors were actively involved in the promotion of all aspects of life in Edenderry. To this end, a €10,000 contribution was given to Youth Café Fund Raising Committee towards a new Youth Café at St Joseph's Hall. This support was based on an excellent presentation by young members of the committee. A further €1,000 was donated to EASA Edenderry Addressing Substance Abuse.

The traditional lighting of the Christmas lights and tree occurred at the Town Hall in December with a magical Santa and sleigh for all the children with gifts

for all. A collective approach from Edenderry Chamber of Commerce and Community, FAS, Edenderry Town Council members and Offaly County Council staff organised and constructed a well lit Christmas tree, Townhall and street lighting.

Edenderry Town Council members this year welcomed the commencement of the R402 Edenderry to Enfield Road, a project they have lobbied for continuously. It is hoped that this new road construction will improve the link with Dublin and hence open up Edenderry for new business and industry. Members are actively seeking assistance from their local TDs and the IDA to welcome industries/enterprises into the town as a direct result of the proposed new route to the capital.

Joint Policing Committee carried out their 2011 work plan - this included the establishment of new residence and neighbourhood watch groups, linked with Offaly County Council speed limit review for approach roads into the town, worked towards securing old derelict Drummond Seed Factory and cooperation between agencies to deliver a successful and safe Halloween.

Tremendous success was achieved by Edenderry Senior Football team winning the Senior Football title. Members were so impressed with the positive lift given to the town that they decided to hold a civic reception to honour the team and management. It was agreed to hold this event in early 2012.



Margaret Farrell receives Lifetime Achievement Award, 2010 from Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fergus McDonnell

BIRR TOWN COUNCIL

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Noel Russell

Director of Services: Frank Heslin

Town Clerk: James Hogan

Town Engineer: Willie Ryan

Birr is the largest town in South-West Offaly. Birr, originally a monastic settlement founded by St Brendan in the 6th century has seen continuous habitation & development & is well known for its Georgian architecture. The urban district of Birr comprises approximately 1500 acres & has a population of approx 4,000.

The Town Council is involved in a broad range of service provision including Housing, Roads and Car Parks, Planning and Recreation, Leisure and Amenity facilities.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings of the council are held on the second Monday of the month at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Wilmer Road, Birr.

The following are the elected Members of Birr Town Council:-

Councillor Tony McLoughlin, Non-Party

Councillor Denis Sheils, Non-Party

Councillor Noel Russell, Fianna Fail

Councillor John Carroll, Non-Party

Councillor Michael Loughnane, Fianna Fail

Councillor Michael Campbell, Fine Gael

Councillor Denis Tierney, Fianna Fail

Councillor Brian Whelahan, Fine Gael

Councillor Bernadette Fanneran, Fianna Fail

REPRESENTAIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES:

Vocational Educational Committee:	Cllr. John Carroll Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran
A.M.A.I.:	Cllr. Michael Campbell Cllr. Noel Russell
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.:	Cllr. Michael Loughnane
Offaly Strategic Policy Committee	Cllr. Michael Loughnane
Oxmanton Hall, Theatre & Arts Centre:	Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran Cllr. Denis Tierney
Meitheal Birr:	Chairperson, Town Council



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2011

- Completion of footpaths and the one-way traffic system at Drumbane.
- Erection of fence at rear of Scurragh.
- Development of Camcor River Walk under the Smart Travel scheme.
- Improvement works Moorpark Street, Orchard Lane and Bridge Street.
- Commencement of works on Tullamore Road Gateway.
- Works at Military Road junction.
- Official opening of Birr Skatepark.
- Provision of Adult Recreational facility at Camcor Park.
- Improvement works at junction of N52 and Pound Street.
- Provision of railing at junction of Model school and Oxmanstown Mall.
- Commencement of the Social Housing Leasing Scheme.
- Adoption of revised Parking Byelaws.
- Progressing the objectives of the Town Realm Plan.
- Maintaining the Housing Stock
- Maintaining street cleaning services in the town
- Providing support to various groups in the town such as Birr Vintage Week committee, The Offline Film Festival, Birr Leisure Centre, the Heritage Council and National Water Safety

